



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, September 30, 2003****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Bonjour, mes amis. Welcome back from your summer break. This will be the last session before the dissolution of the 14th Assembly. I wish to inform the House that I have received the following message from His Honour Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories: "Dear, Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories the passage of Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2002-2003, and Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2003-2004, during the Sixth Session of the 14th Legislative Assembly. Yours Truly, Cal Mains, Deputy Commissioner."

The chair recognizes the Honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent, Point of Order.

Point Of Order

MR. DENT: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order today because I believe that a Member may have misled the House. Mr. Speaker, while the statement that leads me to this conclusion happened some time ago, it was not until August 15th of this year that it became apparent that Members had been misled. This is the first occasion the House has been in session since then and, therefore, the first occasion I have had to raise the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I will set out the details now. On February 21, 2003, Minister Antoine was asked in Oral Question 68-14(6) about the status of revisions for the business incentive policy by Mrs. Groenewegen. According to Hansard, in return to that question he said, "I have to work with my colleagues on the other side and the direction to date is not to move forward at this point in time because of one area with regard to cost. We are saying that we could probably leave this for the time being and introduce a registry to gauge what the costs are to have this policy in place. So at this point in time, the decision is for us to not proceed..." Mr. Speaker, with this statement, the Minister clearly advised the House, and since he used the royal "we," the government would not proceed with implementation of revisions to BIP. As his department, RWED, is responsible for developing the revised BIP and he was the lead Minister on the file, Members have every reason to take his word that no changes would occur.

Then, Mr. Speaker, on August 15, 2003, the Minister held a press conference to announce that the BIP was being revised as originally set out. So, Mr. Speaker, the Minister told the House that the policy would not be changed in February, then announced that it would be changed in August when Members were not in session. Had the Minister told the Members in February that he was still considering implementing the changes, Members would have had an opportunity, either in the winter or the spring session, to debate the issue, but the Members understood that we had the Minister's word that no

changes were forthcoming. The Minister had further opportunity in June to set the record straight when we had our spring session, but he again failed to notify Members that he was considering such changes. Following meetings with committee, the Minister knew there was considerable interest in this issue and a lot of opposition to the proposed changes.

Mr. Speaker, by the way the Minister has handled this issue, he has deprived Members of the opportunity to debate significant change to a very important government policy. His statement in February that the policy would not be changed left Members no opportunity to publicly question the government. By that statement and his actions on August 15th, I submit he has misled the House. I believe the Minister owes this House, at the very least, an apology and a commitment not to implement the new policy until we have debated it in this House.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DENT: If he won't do that, Mr. Speaker, he should resign. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. I am bringing forward your Point of Order. The Point of Order was long. I will take that under advisement and report back to the House at the earliest opportunity as well.

Colleagues, today is a special day in this House and I would like to draw your attention to the new uniforms worn by the Pages on duty today. I am pleased to see the beauty of our northern landscape and cultural diversity captured by two of our most talented artists and featured on the new Pages' uniforms. The artists who created the beautiful vests are Karen Wright-Fraser of Whispering Willows and Suzan Marie of Bush Tea Resources. The vests are made of black stroud to represent oil in the North. The bottoms of the vest are trimmed with bias tape and ric rac in blue representing the rivers and the lakes, green for the trees and red represents the bright northern berries. The white caribou hide represents northern diamonds. A circular patch of smoked caribou hide symbolizes the moon, the sun and the drum of the Dene and the Inuvialuit on the back of the vests. Our brilliant northern lights are captured by beads, ribbons and cording. The beads represent the Dene people, the ribbons represent the Metis and the black cording is intertwined with colourful cording to represent all the different peoples living together in harmony under our northern skies.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 76-14(6): Fiscal Update**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide Members with a brief update of the government's fiscal situation.

Later today, I will table the 2002-03 public accounts. I am pleased to note that this is the earliest the accounts have been completed meeting the target date recommended by the Auditor General. The accounts show a final operating deficit of \$32.7 million, a significantly improved position compared to the forecast in February.

When I updated Members on our fiscal position in June, I noted that we faced considerable uncertainty with respect to population counts. Last week, Statistics Canada released revised population numbers for the period 1996 to 2003 which incorporate the 2001 census results and coverage studies. The numbers held some relatively good news for the Northwest Territories. The final NWT census net under-coverage rate was estimated at 8.11 percent. This final coverage estimate reflects a substantial improvement from the preliminary estimates released by Statistics Canada but is still below what we believe the actual undercount was.

The final coverage estimate of 8.11 percent was the result of considerable work between the GNWT Bureau of Statistics Canada and incorporated significant revisions to the Statistics Canada approach. While the result is still lower than our own estimate of 10 percent, and we continue to have concerns about some aspects of their approach, we are pleased that they did make some substantive changes to their coverage estimates. The Bureau of Statistics will now begin work with the federal agency on the 2006 census, to ensure that the same sorts of coverage problems are not repeated.

These new estimates will be used to calculate funding entitlements under the formula funding agreement with Canada. It is expected that the new estimates will result in a cumulative one-time positive adjustment to 2003-04 revenues of \$35 million, which has lowered our deficit forecast.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have resolved, to our benefit, the issue of the calculation of our "tax effort factor" in the current formula funding agreement which expires in March 2004. This removes a major element of uncertainty from our short-term fiscal situation. However, the treatment of tax effort in the new formula financing agreement remains under negotiation and adds to our longer-term fiscal uncertainty.

The revenue gains we have achieved in 2003-04 have been partially offset by lower than expected corporate income tax revenues. We are undertaking research to determine the reasons for this as we expected better results given the level of economic activity and the anticipated profitability of corporate operations in the NWT.

On the expenditure side, we have achieved the \$15 million short-term savings we targeted for 2003-04 without seriously impacting services to the public. Unfortunately, we were not able to constrain supplementary appropriation requirements as much as we wanted due to factors such as the severity of the forest fire season and the compensation increases to physicians. With our somewhat higher revenues, however, we are able to maintain our 2003-04 deficit forecast at \$77 million.

Despite our improved short-term fiscal situation, Mr. Speaker, our medium to long-term fiscal outlook has not changed. Our revenue growth is being quickly outstripped by spending demands. Without significant spending reform, we are still looking at reaching the federally imposed debt limit of \$300 million by the end of 2006-07.

As we said in the June session, there is no short-term or easy fix to this problem. We need to find creative solutions. The task teams we struck last winter to develop these solutions have continued their work over the course of the summer and will have options ready for consideration when the new government takes office in December. This will allow the 15th Legislative Assembly to factor some of these options into its agenda.

With appropriate funding from the federal government, I am confident that we can meet our fiscal challenges and still protect our ability to achieve critical objectives. The current negotiations for renewal of our formula financing agreement provide one of our best opportunities to secure adequate federal funding levels.

In May, I met with finance Minister John Manley to discuss the Prime Minister's commitment that the adequacy of our funding would be addressed. Over the summer, GNWT officials laid out our case in great detail with Finance Canada. I will be meeting with Minister Manley at the end of next week to review progress on these discussions.

Another key piece of our fiscal picture is the devolution of resource revenues along with a fair net fiscal benefit. It is essential that we make progress in these discussions and finalize a devolution arrangement as soon as possible. We cannot continue to bear the costs of development without access to the fiscal benefits.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the Northwest Territories' economy is vibrant and strong. The Premier's recent trip to North American business centres to promote the NWT has once again brought international recognition of our vast potential to the fore. NWT leaders are working together to promote and manage sustainable and responsible resource development. The federal government is starting to recognize the legitimacy of our issues and the quality of our plans and strategies. Although we still face many challenges, opportunities abound. If we continue to work together for the betterment of all NWT residents, we will make the NWT a success story politically, culturally, economically and socially. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Minister's Statement 77-14(6): Official Languages GNWT Public Response

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to inform the House that later today I will be tabling the Government of the Northwest Territories' response to the final report of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories acknowledges the tremendous amount of time, effort and care that has gone into developing "One Land, Many Voices." This pivotal report of the special committee, which was two years in

the making, was tabled in this Legislative Assembly during the March 2003 session.

We understand that at the heart of the special committee's report there is an abiding respect for the role that languages play in the lives of our citizens and of the value that languages contribute to our culture and society.

The Government of the Northwest Territories shares these views and goals of the special committee and is committed to ensuring that the findings of its report are implemented to the greatest extent possible and in the most expedient time frame.

The Government of the Northwest Territories' response outlines in detail the ways and means by which the government intends to action, both immediately and over time, the special committee's recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, as detailed in the Government of the Northwest Territories' response, it is our intention to give immediate effect to a number of the special committee's recommendations by way of a bill to amend the Official Languages Act that I would give notice of first reading this afternoon.

As recommended by the special committee, the bill defines the powers and duties of the Minister under the act. Through this bill, the government proposes to establish in legislation an aboriginal languages revitalization board with representatives from all official languages, aboriginal language communities, with a mandate to advise the Minister responsible on government and community efforts to maintain, promote and revitalize aboriginal languages.

This bill will concurrently establish in legislation an official languages board with representatives from all official language communities of the Northwest Territories to advise the Minister responsible on the administration and delivery of services by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Each board will be able to make recommendations to the Minister within its respective mandate.

Additionally, the bill will:

- amend the preamble to the act to recognize the important role of language communities in preserving and developing their own languages;
- recognize North Slavey, South Slavey, Inuvialuktun and Innuinaqtun in section 4 of the act and remove them from the interpretation section;
- remove repealed sections of the act and correct spelling, terminology and translation errors;
- include provisions requiring the government to respond to the annual report of the Official Languages Commissioner within 180 days of tabling the annual report;
- include provisions for the recognition of the collective language rights of aboriginal people within their homelands;
- include provisions for smaller scale evaluations every five years beginning in 2008; and finally,
- the bill addresses the role of the Languages Commissioner.

Mr. Speaker, as the report of the special committee indicated, some of the proposed recommendations will take longer than the remaining term of this government to implement. For those findings that cannot be implemented during the balance of the

14th Assembly, this public response should be viewed as a strong recommendation for a course of action that may be undertaken by the government of the 15th Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we know that languages are of untold value for individual and cultural identity and social well-being in maintaining the collective history of the Northwest Territories and in preserving cultural diversity. Once again, I refer back to the words of the special committee, "Languages are about our identity -- who we are and how we understand and interact with each other and the world around us."

I'm proud as a Member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, to be able to present the Government of the Northwest Territories a course of action designed to ensure that the voices of the people of the Northwest Territories are heard in whichever language they choose to speak for generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Premier.

Minister's Statement 78-14(6): Minister Absent From The House

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jim Antoine will be absent from the House today and tomorrow, attending the Ministers of Energy and Mines meeting in Halifax. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Revisions To The Business Incentive Policy

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over a year ago the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development released draft revisions to the business incentive policy. Since then, he's heard from Members of this Assembly and from the business community that not only do the revisions not fix the problems with the existing policy, but they create even more problems.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has consistently asked for a cost-benefit analysis of the business incentive policy so Members can make a rational decision about what is really broken and how we should fix it. Without this information we can only guess at the possible consequences of the revised policy.

I and others were lead to believe that the Minister had understood this and had agreed not to proceed with the changes when he said in the House on February 21, 2003, and I quote, "We could probably leave this for the time being and introduce a registry to gauge what the costs are to have the policy in place. So at this point in time the decision is for us not to proceed, but to have a mechanism in place developed by Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development."

Mr. Speaker, imagine everyone's shock when the Minister announced in the middle of the summer, while most Members were in their constituency or away on holiday, that the revised business incentive policy would be coming into force on October 15, 2003. As one of my constituents asked, what has happened to consensus government?

Mr. Speaker, Hay River businesses are worried about the caps that the Minister is planning to have in place in less than two weeks time. To take the construction industry as an example, there are a lot of projects out there that cost more than \$1 million. So if a general contractor is able to get a large project, once they've accounted for the first million dollars with northern labour what incentive is there for them to hire local sub-trades for the rest of the project? People have also told me that their businesses will be badly hurt if the policy no longer applies to boards, agencies and municipal governments.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Minister know, without having looked at the costs and benefits of the existing policy, what consequences his changes will have for Northwest Territories businesses? How can he go ahead with this when he knows that there are serious concerns out there that have not been addressed?

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be directing questions to the Minister and ask him to do the responsible thing, which is to delay any changes to the business incentive policy until his department has the facts and has done something to address the concerns raised by the Members of this House and by the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Impact Of Miramar Con Mine Closure

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Miramar Con Mine recently announced that they would close underground operations at one of the oldest operating mines in North America. Con is located in my constituency, Mr. Speaker.

The closure of Con Mine will have an impact on us all. Of course, the biggest impact will be felt in Yellowknife where significantly fewer dollars will flow into the local economy. However, if a significant number of laid off miners were to leave the North, the Government of the Northwest Territories transfer payments would suffer. That would have an impact on everyone in the Territories.

Mr. Speaker, our Statistics Bureau tells us that the salaries lost with these nearly 200 jobs disappearing will be \$15 million a year. On top of that, Miramar has been spending an additional \$24 million a year, much of that with northern firms.

Mr. Speaker, we hope that many of the affected workers will be able to find other jobs in Yellowknife, but if none of them could the Statistics Bureau estimates the closure would result in up to 350 direct and indirect job losses. So the potential loss to our transfer payments is staggering. We have to do our best to help these residents stay in the North.

Mr. Speaker, on top of losing their jobs, some 25 families may no longer have a place for their homes with the closure of the trailer camps on the mine site. They will face having to relocate or lose their homes just after they lose their jobs. The problem is made worse because there may not be enough vacant mobile home lots in town to move the mobile homes that are currently at the Con Mine trailer park. For many of the homes, relocation may not even be possible because of changes in the building code since they were installed that make them uneconomic to bring them up to current code, as is required when mobile homes are relocated.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of those residents, this government must continue to try to help to work out a deal between Miramar, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the City of Yellowknife to let the residents purchase the land and stay where they are. My constituents in the Con Mine trailer camp have been working for years to try and work out a reasonable solution. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Vince Steen, has worked on behalf of the Con camp residents and was instrumental in bringing the management of Con Mine back to negotiations. I'd also like to recognize the efforts of Premier Kakfwi. Since the announcement of the closure, he has coordinated and chaired several meetings of Ministers and has brought the mayor, mine management and union officials together with Members of his Cabinet and senior staff to focus on the most important of people involved in this crisis: the affected Miramar employees, in particular the residents of the trailer parks.

Mr. Speaker, the City of Yellowknife has been a partner in discussions about the potential transfer of the land to the residents for quite some time. In spite of the upcoming election and the new council that will be elected, I hope the city will continue to work diligently to assist the residents of Con camp to keep their homes. Time is of the essence.

I also urge the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to consider assisting residents of Con as he did the residents of the Husky Trailer Park in Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, honourable colleagues. Mr. Speaker, it would be important to encourage the employees of Miramar Con Mine to try to remain in the Northwest Territories. Many are skilled trades people, and Minister Ootes and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Human Resources Development Canada are working together to find other opportunities for those that would like to work here in the North. Many of my constituents who have been affected have lived in the North for a long time and contribute to this town in many ways.

Mr. Speaker, all residents of Yellowknife will be affected by the closure of Con Mine. As part of Yellowknife's heritage, economy and skyline, the closure of the mine will be felt by all of us. However, I believe that if we continue working together and focus on what is possible, it can reduce the negative effects of this closure and help affected employees continue with their contribution to the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Complexity Of Seniors Fuel Subsidy Application Forms

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to raise an issue that comes around about this time of year, every year almost. As long as I've been a Member of this Assembly it comes out. This time of year brings about many changes; changes in the colour of our environment from green to red to yellow and soon to white as the snow covers the ground. But, Mr. Speaker, along with that it seems that an annual mailing or seniors that go into the income support offices to apply for seniors' fuel subsidies get their application forms and have to fill them out.

Mr. Speaker, it's been brought to my attention that these forms have become increasingly more difficult to fill out and understood by many of the seniors who own their own homes. If you're not a high school graduate or have a degree in something or another, it's difficult to go through these forms.

Mr. Speaker, I have had an opportunity to review these forms with seniors and, indeed, it would take quite a bit of effort to go through the whole process to make sure you qualify. In fact, they've been signing the documents to say that if you have not put the accurate information down you're liable. Mr. Speaker, not only do seniors in small communities find this a concern, it's almost like an insult that we're not taking their word for granted. Now there are cases, Mr. Speaker, that probably brought this to the department so that they had to address it in these forms, but, Mr. Speaker, I think we've gone too far. We've made it too difficult for seniors to go through these forms to qualify for the fuel subsidy.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the appropriate Minister, but I'd like them to consider that they look at why they're doing these forms and making it even more difficult. Is it in fact so that they can save more money? So that they don't have to give more funds out to seniors who own their own homes? That it's so difficult that they feel like it's not worth going through the hassle? Or is it just because they're trying to curb some misuse of those funds? I'll have a question for the appropriate Minister. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Compensation For Victims Of The Hay River Spring Flood

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every year the residents of Hay River, and in particular the residents of Old Town and West Channel, find themselves at the mercy of Mother Nature and faced with the question of how will all the ice and water caused by spring breakup find its way out to Great Slave Lake without damaging their homes and properties?

It is not easy, Mr. Speaker, to predict what events will unfold and what actions residents should take to protect themselves

and their property. Equal uncertainties are faced by town administrators and what actions they should take. Over the past several years the town has taken a number of steps to guard against flooding, at a considerable expense to the town, I might add. However, Mother Nature is, as I have stated, unpredictable and the power of the water and the ice tends to take its own course and make up its own mind as to what time of day or night the big push will come.

Mr. Speaker, this past spring the big push happened on April 30th. Unfortunately, the safeguards put in place by the town were not sufficient to protect all properties. On that date, Mr. Speaker, I was in Fort Providence on standing committee business when I received a call that I should come home as my constituents were phoning for me. I made arrangements and arrived home at 1:00 a.m. on May 1st and was shocked to see the amount of water and ice over roads and covering residents' properties. I was also informed that all residents of West Channel had been evacuated from their homes.

It became very apparent to me, Mr. Speaker, that the residents would be suffering financial losses and would be seeking some sort of compensation. I put a request in to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs to come to Hay River and witness the situation. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Minister Steen and our Premier, Stephen Kakfwi, who came to Hay River and had a look through my riding and Hay River Reserve.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I hadn't invited them strictly for a site-seeing tour. I had them there knowing that I was going to be approaching them for some sort of funding. All summer I have waited and told my constituents that the Minister was looking at some sort of package and that I was looking forward to some positive outcomes.

On September 9th I received a letter from Minister Steen that none of the claims fit into any of their programs. So they would not be compensating anyone.

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

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

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I also was informed that the town of Hay River received a letter stating that because of their good financial situation, that they would not be receiving any funding for the expenses that they went through in the flood. This, Mr. Speaker, in my way of thinking, is penalizing Hay River for good financial management. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the residents of the town of Hay River and the town of Hay River itself deserve some sort of compensation and to say nothing of the recognition that the many volunteers deserve for their efforts during the spring flood. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Diversification Of The Northern Economy

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me just start by saying that it is good to be back in the House. I would like to be one of the first ones to thank you for your four years in that seat and making sure that good orderly discussion in the House occurs. It's going to be hard to find somebody to fill that seat as comfortably as you have, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

---Applause

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today on unemployment. In the Northwest Territories, we need to diversify the economy. The Government of the Northwest Territories is the only organization in the Northwest Territories that could help diversify economy in the Northwest Territories.

Right now we have 33 communities. Twenty-seven of them are non-tax based. Twenty-seven communities hardly have any government employees. Mr. Speaker, if you sit back and look at the big picture, what we see are regional centres having 90 percent of government employees administering a welfare state. It doesn't make any sense whatsoever where people in five communities make all the money while their tax dollars go to income support and other social programs because there is no employment in the communities. In this day and age of communications why is it policy people, analysts, are all in regional centres? Why can't we diversify the economy of the Northwest Territories so that we could say that the Northwest Territories is in every community and every community belongs to the Northwest Territories' government? We can't say that now.

I can't see why we continually go down the same path saying the economy scales say you can't put a position in there because it is just going to cost the taxpayers too many dollars. At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, it is the taxpayers' dollars that are keeping the people on welfare, not even welfare. You call it income support or employment support. What about the employment in the communities? If we don't put the jobs there, then there is no employment besides short-term employment that does not lead to long-lasting employment that a person could go to a bank with.

Mr. Speaker, this next couple of weeks I will be speaking on this issue, I will be asking appropriate Ministers why we don't diversify our economy to diversify employment in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Mr. Nitah. The chair did bend the rules there a bit but soon realized the topics were very similar. The wealth of my experience and the wealth of the Territories. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for the North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Tlicho Agreement

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight one of the most significant happenings during the life of this Assembly and the history of the North. Of course, I am talking about the Tlicho agreement.

On August 25, 2003, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of the Northwest Territories and the five chiefs in the Dogrib region signed a final agreement. Although both the federal and territorial governments still need to complete legislation for this agreement, a corner has been turned and self-government is in sight. One of the key elements of their agreement is the establishment of new community governments in the four Tlicho communities. These community governments will both represent all residents and be a method of implementing the aboriginal inherent right to self-government. In addition to community governments, the Tlicho government will be responsible for overall operations in the Dogrib region.

Mr. Speaker, self-government means many things to many people. To many self-government is a sign of hope and a sign of change. Self-government is defined by two key words: openness and accountability. We, in the Dogrib region, have, for many years, been accountable to the federal government in terms of finances, law-making and administration. Now in these areas, the Tlicho government will be accountable to the Tlicho people.

Mr. Speaker, elections will be held for officials in the Tlicho government. Tlicho government and all Tlicho companies and boards will provide audited financial statements and budgets for approval. By knowing what the budget is we can make choices for our future and the future of our children. We will be able to work toward self-sustaining communities.

Mr. Speaker, like anything, self-government is a process. A legislative process as well as an evolving personal and community journey. In recognition of this process, the negotiators have established a way that changes can be made to the future constitution if they are needed, so that the best interest of the Dogrib are protected.

Mr. Speaker, the creation, signing and implementation of the Tlicho land claim is and will be a time of learning for all our people as we try to promote and protect Tlicho heritage, culture and way of life. In closing I would like to acknowledge the years of dedication that the negotiators for the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, the federal and territorial governments have spent in creating this agreement. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The Honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Impact Of Miramar Con Mine Closure

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is good to see you and everyone in the House and in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, on August 27th our community received an announcement that Miramar Con Mine would close its operation at the site by the end of this November and it might even be sooner. While many of us knew this would be coming eventually, it still came as a shock and it is very sad news indeed, Mr. Speaker. Mining of gold at Giant Mine and Con Mine and others in the area are what has given this city our modern history. The Robertson Shaft and the Con Mine has been a steady and reassuring presence in this town for many decades. My family members have worked at the mine as

miners and I would even go so far as to say I probably wouldn't be standing here today if it weren't for that very mine. I'll save that story for another time.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that I have had a chance to talk to a number of affected Con Mine workers who live in my riding. I know they are all doing their best to cope with the situation, but mining and working in a mine are a way of life not just a job. For many of them, young or old, they have spent a better part of their life at the mine. It will mean a great deal of adjustment and change, not only for the workers, but for their families and friends in our community. There is no question in my mind that we will feel the economic, financial and emotional impact of the closure of the mine for a long time to come.

On a good note, Mr. Speaker, I must say it's good to see how quickly and comprehensively the responsible departments in the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government have responded to the transitional needs of the affected workers. It has been proactive and organized. They have all done a very good job so far and I want to thank them and encourage them to keep up with the good work until the job is done.

I also appreciate that the Con Mine Trailer Park transfer is working through its various jurisdictional stages and this Legislature must support and do its part for a speedy resolution to that issue.

There's one more issue, Mr. Speaker, that we need to work more on and that has to do with the abandonment and reclamation planned for the mine currently before the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. I need to advise you that the employees had expressed great concern that the plan proposed would be approved and implemented by the end of this year without much public scrutiny and participation. They believe this would mean that the mine would be closed at the end of November, the Robertson Shaft demolished and the process for flooding...

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, your time is up for your Member's statement. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I speak unanimous consent to conclude my statement?

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. You may conclude your statement, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. May I just conclude my statement by advising you that the employees have a great concern that the reclamation and closure plan might go through the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board without participation and public process. I must say, Mr. Speaker, I share their concern and I have joined other Yellowknife MLAs and the workers expressing our concern to the Minister responsible in this government. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my concern on behalf of not only the affected workers, but on behalf of all citizens of Yellowknife, that proper public process is done to clean up and mitigate any harmful environmental impact of the closure of the mine before any steps are taken to close and flood the mine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Prevention And Treatment Of Social Problems

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. About a week ago, I was pleased to host about 20 people at a Great Slave constituency meeting. That's a pretty good attendance and I want to thank all of those who came out.

One overall issue that came out, Mr. Speaker, again and again and again is my constituents tell me that we in government have fallen down and fallen down badly on the prevention, treatment and follow-up for people with social problems, abuse and neglect. Mr. Speaker, here is what some constituents said last week.

We need more treatment centres in Yellowknife and across the Northwest Territories. We need to do more, much more, to prevent the drinking that devastates so many babies because of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. The caseloads of our frontline social workers are too heavy and unmanageable. They need more tools and resources. Alcohol abuse is getting worse. There should be a major commission on alcohol abuse in the NWT. Cocaine and other hard drugs are causing a troubling spiral of danger and violence in downtown streets. Yellowknife's overcrowding and unaffordable housing is a lead cause of depression and domestic conflict that is spilling out of our homes.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of our term, we put together a document called Towards a Better Tomorrow, Our Vision for a Prosperous Future. We talked about healthy, educated Northerners making responsible choices for themselves and their families. Despite our robust economy, prosperity for some, even for many, Mr. Speaker, it is far short of our goal when we don't have a healthy community for all. What's happening?

Mr. Speaker, in the NWT in 1999 to 2000, Criminal Code incidents increased more than 33 percent. In terms of violence, it has increased 15 percent and drug charges under federal statute have increased 23 percent. In Yellowknife, the number of incidents for the Yellowknife RCMP detachment has gone up from just over 3,000 in 1999 to almost 4,900 in 2002.

The NWT Liquor Commission annual report of last year shows that total volume of liquor increased by eight percent over 2001, primarily due to increased sales in Yellowknife, Inuvik and Hay River. Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the most disappointing actions during our four-year term is the money we've spent building new correctional facilities instead of funding new ways to prevent violence and treat offenders. Mr. Speaker, the health of our society depends on our commitment to listen and act on what our people are telling us. Are we listening? Is the government listening? Sadly, Mr. Speaker, it would seem not. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement On Revisions To The Business Incentive Policy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to also raise some concerns about the government's decision to do an absolutely 180 degree turn on the implementation of revisions to the business incentive policy. Mr. Speaker, over the last month or so, I, like many of my colleagues -- and I know from talking to them -- have been receiving phone calls and letters from concerned constituents and business people across the Territories who thought they had a deal and thought they had agreement on behalf of this government to accurately analyze what these revisions to the BIP would mean to small business, what they would cost. Because admittedly -- and our government has admitted this -- we have no idea currently what the BIP is costing us.

Mr. Dent, in a Point of Order today, spoke about the commitment we thought we had from the Minister of RWED. Mr. Speaker, it's broader than that. I don't think there's a Member on this side of the House that would believe the Minister of RWED decided to implement these changes to the BIP on his own without consulting Cabinet. Mrs. Groenewegen indicated earlier some time in the dog days of summer with Members out in their constituencies, this government decided to do an end run, despite the fact that they were more than aware that Members on this side of the House had all kinds of concerns, the public had all kinds of concerns.

Mr. Speaker, this Cabinet, these supposed stewards of our consensus system, decided that despite our concerns, they would jam it through under the cloak of darkness and it leaves people out there, Mr. Speaker, wondering what could be so reckless and destabilizing about these changes that they need to be snuck in the back door. I think we will spend the next several weeks poking holes in the proposed changes, asking questions that the government can't answer, Mr. Speaker. At the end of that, I hope with some good sense, this government will decide until they have the kind of blue chip information we are looking for, it makes no sense to try to railroad these changes through. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Candice Ciboci's Academic Achievement

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it gives me great pleasure to indulge in intellectual achievements of a young female constituent of mine who resides in Inuvik Twin Lakes. Ms. Candice Ciboci was recognized for her academic achievements. I will describe her academic accomplishments as a social pride for the entire community of Inuvik. Ms. Ciboci will continue to serve as a model and inspiration for other young people in our region. Ms. Ciboci has received several citations to her credit, which is listed as follows: She is a recipient of the Governor General's Academic Bronze Medal for Academic Excellence 2001-2002; Shell

Canada Limited Academic Award Recipient; Honourable Mention, Canada-wide Science Fair, Kingston, Ontario, 2001. She's also had outstanding achievements at Samuel Hearne Secondary Hearne in a mathematics school contest. She also received the highest score in Grade 11. She was also an honour roll student in the year 2001.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Ciboci is now studying at the University of Alberta. I want to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to a well-deserved recipient and further want to wish her a great success in her studies of choice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 318-14(6): Government Sponsored Insurance Programs

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to an oral question asked by Mrs. Groenewegen on June 12, 2003, with regard to government sponsored insurance programs.

The Government of the Northwest Territories regulates insurance companies operating in the Northwest Territories through the NWT Insurance Act. The Department of Finance, through the superintendent of finance, is responsible for administering the act.

The superintendent of insurance does not approve rates charged by insurers or standard risks. Automobile insurance premiums charged to the residents of the NWT are significantly below premiums charged to residents of Alberta.

For example, for high risk drivers, property damage and public liability coverage of \$1 million costs \$1,979 annually in Alberta, but only \$569 a year in the NWT.

Accident benefits coverage costs \$132 a year in Alberta, but only \$46 annually in the NWT. Low automobile rates charged to residents of the NWT are due to the low risk road system and dry weather. NWT automobile insurance premiums are lower than those charged in any province.

The office of the superintendent of insurance continues to review rate changes filed by the Facility Association, an association of insurance companies which insures all high risk applicants and to monitor premium rate changes in the standard insurance market. Insurance brokerages and the superintendent of insurance have received some complaints regarding the availability of insurance, but relatively few complaints with respect to increases in premiums. The superintendent of insurance has not received any complaints regarding the level of insurance premiums.

Given the small population of the Northwest Territories, a government-run insurance program would not be economically feasible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize all my constituents from North Slave, the people of the Tlicho government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. It's nice to see so many people in the visitors' gallery. Welcome to the Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize so many visitors from our neighbouring communities and also to recognize the presence of some of the elders in the gallery. Mr. Speaker, I would like to especially recognize one elder who makes a tremendous difference in my life, my mother Mrs. Esther Braden. With her today is Barb Hood of the NWT Seniors' Society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my constituency assistant, Ms. Caroline Sanderson and also the Tlicho people who were here in the House, especially my great-uncle Johnny Michel.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome some Yellowknife residents in the gallery: Ms. Kathryn Youngblut, Ed Jeske, Dave Wind and a very active mother, Marlo Bullock with her two children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Connor Bullock and Nelson Bullock who are here with their mother Marlo, as Sandy just indicated. Their ages are 8 and 11 and they've come to see the proceedings of the Assembly here today. So I hope my colleagues will join me in welcoming them. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Major Karen Hoeft and Captain Al Hoeft from the Salvation Army, as well as two other members from the Salvation Army. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize all the people from the Dogrib Nation in the gallery today, but there's one I work with, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to recognize. That is Violet Camsell-Blondin, the chair of the Dogrib Community Services Board, which is responsible for both education and the health and social services department. I would like to recognize her, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Colleagues, I would like to direct your attention to the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of Karen Wright-Fraser, the designer of the new Pages' uniform. With her are four ladies who assisted Karen with the piecework on the vests and they are: Lucy Black, Christine Doctor...There are only two.

---Laughter

There is Karen Wright-Fraser and Mr. Fraser. Please welcome them.

---Applause

Are there any other recognitions? I would like to take the opportunity to welcome everyone to the Legislative Assembly. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**Question 333-14(6): Complexity Of Seniors Fuel Subsidy Application Forms**

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment which the senior fuel subsidy falls under. I would like to know from the Minister what work was undertaken with seniors in the development of the application forms for seniors' fuel subsidy.

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

Return To Question 333-14(6): Complexity Of Seniors Fuel Subsidy Application Forms

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not familiar with that particular work that had been undertaken and whether there has been consultation with seniors. I must say though that a lot of changes have been introduced into the seniors' fuel subsidy over the last several years. I heard what the Member has said and we need to look at this application form to see if it is a difficult form to follow. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 333-14(6): Complexity Of Seniors Fuel Subsidy Application Forms

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When will the Minister undertake to have a review of these forms? When he does that, will he find out if seniors were contacted with how they felt these forms should be put together? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 333-14(6): Complexity Of Seniors Fuel Subsidy Application Forms

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will get onto that item immediately, Mr. Speaker, to see whether consultations had taken place, whether there was input from the seniors' society and whether there was input from other seniors. We will certainly look to see whether the forms are possible to change very quickly if they are too difficult to follow, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 333-14(6): Complexity Of Seniors Fuel Subsidy Application Forms

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the department in all communities prepared to work with individuals who would come into their office to help fill out the forms? They are more difficult this time around than previous years, I believe. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 333-14(6): Complexity Of Seniors Fuel Subsidy Application Forms

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, a lot of changes have taken place. First of all, we changed the fuel subsidy regionally, so there's a higher level of support for individual seniors if they are in a colder climate area with longer winters. The second case that took place was the change in the level of income that a senior can have. A number of those changes have taken place and no doubt, the department, in its wisdom, has made changes on the forms as well. What we did do, as well, Mr. Speaker, is put out a publication to allow seniors and others on income support to understand the program, but I will immediately get on to the question that the Member raised here. If we can provide assistance to seniors in communities to help fill out the forms and secondly to see if the forms are appropriate and if we need to make changes on the forms.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 333-14(6): Complexity Of Seniors Fuel Subsidy Application Forms

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicated that a lot of changes had happened and some increases to the limits as well, so will the Minister provide that information as well when he goes through and does this other work? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 333-14(6): Complexity Of Seniors Fuel Subsidy Application Forms

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I had instructed the department to develop guides for income support, guides for the senior fuel subsidy and all the programs we have so that those guides can be handed out to individuals, which would give individual seniors in this particular case the opportunity to see in print what their eligibility requirements are, what they are eligible for and so forth. I'll ensure that if those aren't being distributed yet, that they will be distributed shortly. It's my understanding that it has already been done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 334-14(6): Compensation For Victims Of The Hay River Spring Flood

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. As I stated in my Member's statement, Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents were involved in flooding which caused a lot of damage to properties and personal items. This flooding did not wipe out everyone in West Channel, Mr. Speaker, but it did have a degree of hardship for all residents.

Mr. Speaker, even though not all residents suffered financial loss, this doesn't lessen the level of damage suffered by a few. Could the Minister tell this House how many claims were received by his department with regard to the flood in West Channel? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 334-14(6): Compensation For Victims Of The Hay River Spring Flood

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have the information the Member is asking for, but I'll have the department supply the information and pass it on to the Member.

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

Supplementary To Question 334-14(6): Compensation For Victims Of The Hay River Spring Flood

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like the Minister to provide the total of those claims that were presented to the department; the number of claims and the total amount in dollars that were put to the Minister. I would like the Minister to inform the House as to whether he approached Cabinet with a benefit package or a compensation package for affected residents of the flood. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. There are two questions there. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 334-14(6): Compensation For Victims Of The Hay River Spring Flood

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did receive the total for all individuals and I have a total here for West Channel Village \$66,946; the Hay River Reserve was \$3,020; and the Hay River Reserve new village was \$3,400. The overall total for all individual claims was \$102,000.

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

Supplementary To Question 334-14(6): Compensation For Victims Of The Hay River Spring Flood

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second part of that question was did the Minister take any kind of a compensation package for approval to Cabinet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 334-14(6): Compensation For Victims Of The Hay River Spring Flood

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the recommendation the department and myself took to Cabinet was that we would not pay compensation. There was a committee established to review compensation requests. Their recommendation was that we don't pay compensation, and I accepted the recommendation and took it to Cabinet, and that's what the ruling in Cabinet was. We weren't going to pay compensation.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 334-14(6): Compensation For Victims Of The Hay River Spring Flood

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a letter also went out to the Town of Hay River that because of their good financial situation the department would not be reimbursing them any money for the expenditures that they incurred during the flood for residents of Hay River. Could the Minister justify why he would make that kind of a statement? Had the Town of Hay River been broke or badly managing their funds, would the Minister have come forward with some money at that time, but simply because they have good financial management they would not be reimbursed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 334-14(6): Compensation For Victims Of The Hay River Spring Flood

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Town of Hay River put in their expenditure statements at \$18,885 and the First Nation put in \$10,397 as claims. However, whether the town is in a good financial situation or not has no bearing on the policy. We would have paid if we felt

that it was widespread and that proper steps were taken to prevent damages. Thank you.

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

Question 335-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Facilities

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I would like to ask some questions of the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger, concerning facilities for our increasing alcohol and drug problems. Mr. Speaker, in the NWT we have some facilities, for instance the Salvation Army, our hospitals, but it seems that the number of facilities overall is diminishing. I would like to ask the Minister whether our facilities are keeping pace with the demand for alcohol and drug-related treatment in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 335-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly we will always have, as far as I can anticipate, far more problems than we have resources for. As the Member indicated in his statement, the alcohol consumption rates, incarceration rates and crime rates due to alcohol abuse and such have not diminished. We have not eliminated or cut back on any facilities. We've, in fact, tried to enhance the services that we do provide and we've done that with communities with money added into paying alcohol and drug workers adequately to bring on more staff and clinical supervision for mental health and communities wellness. So, Mr. Speaker, it's a difficult battle. We haven't cut back any resources or closed any facilities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 335-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Facilities

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Minister is right. At least in the term of this government I don't recall any closures of facilities. But we've lost some over the course of a longer history; for instance, T'loondeh in the Mackenzie Delta; Somba K'e here in Yellowknife and also what was called the Detox Centre on Franklin Avenue. So we haven't been replacing these facilities, and we've been losing them, Mr. Speaker. Is this an indication that residential alcohol and drug treatment facilities in the NWT are no longer a priority for our continuum of care? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 335-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we've attempted to do over the last few years is focus attention at the community level with the

increase in social workers and the money, as I indicated just in my previous answer, in terms of increasing the pay range of alcohol and drug workers so that they are fairly compensated for mental health workers, for clinical supervisors. We're working more closely with the existing facilities, we've tried to improve the services and the medical coverage, transportation coverage for the Salvation Army. Mr. Speaker, the fundamental issue is the personal choice people make to drink. Mr. Speaker, we will spend all the money we have and the millions and millions of dollars to deal with the issue of addictions and the results of the ravages of alcohol, but really and truly the fundamental choice, as the Member touched on, is how do we get people to make that personal choice so that we can in fact deal with prevention at the community level. As of yet we have not succeeded. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 335-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Facilities

MR. BRADEN: Again, Mr. Speaker, I cannot disagree with the Minister. In fact, this is what my constituents told me. That where we're falling down is on prevention and treatment, as well as follow-up. So what then, Mr. Speaker, what can I go back and say to my constituents that we have done and we are doing to tackle these problems from the front end, from the prevention and awareness side? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 335-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the city of Yellowknife there is an initiative that's underway, spearheaded initially by the RCMP to bring the various practicing non-government organizations and support groups and services that are currently provided to the table to see how they can better coordinate and collaborate on their efforts, both on the prevention as well as dealing with the issue of alcohol abuse as it currently exists.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to work with the communities, the health authorities, with this legislature in terms of funding requests and program development, to see how we can, in fact, deal on a treatment side. Once again, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental issue is how do we get people to make the right choices so babies are born healthy, that we avoid the abuse that's tied to alcohol and we get the people to make the right choices when it comes to the consumption and abuse of alcohol so that they avoid doing that? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 335-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Facilities

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to getting that message across, we don't seem to be very successful. The numbers would seem to indicate that we're going the wrong

way. What innovation is the department bringing to getting this message across? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 335-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Facilities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Health and Social Services has a budget of about \$230 million this year, which is up almost \$40 million over the last three to four years. A significant amount of that money is tied into dealing with issues that are related to alcohol, to the effects, the treatment issues, the drug abuse. Mr. Speaker, we're working, we have a strategy that's approved, a mental health and alcohol and drug addictions strategy, that's been approved that we're getting funding for. We need ongoing funding to implement it. We're consistently working with the authorities. We always welcome the advice and direction that we can get from our colleagues in the House. This is a very terrible and complex problem and it is a battle that we are not winning.

So, Mr. Speaker, we don't have any pat answers. We're pouring enormous amounts of resources into treatment of the health issues related to this. We have yet to come to grips with a final answer. Thank you.

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

Question 336-14(6): Impacts Of Decentralizing GNWT Positions

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is a follow-up to my Member's statement. It's dealing with Finance, so I'll ask the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, it's fitting that my colleague, Mr. Braden, has asked the questions on alcoholism recognizing that alcoholism is a symptom. Unemployment is one of the causes. So I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance if the Government of the Northwest Territories ever did any kind of study to see what kind of effect diversifying the economy of the Northwest Territories by devolving Government of the Northwest Territories positions into all 33 communities of the Northwest Territories, what kind of effect would that have on the economy? Whether positive or negative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of Finance, Minister Handley.

Return To Question 336-14(6): Impacts Of Decentralizing GNWT Positions

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, no, I'm not aware of the government ever doing any comprehensive study of the impact of decentralizing a lot of positions. We look at each situation case by case in terms of its impact, but not a comprehensive study. This government certainly hasn't done one. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 336-14(6): Impacts Of Decentralizing GNWT Positions

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has been in the Northwest Territories for 30 plus years. I'm surprised that a study of this nature has never been done since economy and unemployment is very important to today's style of living. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if he would direct his government or the Government of the Northwest Territories and staff to start a process to see what kind of impact diversifying the economy of the Northwest Territories to devolution of jobs to the communities would have on the economy of the Northwest Territories and the social level of the economy of the Northwest Territories. Socio-economics.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of Finance, Minister Handley.

Further Return To Question 336-14(6): Impacts Of Decentralizing GNWT Positions

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we can certainly take that into consideration as we put together a transition document for the next government, but even if we started it now the bulk of the work would be really in the hands of the next government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 336-14(6): Impacts Of Decentralizing GNWT Positions

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's a good idea, even if it's going to be the bulk of the work by the next government. The Government of the Northwest Territories is here to represent the people of the Northwest Territories. We're losing generations of people to alcoholism and other social ills. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would involve the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight in giving direction to the bureaucracy to start a process that will look at diversifying the economy of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of Finance, Minister Handley.

Further Return To Question 336-14(6): Impacts Of Decentralizing GNWT Positions

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly if the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is interested in looking at the terms of reference or something for a study like that, that could be recommended to the next government and definitely we'd be interested in involving them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 336-14(6): Impacts Of Decentralizing GNWT Positions

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recognizing that this is the last session of this Assembly, I'd like

to ask the Minister if he could be time sensitive. If maybe he could share with us the direction that the government gives to the bureaucracy within the next two weeks with Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight so that we have some kind of input on the transitional document that we want to leave for the next government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister of Finance, Minister Handley.

Further Return To Question 336-14(6): Impacts Of Decentralizing GNWT Positions

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we've done a fair bit of work on the transition document. I think a lot of it has been shared with the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight so far. I will take a look at the issue that he's raising and see whether or not that is something we could add on at this point. It's a very complex task if you start to look at the relationship between social conditions, problems, employment, alcohol, drugs and so on. I think there would have to be a lot of background work before we could ever frame up a study. I'm sure in Yellowknife, for example, the biggest centre with the most employment, we have some very serious problems even here. So it doesn't just happen in the small communities. It's a complex one, but I will certainly talk to my staff about it. Thank you.

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

Question 337-14(6): Passage Of Tlicho Settlement Legislation

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, the Premier of the Northwest Territories. I'd like to ask the Premier if he could work with Cabinet and the Members on this side of the House to accommodate the passage of the Tlicho Settlement Act through the life of this Assembly. By that I'm asking if we can extend the sitting or extend the days that we're going to sit here in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 337-14(6): Passage Of Tlicho Settlement Legislation

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been some discussion with Members of the legislature about business that is before this House that requires our attention. The Members of the legislature and the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, I believe, and the Cabinet are all aware of the concern by the Tlicho to give some attention and due consideration to their legislation. I believe there will be some discussions today and possibly tomorrow that could provide hopefully a positive response to the Member's question. So probably tomorrow you will get an appropriate or positive response. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 337-14(6): Passage Of Tlicho Settlement Legislation

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Premier for the answer he's given. It's very positive. I'd also like to ask him if he can work with Cabinet and Members on this side on the chance that if we can't pass this Tlicho legislation within the time we have on October 24th, I would ask that if he can work towards maybe getting a motion to the House so that we can extend the Legislative Assembly until the last day of our term, to January 6th, so that we can deal with the Tlicho legislation and pass it within the life of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 337-14(6): Passage Of Tlicho Settlement Legislation

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that question was put to, I think, all Members of the legislature this morning. I think Members are considering those possibilities and over the course of today they will be considering it. There's probably an interest to discuss it again tomorrow. We hope there's some positive outcome from that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 337-14(6): Passage Of Tlicho Settlement Legislation

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes this government has to go through due process and sometimes things are dealt with over a certain amount of time. It may look like things are not moving too fast, but we have to show our support for the Tlicho legislation and I'd like to ask the Premier if he and his Cabinet, along with the other Members, can show some kind of support by doing a press release or whatever. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 337-14(6): Passage Of Tlicho Settlement Legislation

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Members of the legislature have a duty to consider all legislation and initiatives by this government and legislation requires due diligence. There's a process set out for considering bills, including public consultation. So we have to take that into account. The Cabinet is fully aware of it. We would like to see that respected, as well as the political will of the Tlicho people to see this government act as quickly and as fairly as possible in response to the need for legislation and for the public to be informed about what these agreements mean and to have some opportunity to be informed and to have some discussion.

The intent is to proceed, taking into account everybody's interest and to make sure that everybody is onside and we act

in the way that we all like to think we are, which is the consensus system of government. Thank you.

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

Question 338-14(6): Maintenance And Reconstruction Of Highway No. 3

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Transportation. At a constituency meeting last night one issue that came up was the condition of Highway No. 3. I suspect that will be of interest to some of the others in the gallery, as well, today. One person that came to my constituency meeting advised me that he had driven the highway four times recently and that each time he felt that the highway was unsafe. On each one of those four trips he felt the highway was unsafe. He wondered if, in order to ensure that we had enough money to put into the reconstruction, the government was skimping on daily maintenance. The parts of the highway that he found were bad were not just in the construction area, but along the regular parts of the highway where construction has not yet taken place. So are we reducing the maintenance in order to put more money into reconstruction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Minister Handley.

Return To Question 338-14(6): Maintenance And Reconstruction Of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, no, the department is not skimping on maintenance on Highway No. 3. As we know, the portion that is within the construction area is maintained by the company that is doing the reconstruction. The other piece on this side is the responsibility of the department. We're continuing to maintain it as best we can. It is a worn out, tired, broken down, old road and requires almost daily work on it to keep it passable. As far as it being unsafe, it probably is unsafe at some speeds, some conditions and so on, but I hope people can bear with us while we improve the road. We're doing another 20 kilometres this year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 338-14(6): Maintenance And Reconstruction Of Highway No. 3

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm concerned that the Minister is saying that the road may at times be unsafe, because I think we have a responsibility as a government to ensure the safety of the travelling public. So would the Minister please confirm that it's his responsibility, if the road is open, to be able to say to the public that the road is safe if you're following the posted speed limit?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Minister Handley.

Further Return To Question 338-14(6): Maintenance And Reconstruction Of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the road is safe at the posted speed limits. If they're not working on it, the road is certainly patrolled every day. If there are spots where there are potholes or conditions that need to be noticed by drivers, then those are put up as quickly as they are become aware of. This doesn't mean there won't be accidents, but I certainly urge drivers to use due care and attention when they travel that road. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 338-14(6): Maintenance And Reconstruction Of Highway No. 3

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I have to express a significant concern that the Minister says that he knows there will be accidents. I would hope that we're maintaining a road in a state that the public can be assured that if they were travelling at the posted speed that they could travel in safety. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister advise us, what is the timetable for concluding the reconstruction of Highway No. 3?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Minister Handley.

Further Return To Question 338-14(6): Maintenance And Reconstruction Of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, this year, as I mentioned, we are doing another almost 20 kilometres that will be reopened. That will leave 30 kilometres. We are looking at how we can do that within our limited fiscal resources and, in fact, the Department of Transportation is looking at alternatives, including having someone do a finance design and build for the road to finish it over the next couple of years. I will do everything I can within our resources to get it done as quickly as we possibly can. Thank you.

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

Question 339-14(6): Increase To Marriage Licence Fees

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is in regard to marriage licence fees, which is under the jurisdiction of Department of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, it is very rare and it takes a lot of work to change a law on behalf of your constituents. I was able to get this done, but there is a last set that needs to be done. Mr. Speaker, what I've been working with the Minister of Health and Social Services on for the last three years is to increase the fee for getting a marriage licence from \$5 to something bigger because it's written in the act as \$5. In order to change that and to increase to reflect the market value of the work being done, we need to change the law. The law was changed, the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that it hasn't been enforced. So it's not effective and as everybody is aware, we are drawing to a close this Assembly. So I need to ask the Minister when he's preparing to enforce that clause so that the increase will come into effect before we finish. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 339-14(6): Increase To Marriage Licence Fees

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the plan is to have it finalized by the middle of October. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 339-14(6): Increase To Marriage Licence Fees

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the correspondence that I've had from the Minister indicates that this is a very simple process of enforcing it. So why is it that when he promised me this would be done by the middle of September that he's now saying it's the middle of October? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 339-14(6): Increase To Marriage Licence Fees

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've discovered that there's nothing simple in government when it comes to changing laws, regulations and policy. I know we've been much slower than I would have liked in implementing this relatively, as the Member said, straightforward change. I apologize to everyone for the delay, but we will get this done. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 339-14(6): Increase To Marriage Licence Fees

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These little changes in the act have taken three years and started with his predecessor -- I can't say that word, sorry -- my colleague, Mrs. Jane Groenewegen. Mr. Speaker, the other part of this change has to do with the increase in the fee to get a marriage licence issued. People pay \$15 and the person who issues it gets to keep only \$10. Through changes to regulations, it could go up to \$40. That is the other part of this action that the Minister is taking. Could the Minister advise me when that will be enforced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 339-14(6): Increase To Marriage Licence Fees

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intent is once and for all to have this agenda by the middle of October. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 339-14(6): Increase To Marriage Licence Fees

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am finding it more difficult to explain why a little change like this would take more than three years. Could I ask the Minister to provide me with a detailed briefing with what the problem is in getting this done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 339-14(6): Increase To Marriage Licence Fees

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that in my tenure as Minister, we acted on this very quickly. I recognize that it was a long process for this government, but I will commit to provide a chronology.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 340-14(6): Changes To The Business Incentive Policy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Premier and it's about the changes that are going to come into effect to the business incentive policy. I would like to ask him when Minister Antoine decided on and brought forward these proposed changes to Cabinet and Cabinet presumably approved that he go forward with these changes, if the Premier was aware that the Minister had previously given us the assurance of the exact opposite. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 340-14(6): Changes To The Business Incentive Policy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will be discussing this in Cabinet in the morning and reviewing the history of this issue. We will respond at that time, so we will take the question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The question was taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 341-14(6): Notification Of Driver's Licence And Registration Renewal

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Transportation. It revolves around notification that used to be sent out to NWT residents when their driver's licence or vehicle registration was coming up for renewal. I don't know how much money it costs to do that, but not doing it has caused a tremendous amount of

inconvenience for people. I also submit it also costs the government because they've probably had less revenue because of people driving around without valid registration on their vehicle. Someone is driving, they don't realize the registration has expired and it comes to their attention a year afterwards. They don't have to pay the registration retroactively. They just pay it from that day forward. If they don't necessarily notice it on their own, they don't necessarily get pulled over and fined for it or anything. So I would like to know if the Minister would reinstate the notification policy for drivers' licences and vehicle registry renewal. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 341-14(6): Notification Of Driver's Licence And Registration Renewal

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, when we went to a system where drivers' licences are issued every five years, then we stopped giving notice to people on the driver's licence. Because of the change that seemed to happen over five years, it seemed to be an impossible task to track people down. On the vehicle registration, there's a sticker that they have that is very noticeable and they will certainly get a warning if they don't put the sticker on. They will probably get a fine if they haven't renewed it and are still driving their vehicle around. The onus is on the driver and on the vehicle owner to ensure that the registration and licences are all up to date. I will discuss with my department the possibility of doing more advertising and public awareness on this, but going back to a system of mailing out notification, I don't think they can go there. It didn't work before. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen,

Supplementary To Question 341-14(6): Notification Of Driver's Licence And Registration Renewal

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To suggest that we shouldn't do it now because your licence is due every five years isn't a very good argument because that's all the more reason why you should do it. Most people go and get their driver's licence and then put a note on their fridge to remind themselves that on April 1, 2008, their driver's licence is going to expire. How many people get their driver's licence out all the time and actually look at it? Are you aware of how much revenue this government is losing right now as a result of people driving around with plates not currently registered on their vehicles? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 341-14(6): Notification Of Driver's Licence And Registration Renewal

HON. JOE HANDLEY: No, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of how much revenue we are losing because people have not renewed their registration but still drive their vehicle. I doubt that it's a lot of revenue. It's one we can't even estimate because if they don't have a registration, we have a hard time even knowing who they are.

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

Supplementary To Question 341-14(6): Notification Of Driver's Licence And Registration Renewal

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister could actually find this out easily by talking to the people who run the offices where people go and get their registration renewed. When you go in there, it's all computerized and they can tell. If you come in in November and your licence actually expired in April, you are going to start from November on and people will know about that gap. It's a highly automated system and it would be easy to find out. I would like to know if he would undertake to find that out.

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

Further Return To Question 341-14(6): Notification Of Driver's Licence And Registration Renewal

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I can get the information of how many people register their vehicles. I can tell you how many people registered late and how late they were in registering it, but I don't know how many have never come back and registered their vehicles but are still driving them. We have no way of knowing until they come into the office. It's not such easy math to work out, but I can certainly undertake to get the information for the Member on how many have registered late and what that lost revenue was for those individuals. That's all. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 341-14(6): Notification Of Driver's Licence And Registration Renewal

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I would contend that the good and law-abiding citizens of the Northwest Territories who do let their licence expire and do let their registration expire, it's completely inadvertent, it's not intentional. I am sure they are not trying to deprive the government of revenues. It's a customer service and it's a very small thing to do and it is not costly. I don't know if the Minister knows how much it would cost, but I am sure it's not costly. It's very costly to the person who doesn't renew their driver's licence who has to go back then after a year or so and have to rewrite all their tests and get their licence. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister please find out for us how much it would cost to reinstate the renewal notification program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 341-14(6): Notification Of Driver's Licence And Registration Renewal

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will get an estimate of what it would cost, but again I want to say most people are registering their vehicles, renewing their drivers' licences. There's a few, but not very many out there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Order, please. Order. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 342-14(6): Hay River Health Authority Bargaining Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, this House is well aware that the workers at the hospital in Hay River have been involved for quite some time now in trying to reach an agreement on their contract. In trying to reach an agreement, Mr. Speaker, a conciliator, Mr. Tom Hodges, was brought in and Mr. Hodges put in a report. His final report was made on September 8, 2003. The final point of the report is that all parties accept the recommendations by September 30, 2003. Is the Minister aware of this report, has he seen it and is he aware of the deadline? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 342-14(6): Hay River Health Authority Bargaining Process

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, I am aware of the report and I am aware of the deadline. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 342-14(6): Hay River Health Authority Bargaining Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, if I am not mistaken, is September 30th. Does the Minister agree with the recommendations that are in the report? Is the department prepared to sign off on those recommendations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 342-14(6): Hay River Health Authority Bargaining Process

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of the arrangement was to increase part of the bargaining mandate of the negotiating team, which was done. We've been working with the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and the negotiators who have come to a resolution and we think we have achieved that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 342-14(6): Hay River Health Authority Bargaining Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the Minister answered my question. Does the Minister agree with the recommendations in the report and is he prepared to sign off by September 30th, which is today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 342-14(6): Hay River Health Authority Bargaining Process

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a negotiation process underway. One of the pieces was a report by the conciliator. There has been some discussion. We have taken a course of action to increase the mandate building on the conciliator's report and the negotiating team has the authority, I believe, to take the steps that they deem necessary to conclude negotiations. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 342-14(6): Hay River Health Authority Bargaining Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister inform this House if the department has agreed to the financial obligations to bring these kind of negotiations to a close based on the recommendation of the conciliator? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 342-14(6): Hay River Health Authority Bargaining Process

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we, the Health and Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories, have agreed to an expanded mandate that will allow an agreement to be reached between the Health and Social Services Authority in Hay River and its employees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 343-14(6): Condition Of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Joe Handley, Minister of Transportation. Mr. Speaker, in questioning the Minister in the spring session, he told us that Highway No. 3 is in excellent condition, but if you read the newspaper in the Hub, Highway No. 3 was nominated as one of the worst highways in Canada. How can a road become one of the worst highways from excellent shape in a matter of a few months? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 343-14(6): Condition Of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, it was listed as possibly the worst highway that connects our capital cities and as part of our national highway system. I don't question that at all. It is in terrible shape for a national highway. We have been working

hard with the federal government to try to find the resources to be able to make improvements on it. But the highway changes, as Mr. Lafferty knows, he drives it almost everyday, it changes from day to day. One day it's good and then we'll have a heavy rain storm and heavy traffic and it will be terrible the next day. So it does change quickly from being a pretty good highway for its age and general condition, to being a highway that's in terrible and rough shape. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 343-14(6): Condition Of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There must be lots of rain because the road has never been in good shape all summer. Because of this news report, has the department taken any new steps in maintaining that road? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 343-14(6): Condition Of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the report came out in the last day or so, so the department has not taken any unusual steps of bringing in any more equipment or rebuilding it or putting a new surface on sections or anything like that that would be necessary to change its condition. We certainly hear when reports like this are made and we will take them into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 343-14(6): Condition Of Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is right, I drive the road almost everyday and I have yet to see equipment working on that road consecutively, more than three days at a time. This summer, they did only four circuits and that's in five months. Can the Minister get his department to do more frequent maintenance, then we don't have to deal with the safety or news reports to consider this one of the worst highways? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 343-14(6): Condition Of Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly I will be talking with my department about the report and also the issues that are raised here today. We will do the work on the highway, the maintenance on the highway as conditions warrant. If it means we have to bring in more equipment, we will do that. If it means having to go to private contract, we'll do it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS**Return To Written Question 7-14(6): Support For Somba K'e Facility**

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a return to written question asked by the Member for Yellowknife South to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation concerning support for Somba K'e facility located on Detah Road.

Specifically, the Member wanted a detailed 12-month accounting of all public funds provided to support the operations of the Somba K'e facility.

Mr. Speaker, from June 2002 through October 2002, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation spent \$5,000 per month on mortgage payments for the Somba K'e facility. From November 2002 to January 2003, the corporation paid \$10,000 per month for mortgage payments. A further \$6,184 was expended in February 2003 for repairs related to a freeze-up. Repairs to mechanical systems accounted for expenses of \$19,484 in May 2003. In total, since June 2002, the corporation has spent \$120,688 on the facility.

The total mortgage payments per month amounts to \$17,759. The corporation receives a subsidy for this facility from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation of \$7,759 per month. From June 2002 to October 2002, the Somba K'e Healing Lodge paid \$5,000 per month in lease payments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Return To Written Question 8-14(6): Business Incentive Policy

Return to Written Question 8-14(6) asked by the Member for Mackenzie Delta and responded to by the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development on the business incentive policy.

As of August 31, 2003, there were 1,435 businesses registered under the current business incentive policy, BIP. Of these 1,435 registered businesses, 94.5 percent were owned by residents of the Northwest Territories. The remaining 5.4 percent were non-resident businesses that have operated in the North for longer than 10 years, as allowed for in the business incentive policy.

The BIP program budget is \$298,000.

The current registration for BIP is based on ownership and does not distinguish between wholly-owned subsidiaries and branch operations. The Government of the Northwest Territories is establishing a contract registry that will provide information on all tenders and proposals valued over \$5,000, the evaluation and award results including the total BIP bid adjustments and any applicable premiums.

There were 7,698 employees of registered BIP companies.

Return To Question 9-14(6): Child Protection Services

Return to Written Question 9-14(6) asked by the Member for Mackenzie Delta to the Minister of Health and Social Services concerning child protection services.

1. Data from the child and family information system shows that, on May 31, 2003, 43 children in the Mackenzie Delta region were receiving child protection services.

2. The status of the children in care was as follows:

• Voluntary support agreement	3
• Plan of care	16
• Interim custody order	9
• Temporary custody	2
• Permanent custody	10
• Apprehension	3

The placement of children in care was as follows:

• Parental home	9
• Extended family foster home	9
• Regular foster home	21
• Northern treatment	1
• Southern treatment	3

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 9, replies to Opening Address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**Committee Report 16-14(6): Report On The Review Of Bill 27, An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act**

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you particularly for speaking slowly. Mr. Speaker, I have the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight report on the review of Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is pleased to report its review of Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, herein after referred to as the act, was passed by the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories in 1994. It came into force on December 31, 1996. The stated intention of the act is to promote, uphold and protect access to the information that government creates and receives and to protect the privacy rights of individuals.

The act provides for the appointment of an Information and Privacy Commissioner as an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly. The current Commissioner, Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengts, was appointed on July 1, 2000, for a five-year term. Under Section 68 of the act, the Commissioner is required to submit an annual report to the Assembly. This committee has taken on as part of its mandate the responsibility to advocate for the rights of the public to an open and transparent government and has made it a practice since 1999-2000 to undertake reviews of the Commissioner's report and to in turn report back to the Assembly with its recommendations and findings.

Since it first began reviewing the Commissioner's reports, the committee has made several recommendations for changes to the act to address problems pointed out by the Commissioner. Members were pleased to see that Bill 27 addresses some of these recommendations, the details of which are explained below.

Public Review Of Bill 27

Mr. Speaker, the committee held an initial public hearing with the Minister on August 29, 2003. A further hearing took place on September 19, 2003, at which the committee heard from the Commissioner and the Minister and conducted its clause-by-clause review. During its clause-by-clause review, two motions to amend the bill were carried by the committee and concurred with by the Minister. The substance of these motions is discussed below. Following clause-by-clause review of the bill, a motion was carried to report Bill 27, as amended, back to the Assembly as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Power To Subpoena Witnesses

Mr. Speaker, Bill 27 provides the Commissioner the power to summon witnesses and require them to give evidence. This power only applies to reviews of access to information complaints. These provisions respond to recommendations made by both the Commissioner and the committee and both were pleased to see them included in this bill.

Power To Investigate And Make Recommendations On Privacy Complaints

Mr. Speaker, Bill 27 also provide the Commissioner with the power to review complaints that a public body has collected, used or disclosed personal information in violation of the privacy provisions under the act. These provisions were also in response to the recommendations and were welcomed by both the Commissioner and the committee.

Two amendments were made to these provisions during the clause-by-clause review of the bill. The first deleted a proposed section which dealt with evidence given by witnesses as the Commissioner will not have the power to summon witnesses in conducting a review of a privacy complaint. The second amendment clarifies the process to be followed by a public body after receiving the Commissioner's report on a privacy complaint. Within 90 days, the public body must decide whether or not to follow the Commissioner's recommendations and must give written notice of this decision to the Commissioner and the person who requested the review.

Deemed Refusal

During its public hearings, the committee had lengthy discussions with the Information and Privacy Commissioner on the deemed refusal provisions contained in Bill 27. The committee has also discussed the same issues with the Commissioner during its reviews of her last two reports. Because the committee adopted a position that was not favoured by the Commissioner, Members felt it was important to explain their reasons for doing so in detail.

The change in the legislation is designed to address a gap in procedure that currently exists with respect to access requests and a review of an access request by the Commissioner. Under the present legislation, a person can request information from the head of the public body. If the applicant disagrees with the decision of the public body, respecting access to the information, he or she may request the ATIPP Commissioner to review the decision. When the Commissioner has conducted a review, a report which may contain recommendations, is prepared by the Commissioner and provided to the applicant and the head of the public body. The head of the public body would then be required to make a decision as to whether the

recommendations of the ATIPP Commissioner would be followed or not, and to advise the ATIPP Commissioner and the applicant of this decision.

The difficulty is that the legislation did not provide for any further remedies. If the head of the public body does not respond to the recommendations of the Commissioner, there appeared to be no further action which could be taken by an applicant. It therefore became necessary to address this gap in the legislation so that recommendations could not be ignored without consequences. All agreed that this situation had to be fixed. However, there was disagreement as to how to best remedy the legislation.

The Commissioner thought that the best approach was to have a deemed acceptance provision in the act. This would mean that if the head of the public body did not respond within the stipulated time to recommendations made by the Commissioner regarding the request for access to information, the head of the public body would be taken to have accepted those recommendations and act accordingly. She felt that this would be the clearest and simplest solution to the issue. She advised the committee that recommendations contained in her report are often detailed and there may be many recommendations contained in the report. She was of the view that if a deemed refusal provision was put in, namely a statement that if the head of the public body does not respond within the time required, he or she is deemed to have rejected the recommendations of the ATIPP Commissioner, it would cause confusion.

The committee had previously recommended in reports previously made to the Assembly that a deemed refusal provision was the most appropriate way of solving the problem. It came to this conclusion because:

- This issue has been solved in this fashion by other provinces and their ATIPP legislation, whereas no other jurisdiction has adopted a deemed acceptance approach;
- There is equal opportunity for confusion, whether the recommendations are deemed to be accepted or deemed to be refused;
- The general role of the ATIPP Commissioner is akin to ombudsman. The power of the Commissioner is that of making recommendations. It is up to an applicant to take matters to court for an order if he or she is unhappy with the result. A deemed acceptance provision would have the effect of giving order making authority to the ATIPP Commissioner and this is not what the legislation as a whole intends;
- Deemed refusal is more consistent with a failure to respond or saying nothing then is deemed acceptance;
- The problem being addressed does not frequently occur. As in the vast majority of cases, department heads respond within the time set out in the legislation. During the public hearings with the Minister, justice staff advised that according to their records there has only been one time in the history of the act that a department has failed to respond within the allotted 30 days.

Mr. Speaker, the committee's decision to support the deemed refusal provision was not made lightly. Members wish to reassure the Commissioner that full consideration was given to

her views and concerns. The committee strongly believes that this provision provides the best protection for NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, the committee is disappointed that the government has not pursued amendments to include municipal governments under access to information and protection of privacy laws. In its reports on the Commissioner's 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 reports, the committee fully supported the Commissioner's recommendations that either separate legislation be developed to deal with the municipalities or municipalities be included under the existing act.

The committee also developed a concern that the federal government now has the authority under the Personal Information and Delinquent Documents Act to regulate how the private sector in the NWT collects, stores and uses personal information. The committee recommended in its review of the Commissioner's 2000-2001 report that the government establish legislation in order to avoid federal jurisdiction in this area and to ensure that local privacy issues are regulated by made in the NWT laws. Members are disappointed that the government has not pursued development of legislation in this area.

Acknowledgements

Mr. Speaker, the committee would like to thank the Minister and his staff for presenting the bill. The committee would also like to thank the Commissioner for her submission on Bill 27, and also for her advice and cooperation over the past three years, which has resulted in many of the amendments contained in the bill. The committee is confident that these amendments will ensure better access to information and privacy protection for NWT residents.

Motion To Receive And Adopt Committee Report 16-14(6), Carried

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight on the review of Bill 27, an Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Committee Report 16-14(6) be received by the Legislative Assembly and adopted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: The report has been received by the House. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 22: Waste Reduction And Recovery Act

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on

Governance and Economic Development has reviewed Bill 22, Waste Reduction and Recovery Act, and wishes to report that Bill 22 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Bill 21: Protection Against Family Violence Act

Bill 24: Midwifery Profession Act

Bill 26: Youth Justice Act

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 21, Protection Against Family Violence Act; Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act; and, Bill 26, the Youth Justice Act, and wishes to report that bills 21, 24 and 26 are now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Bill 19: Write-off Of Debts Act, 2003-2004

Bill 20: Forgiveness Of Debts Act, 2003-2004

Bill 23: An Act To Amend The Safety Act

Bill 27: An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has reviewed Bill 19, Write-off of Debts Act, 2003-2004; Bill 20, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2003-2004; Bill 23, an Act to Amend the Safety Act; and Bill 27, an Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. I wish to report that Bill 19 is not ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole and bills 20, 23 and 27 are ready for consideration of Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to waive Rule 70(5) to have bills 19, 20 and 23 ordered into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 70(5) and have bills 19, 20 and 23 ordered into Committee of the Whole for today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. The respective bills are ordered into Committee of the Whole for today. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 13: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 83-14(6): Public Accounts Of The Northwest Territories, 2002-2003

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two documents for tabling. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document Entitled Government of the Northwest

Territories Public Accounts, 2002-2003. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 84-14(6): Response To Committee Report 8-14(6): The Accountability And Oversight Committee's Report On The Review Of The Auditor General's Report To The Legislative Assembly For 2000-2001

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 8-14(6), Accountability and Oversight's Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General of the NWT Legislative Assembly, 2000-01. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Tabled Document 85-14(6): GNWT Response To The Final Report Of The Special Committee On The Review Of The Official Languages Act

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Response to the Final Report of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Tabled Document 86-14(6): GNWT Response to Committee Report 6-14(6): The Accountability And Oversight Committee's Report On The Review Of The Access And Privacy Commissioner's 2001-2002 Annual Report

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 6-14(6), Accountability and Oversight's Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's Annual Report, 2001-02. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Tabled Document 87-14(6): GNWT News Release Titled "Federal/NWT Ministers Of Justice Meet In YK," September 26, 2003

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a news release dated September 26th entitled Federal/NWT Ministers of Justice Meet in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Colleagues, before we proceed to the next item, I would just like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of a member of the Japanese media who is doing a pictorial essay on our very unique and beautiful Legislative Assembly. Konichiwa. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

Tabled Document 88-14(6): Response To Petition 5-14(6): Specialist Physicians At Stanton Territorial Hospital

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table a response to Petition 5-14(6) presented by the Member for Range Lake and responded to by the Minister of Health and Social Services concerning specialist physicians at Stanton Territorial Hospital.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 15-14(6): To Rescind The Revised Business Incentive Policy

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 2, 2003, I will move the following motion:

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Executive Council rescind the revised business incentive policy;

AND FURTHER that the Executive Council not introduce any further changes to the existing policy until it has provided at least one year of data substantiating the need for and intended effect for those changes;

AND FURTHERMORE recommends that the Executive Council of the 15th Legislative Assembly that they not consider any changes to the policy until this data is collected and reviewed in a substantive manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 31: An Act To Amend The Official Languages Act

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I given notice that on Thursday, October 2, 2003, I will move that Bill 31, an Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, No. 3, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have three notices of motion for first reading of bills.

Bill 32: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2003-2004

Mr. Speaker, I given notice that on Thursday, October 2, 2003, I will move that Bill 32, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No.2, 2003-2004, be read for the first time.

Bill 33: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2002-2003

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 2, 2003, I will move that Bill 33, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2002-2003, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 34: Tlicho Land Claims And Self-Government Agreement Act

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 2, 2003, I will move that Bill 34, Tlicho Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: committee reports 14-14(6), and 15-14(6), bills 19, 20 and 23, with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I call the Committee of the Whole to order. We have a number of issues to consider in Committee of the Whole. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: I would like to recommend that the committee consider Committee Report 14-14(6) followed by Committee Report 15-14(6).

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The chair will call a short break and come back and consider Committee Report 14-14(6) followed by Committee Report 15-14(6). Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

---SHORT RECESS

Committee Report 14-14(6): Report On Potential Committee Structures And Role For The 15th Assembly

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I call the Committee of the Whole back to order. As agreed, we'll deal with Committee Report 14-14(6), Report on Potential Committee Structures and Role for the 15th Assembly. At this time I would recognize general comments. Mr. Bell.

General Comments

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman, Committee Report 14-14(6), first, we've already gone through the detail on this. Maybe just quickly I'll summarize the background and process we used at arriving at this report. We do have some committee motions that committee would like to make, but we'd like to hear if there are any comments from anybody. Just quickly, you'll remember on October 25, 2002 the Assembly instructed the rules committee to undertake a review of the operation and accountabilities of the committee structure and system. The standing committee was instructed to provide a report on those matters to the Assembly no later than June 30th and we did that.

Mr. Chairman, we met initially to consider background information on the evolution of committee structures in the

Northwest Territories and then to formulate options on how to best proceed with the review of the structures and systems.

We decided there would be three basic underpinnings to this review: One, that consensus government would continue with the 15th Assembly; two, that the structure, roles and responsibilities of the Assembly and its committees would not change in the face of self-government agreements; and the review of the operations and accountabilities of the committee structure and systems is a separate process from the transitional planning exercise.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, staff was instructed to research and prepare briefing notes on potential committee structures that would lend themselves to the consensus form of government. Staff were also asked to consult with key managers on their thoughts on the current committee structure in relation to the legislative and budgetary processes and to receive input on the potential for changes they see as being beneficial to both committees and the bureaucracy.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, the committee provided direction to staff in the preparation of a survey designed to elicit Members' opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the current committee structure, as well as their thoughts on the potential changes to committee structures and systems. Since we've been through this before, Mr. Chairman, I won't bother to go back over and reiterate the findings and results of the survey in that level of detail, but I am prepared to move several motions on behalf of the committee. I can do that now if there are no general comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Any further general comments? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a short general comment. I've had a chance to look at recommendations and the contents of the report. I understand that the committee has worked hard and diligently to report on the work of the committee. I think it's important to note that when this Assembly came into office four years ago, Members got together and discussed and talked and decided on the committee structure. The major committees that we have been working with, accountability and oversight committee – that includes all the other Members – social programs and governance and economic development committees; two key committees that review the budgets and bills of each department. That was a creation based on a decision made by the new Members when we came here.

So I have no reason to think that sort of thing would not happen in the next Assembly and I just want to make it known that nothing suggested to me here is binding on the next Assembly. I know that when there are new Members mixed with old Members and starting out fresh in a new Assembly, I'm sure that the 15th Assembly Members would want to create the organizational system and committee system the way they see fit and the way they think would best meet their needs.

So while I agree with the basic findings of the committee report, as well as the recommendations, I just want to make sure that there's no suggestion that would preclude any new ideas and new suggestions from the Members of the new Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Any further general comments? There being no further general comments, Mr. Bell had some motions to make. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do have several motions here. Mr. Chairman, the first one:

Committee Motion 126-14(6) To Ensure Balanced Committee Workload, Carried

I move that this committee recommends that the 15th Assembly examine the assignment of departments between standing committees to ensure balanced committee workload. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Bell.

Committee Motion 127-14(6) To Enhance Committee Orientation And Training, Carried

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the committee manual be updated and training sessions for the incoming committee chairpersons and Members on the respective roles and responsibilities be enhanced. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Bell.

Committee Motion 128-14(6) To Examine The Budget Review Process, Carried

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the 15th Assembly examine the advantages and disadvantages of streamlining the budgetary review process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Bell.

Committee Motion 129-14(6) To Engage Committees In Early Policy Development, Carried

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the 15th Assembly examine options for engaging standing committees in the early stages of policy development. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Bell.

Committee Motion 130-14(6) To Establish A Convention Of Representatives On Standing Committees, Carried

MR. BELL: Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Striking Committee establish a convention that ensures equitable regional and urban representation on the standing committees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Does the committee agree that that concludes the review of Committee Report 14-14(6)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): That concludes Committee Report 14-14(6), Report on Potential Committee Structures and Role for the 15th Assembly. As agreed we'll go on to Committee Report 15-14(6), Report on the Review of Rule 70 of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly. I recognize general comments. Mr. Bell.

Committee Report 15-14(6): Report on the Review of Rule 70 of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly

General Comments

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman, just again to refresh the Members' memories on this report, it was a report on the review of Rule 70 of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly. I'll provide just a quick background. It's been some months since we've discussed this, but in October of '01, the Speaker directed our committee to conduct a review of Rule 70 because it was felt there may be some procedural difficulties with the provisions respecting the 120 day rule for standing committee review of bills. The rule states that the committee has 120 days to review a bill from the day it's referred to a committee until it must be reported back to the House, and it implies that if a committee has not reported a bill within the timeframe, then the

sponsor of the bill is permitted to proceed with the bill in the Assembly. Complicating this is the occurrence that standing committees often take longer than 120 days to do their review, due to the size, scope and impact of the bill or the length between sittings of the Assembly. In all cases, implicit concurrence of the bill's sponsor is almost always that the government not to proceed with the bill until the essence of the committee report has been obtained. On two occasions this concurrence has been obtained in writing, while all others have been implied to mutual agreement.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the potential difficulty would arise under the present wording of Rule 70 if the bill's sponsor insisted on proceeding in the House with a bill that had not been reported from committee and the 120-day period had lapsed. The problem would stem from the lack of a mechanism to return to the bill to the House by way of placing it in some fashion on the Order Paper, most likely Committee of the Whole.

During the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures' consideration of the issue on December 9, 2002, and April 17, 2003, we discussed a number of options. Having the bill automatically appear on the Order Paper in Committee of the Whole 120 days after the second reading was deemed to be undesirable because it didn't take into account those numerous instances where the standing committee's review may be lengthy due to the complexity or nature of the bill. In addition there are occasions that the length of time between sittings of the House from spring to fall, for example, such that reporting with 120 days is not possible. The remedy would also preclude the continuation of a long-standing parliamentary convention of allowing bills to die in committee.

Mr. Chairman, the opinion of returning the bill to the House by order of the Speaker was not preferred because of the impartiality of the Speaker's position and the fact that the Speaker would theoretically, and as a rule of procedure, possess no direct knowledge of committee's activities or the wishes of the bill's sponsor in order to be able to ascertain whether a particular bill should be returned. So in considering the matter, Mr. Chairman, the rules committee decided that a mechanism was required to advise the House and the Speaker that it had not been reported within the required timeframe and that the bill's sponsor wished to proceed with the bill in the House. It was decided that this mechanism be incorporated into Rule 70 and be termed notice of intent. This notice of intent to proceed with a bill not reported would be given to the House by the bill's sponsor under the item Minister's statements on the Order Paper if it is a government bill, or under Members' statements if it is a private Member's public bill. The mechanism would then provide that on the third sitting day following receipt of a notice of intent to the House, the Speaker would place the bill on the Order Paper in Committee of the Whole.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, committee also feels it's necessary to provide a more formal avenue under the rules for a standing or special committee to secure an extension of the 120-day rule if it wishes to do so. The rules committee proposes that this be facilitated by an amendment to Rule 70 which would state that an extension may be requested by a motion in the Legislative Assembly under the item reports of committees on the review of bills. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is of the opinion that this course of action takes into account the interests of all parties and provides an effective and efficient remedy to the issues hereby recommended to the House.

Mr. Chairman, we don't have a formal recommendation out of this, but I am prepared to have our staff develop a motion and bring that forward formally for us to deal with.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Any general comments? Does the committee agree that the review of Committee Report 15-14(6) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. This concludes the review of Committee Report 15-14(6). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion on the floor is not debatable. To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

The chair will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. May I have the report of Committee of the Whole? The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 14-14(6) and Committee Report 15-14(6) and would like to report progress with five motions being adopted, and that Committee Report 14-14(6) and Committee Report 15-14(6) are concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do I have a seconder to the motion? The honourable Member for Nunakput seconds the motion. We have a motion on the floor and the motion is in order. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, may we have the Orders of the Day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight immediately at adjournment today, at 9:00 a.m. again of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight tomorrow, at 10:30 a.m. of Caucus, and at 12:00 noon of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development.

Orders of the Day for Wednesday, October 1st :

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements

4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 29, NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation Act
 - Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, No. 2
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 19, Write-off of Debts Act, 2003-2004
 - Bill 20, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2003-2004
 - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Safety 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 Wednesday, October 1, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:15 p.m.