



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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(Kam Lake)

Hon. Stephen Kakfwi

(Sahtu)

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(Hay River North)

Mr. Charles Dent

(Frame Lake)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. David Krutko

(Mackenzie Delta)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, October 1, 2003****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

Speaker's Ruling

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Hello, my colleagues. Before we go to the Orders of the Day, I wish to provide my ruling on the Point of Order raised on September 30, 2003, by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Before addressing the specific Point of Order, I would like to make some comments to refresh Members on the procedural purpose of a Point of Order. A Point of Order is a question raised by a Member who believes that the rules or customary procedures of the House have been incorrectly applied or overlooked during the proceedings. Members may rise on Points of Order to bring to the attention of the chair any breach of the relevance or repetition of the rules, or the utterance of unparliamentary remarks. Members are able to do so at virtually any time in the proceedings, provided that the Point of Order is raised and concisely presented as soon as the irregularity occurs or as soon as practicable thereafter. As a Point of Order concerns the interpretation of the rules, it is the responsibility of the Speaker, or chair in Committee of the Whole, to determine its merits and to resolve the issue.

To the specific Point of Order raised by Mr. Dent. I find that the Point of Order was raised at the earliest opportunity, based on the facts as outlined by the Member for Frame Lake. The honourable Member contends that the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Mr. Antoine, may have misled the House as his comments during question period on February 21, 2003, were not consistent with the Minister's subsequent actions.

Any allegation that a Minister may have misled the House is a matter that the chair and all Members must take very seriously. In this light, as I do with all Points of Order, I took some time to review the facts available to me. Some of the facts raised by Mr. Dent unfortunately touched on matters that occurred outside the House and cannot be confirmed, as to whether or not they are an accurate account of events. The facts available to me were the comments made by the Minister on February 21, 2003, as outlined by Mr. Dent in his Point of Order. The comments are contained on pages 235 and 236 of Hansard. I am drawn to the comments of the Minister in responding to an oral question by the Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen, and I quote from page 236 of edited Hansard, "so at this point in time, the decision is for us to not proceed, but to have a mechanism in place developed by RWED."

The chair, and all honourable Members, must assume that the statements made in the House were an accurate reflection of the Minister's and the government's intent at that particular point in time, as there is no evidence to suggest otherwise. Circumstances obviously change over time and can influence future decisions. This cannot be viewed as evidence to show

that the Minister intentionally and willfully misled the House. I, therefore, find that the Member for Frame Lake does not have a Point of Order.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 79-14(6): Premier's Award For Excellence**

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to announce this year's recipients of the Premier's Award for Excellence. The Award for Excellence was recently created to recognize our employees who have distinguished themselves through work-related achievements and contributions. Today I honour the following employees and teams for their accomplishments:

- Dr. Anne Gunn, a biologist with the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development who has made a significant contribution to our understanding of caribou ecology;
- Keith Hickling, manager of fish and wildlife with the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, who has undertaken many initiatives to help the youth of the Northwest Territories through programs such as the Youth at Risk Trapper Training Program;
- Karen Hicks, a program advisor with the Financial Management Board Secretariat, who had the lead in developing and implementing the government's performance measurement system;
- John Nishi, a bison ecologist with the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, who has represented our government on all fronts regarding the control of bison disease;
- Raymond Tuccaro, traditional counsellor at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre for the Department of Justice, who has played an important role in assisting inmates, families and their community in the process of rehabilitation;
- Al Woods, who is the interim chief executive officer of the Stanton Territorial Health Authority, as well as the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority. Through a period of great transition, Mr. Woods has provided the necessary leadership to ensure that the region's health care system was maintained at an effective level.
- The equal pay team of the Financial Management Board Secretariat was instrumental in reaching a settlement of

the long outstanding pay equity complaint and was responsible for the smooth implementation of the settlement. The team members include Shaleen Woodward, Andy Bevan, Daniel Grant, Vishni Peeris, Jami Semenoff, Jeff Barichello, Tracey Rumig, Alexandra Robles and Colette Perry.

- The territorial biomedical engineering team from the Stanton Territorial Health Authority also introduced innovative processes to improve their liability and operations of biomedical equipment across the Northwest Territories, and this team has shown an extraordinary commitment to the development of a homegrown biomedical engineering workplace. The members of this team include Kevin Taylor, Christine Roemer, Phil Borer, Erwin Sumcad, Keith Deans and Doug Osmond.
- The Tlicho GNWT negotiating team is also recognized, having worked diligently towards the Tlicho agreement, now seen as an historic and unique agreement that was ratified in June and signed by the Prime Minister of Canada in August. The Tlicho negotiating team includes Paul Beauchamp, John T'Seleie, Steve Iveson, Mark Warren, Kevin Campbell, Lorraine Whiteman, Jim Cunningham, Fred Chambers, Joe La Ferla, Mike Kalnay.
- As well, today we recognize the Idaa Trail project team who were successful in developing an innovative program that invites people to learn about the Dogrib culture and heritage as they embark on a virtual journey through a traditional Dogrib travel route. The members of this team include Tom Andrews, Richard Valpy, Mark Heyck, Wendy Stephenson, Barbara Cameron, Lucy Lafferty, Gerriann Donahue, Kyle Kelly and Rosa Mantla.
- We also recognize the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Centre project team who was responsible for the construction of a new health centre in Inuvik which is the largest, most complex project carried out in the Inuvik region to date. Members of this team include Brent Rausch, Ted McLeod and Len MacDonald.

Mr. Speaker, all teams and employees who have been chosen to receive this award were nominated because they demonstrated excellence, innovation and dedication to their work. They have provided a valuable contribution and it is my great pleasure to honour them. Please help me congratulate them on their achievements. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Minister's Statement 80-14(6): Premier's Sessional Statement

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to address you, my colleagues in this Assembly and the people of the Northwest Territories today. It is time to reflect on the term of this government, on the challenges we faced, the opportunities that we created, and the successes we have to date.

We have taken some risks. We have made strategic investments. We certainly have moved the Northwest Territories' agenda forward. We have assumed responsibility

beyond our jurisdiction. But most importantly for me, we have achieved incredible success by working together.

This is not work, Mr. Speaker, that we could have done alone. It is time to take a few moments to take stock and pay tribute to our partners who have worked with us and helped achieve our collective goals.

The evolution of the Northwest Territories as a society is directly linked to the strength we get from unity and common purpose.

Today, the Northwest Territories is, without question, the most exciting jurisdiction in Canada. It has captured the attention of the national media. It is discussed in the boardrooms of major national and international corporations, and it has the economy that is envied by other jurisdictions.

This remarkable success did not happen overnight. Our history and the achievements of our elders, like Alexi Arrowmaker, Paul Baton and the late Agnes Semmler, demonstrate that when we are united by common goals we get things done.

Think back to the long struggles to recognize aboriginal land and self-government rights; to create two new territories; to be recognized at the national level; and to raise awareness of our fragile northern environment.

We succeeded on these issues when and because we were united. We are a better territory for our collective efforts.

During the past four years, unity and common purpose have expressed themselves in many ways. They represent the defining moments of our term.

Early in 2000, as newly-elected Members of this legislature, the first Assembly of the new Northwest Territories and the first Assembly of the new century, we gathered in Fort Providence. There, together, we produced a vision for our Assembly and our government, an agenda based on common purpose and collaboration.

At the same time as we were setting out our vision, aboriginal leaders met in Fort Liard and agreed they would have ownership in a Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline. Strong common purpose, the willingness of all partners to take a risk and the leadership of many individuals like Harry Deneron, Nellie Cournoyea and Fred Carmichael have made aboriginal equity participation a reality of northern development. As a government, we have worked with and supported aboriginal leaders in achieving this goal.

In May 2000, aboriginal, territorial and federal government leaders met as an Intergovernmental Forum, a place where territorial-wide issues could be discussed among equal partners and resolved.

As a result of the forum's work and much goodwill, aboriginal, federal and territorial governments renewed devolution negotiations based upon sharing of jurisdiction and revenue.

Under Minister Antoine's leadership, we have worked together with the Aboriginal Summit leadership to ensure that our constituents have a clear understanding of what devolution and resource revenue sharing means and how it can meet our overall objectives.

I commend the aboriginal governments and their leaders for having the courage to work with us to develop joint northern positions on such critical issues as sharing power and resources.

In this term, with a renewed commitment, numerous aboriginal land and self-government rights agreements were signed by the Inuvialuit, Dene and Metis, some involving working together to make difficult decisions on things such as boundaries.

The Tlicho agreement, signed last month, marked an historic milestone in the conclusion of a land and self-government agreement by a common commitment and shared purpose to work together. Grand Chief Joe Rabesca and all the Dogrib Nation are another example of how unity and common purpose produce results.

It is important to acknowledge and commend Metis in the Northwest Territories for their role in advancing the recognition of their rights. The recent decision by the Supreme Court of Canada has huge national significance for Metis of this country and of this territory.

At Hay River in June 2002, the Northwest Territories' social agenda was forged by frontline workers, NGOs and our employees who saw strength in a unified, collaborative approach to building our social fabric. It took the work of individuals like Arlene Hache, Margaret Thom and Evelyn Storr, and all participants of the Social Agenda Working Group, to press the critical importance of ensuring our residents are healthy and have the social support necessary to balance and cope with a booming economy.

On the government's part, Health and Social Services Minister Miltenberger has completed and started implementation of the health and social services action plan, with a renewed focus on community wellness.

NGOs and their volunteers also have a prominent role in building the social fabric of our North. James Ross has worked tirelessly every year for many years now to establish the Midway Lake Music Festival where Delta people get back to the land, enjoy country food, play old time music, and visit as a people with friends and relatives over the course of a long weekend in August. We also remember the late Vi Beck who had a long and distinguished career dedicated to the people of Yellowknife and the people of the Northwest Territories.

Our social fabric was improved dramatically with the passage of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Act. It is a progressive model for the rest of Canada, placing us in the forefront of recognizing and protecting human rights. Minister Allen, Ministers, MLAs, NGOs and all northern residents who championed tolerance and this legislation are to be commended.

Throughout this term, we have worked to make sure industry provides employment and training opportunities for northern residents. Through government programs like maximizing northern employment, we encouraged our young graduates to return home to a job. Minister Ootes was instrumental in the outstanding success of these programs.

Women have always had a strong and particularly important role in our ambitious agenda. I want to acknowledge the work of the only two women in this Assembly, Mrs. Groenewegen and Ms. Lee, for their vision and their contributions. We need

to encourage more women to take their positions and take prominent leadership roles at the territorial level.

This Legislative Assembly has also taken great strides to raise our collective awareness of key issues and concerns critical to bettering the lives of our residents. Through its special committees dealing with official languages, self-government implementation and rural communities, this Assembly has brought focus to the importance of maintaining our aboriginal languages; preparing for implementation of self-government agreements; and the need to balance critical needs of small communities in the Northwest Territories with investments in the capital and regional centres. Steve Nitah's efforts and commitment to the renewal of aboriginal languages is to be commended.

The standing committees on Accountability and Oversight, Governance and Economic Development and Social Programs, under the able chairmanship of Mr. Dent, Mr. Roland and Mr. Bell respectively, have contributed to our common commitment to an open and accountable government.

We have built upon our territorial identity elevating June 21st, National Aboriginal Day, to a statutory holiday, so all our people can participate in this special day of recognition of our aboriginal cultures and heritage.

We can also measure the achievements of unity at the community level.

The people of Fort Providence, and their MLA, Mr. McLeod, are going to build one of the most important pieces of territorial transportation infrastructure: the Deh Cho Bridge. An achievement of national significance, I believe, because it is completing the link between the Northwest Territories and the rest of Canada that has been facilitated by the support of our government and the energy of the Deh Cho Bridge Development Corporation.

Other critical infrastructure such as roads, winter bridges, municipal services, communications and housing have moved forward through partnerships in the efforts with the federal government and aboriginal businesses.

Under the leadership of Minister Steen and Minister Handley, our roads and bridges have been improved and our case has been made very effectively to the federal government that more infrastructure funding, based on needs, not just per capita, is required by our people.

We have also heard the Sahtu Women Warriors and we applaud their ingenuity, commitment and drive to realize the dream of a highway linking our more northern communities with southern highways.

Mr. Lafferty must also be given credit for his relentless pursuit of improvements on Highway No. 3 and road access for the smaller communities in his region.

Municipal governments have also been instrumental in making the decisions and implementing the programs and services which are so critical to our quality of life at the community level. We especially appreciate the support of our mayors on changing the approach of the federal government to funding municipal infrastructure.

Housing remains high on our agenda, primarily because of the work of Housing Minister Allen, under the watchful eye of Mr.

Braden, who pursued a housing agenda based not only on the needs of local residents, but on the needs of all Northerners who aspire to home ownership or affordable accommodation.

Key to all these achievements was the decision to invest, even though we started our term in difficult fiscal circumstances and we have been facing significant financial challenges ever since. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley, though, has never wavered from the fundamental commitment to invest in our people and our territory to ensure maximum returns and benefits in the long term.

We not only had to deal with our own internal agenda, we had to take into account ongoing diamond mine development and renewed interest in northern gas and a Mackenzie Valley pipeline.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Minister is anticipating that his time will run out and he's seeking unanimous consent of the House to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays, Mr. Premier, you may conclude your statement.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With limited capacity, facing some of the most powerful mining and oil and gas corporations in the world, together we staked out an agenda for ourselves for non-renewable resource development.

We were the first in Canada to recognize the magnitude and impact that Northwest Territories' diamonds would have on the world diamond trade and to push for a Canadian diamond policy and a secondary diamond industry in the Northwest Territories and Canada. We are also sharing our expertise now with other governments through initiatives such as the national diamond strategy.

We were clear that development in the North would not occur at the expense of the environment. We supported the implementation of the Kyoto Accord and support Mr. Krutko in bringing his message about the protection of the Porcupine Caribou to Washington and the U.S. government.

We were committed to ensuring that development of northern resources be determined by market forces and that Canadian gas in the Beaufort and Mackenzie Delta and in the Liard Valley is not stranded.

We have been relentless in our demand for northern long-term benefits flowing from our development and our resources.

We have collaborated with other northern governments and the private sector through the Northwest Territories Business Coalition on the need for investments in infrastructure and training to make sure that our residents in our territory manage and benefit from development.

The heavy load of all these files was primarily carried by Minister Antoine who worked closely with our business community and the representatives of industry, like Imperial Oil's K.C. Williams, who truly wants to see the Northwest Territories realize its economic, social and political agenda.

We should be proud that we have, along with our 42,000 people, unified together, agreed on a common purpose, and have together made such incredible results and progress.

At this time, I want to acknowledge the contributions made by my colleagues in Cabinet and all of you as Members of the legislature for the past four years.

While the role of seasoned politicians is critical to the momentum and stability of our governments, the energy and new ideas injected by new Members such as Mr. Bell, Mr. McLeod and Mr. Delorey are important and essential to the success and future of our territory.

I want to encourage all young people in the Northwest Territories, especially aboriginal youth and young women, to look to a career in politics whether it is at the territorial government level or with aboriginal governments.

Whatever direction they choose, we must keep focused on the need for our youth to be raised in strong families and communities. We must encourage them to remain in the North, to take advantage of the opportunities and quality of life that we all have to offer, and to get them to help us build a better future for our territory.

As our term draws to a conclusion, it is only fitting that I thank all our employees, the territorial administration, here at the Yellowknife level, in the regions and communities. All of you out there should be proud of your collective accomplishments during this term and your contribution to the amazing future of our territory and its people.

In particular, we have benefited from an outstanding group of deputy ministers who take seriously their responsibilities for implementing our agenda. As a key source of advice, some of which sometimes we don't want to hear, but which is necessary, they have made for an effective operation as a team with us for our government.

I also want to thank personally the contributions of my staff in my office, in the Cabinet office and in the Department of Executive. All of those who have helped me, you have helped me immensely on a daily basis with my responsibilities during the past four years.

I also want to acknowledge your role, Mr. Speaker, in overseeing the operations and the work of this House and this Assembly. I want to thank you on behalf of all Members. Mr. Speaker, I also acknowledge outgoing Clerk David Hamilton for his long service in support of this Assembly and all the other ones I have served on and even before my time.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear!

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Most importantly, now I want to thank my wife, Marie, and my children: Kyla, my son-in-law Amos, my daughter Daylyn, and my son Keenan who have made many, many sacrifices in supporting me through these last four years.

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, northern leaders, elders, friends, it has been an honour and privilege to serve as your Premier. In the weeks coming, I look forward to continuing. I will work hard right to the completion of our agenda and to the end of my term as a Premier and help prepare for the transition for the next legislature. So thank you very much. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Taxation Of First Nations People

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again I want to raise the issue of taxation on First Nations people. Mr. Speaker, treaties 8 and 11 state, "Her Majesty agrees to pay the salaries of such teachers to instruct the children of said Indians." Because of this inclusion in the treaties, Mr. Speaker, concern has been raised by my constituents in my riding on the matter of financial responsibility for Indian education. The Government of Canada's responsibility for First Nations' education is clear to my constituents, thus the concern of why are they being taxed for education when it is a treaty right.

When this government taxes First Nations people and their property, a portion of this tax is identified for education. Is such taxation a contravention of both treaties 8 and 11?

Mr. Speaker, taxation of First Nations people has and will continue to be a concern. The Government of Canada provides this government with transfer payments and powers upon which we are able to provide services within this jurisdiction. However, it is important that this government provide our constituents with a breakdown of what portions of funds are for First Nations; further, what amounts are allocated for various services such as education, health, housing, economic development, et cetera. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Finance during question period.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 2, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement On Essential Services In Remote Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker today I raise an important point of essential services being provided to our communities. This summer again we find ourselves in the Mackenzie Delta communities with emergency services being provided at our centres in which daily clinics have been cancelled. Mr. Speaker we talk about improving the lives and well-being of the residents of the Northwest Territories and improving the quality of life for the residents of the Northwest Territories, yet today we still cannot even deliver the basic essential services to our communities such as health care, the lack of mental health and alcohol and drug workers in our communities or the lack of police.

AN HON. MEMBER: Shame.

MR. KRUTKO: I, for one, stand here today knowing what the communities are going through. Here is the point. This is what has been posted in our communities: "To all community residents: While community residents in the Northwest Territories expect nurses shortages along with the rest of Canada, this means at this time that the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services has to restrict the services we normally

provide to our clients. Formally, our communities will be affected as follows: Emergency services only from July 30th to August 12th and from August 18th to September 16th. Daily clinics will not be scheduled and only urgent emergency cases will be seen at the Health Centre." Then it gives you a phone number to call at the Inuvik Regional Hospital.

For us to say we provide services to the people, we have seen the outcry because of a few doctor specialists. We make a major move to increase their wages to improve services. Have we seen an improvement in services to the people in our communities? No, we have not. If anything, I hate to admit it, it has gone down in regard to the quality of the services we are getting in our small communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have programs that are socially offered right across Canada in regards to ensuring that the well-being of Canadians is taken up to federal programs. I would like to know as the Government of the Northwest Territories, are we even meeting the national standards that are out there to providing the service to the rest of Canadians across the country?

I, Mr. Speaker, will have some questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services who I have been corresponding for months on end, if not years on end, on this issue. So I will be asking the Minister a question on this matter later. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Requirement For A Territorial Court Judge In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as most Members are aware, the Honourable Chief Judge Robert Halifax recently retired after 26 years of distinguished service to the residents of the North.

Mr. Speaker, most people from Hay River and Yellowknife and other parts of the country gathered to honour Robert Halifax this past Saturday, including the honourable Minister Roger Allen, Minister of Justice. A common theme for the evening, Mr. Speaker, was the relationships with the people in all of the communities south of the lake that Robert was able to establish as the resident judge based in Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, Judge Halifax served the communities of Hay River, Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson and Fort Liard. In addition he served Trout Lake, Nahanni Butte and Wrigley as needed.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that a resident judge based in Hay River is essential to establishing continuity both within the justice system and within the communities that are served. A resident judge is able to establish relationships with the people they serve. A resident judge will get to know the families involved and the people's backgrounds which, I believe, is key to an effective judicial process.

Mr. Speaker, the loss of a judicial presence in Hay River and indeed south of the lake, will lead to the public perception of being remote and removed from the justice system. We simply cannot allow this to happen.

Mr. Robert Halifax was instrumental in establishing the Justice of the Peace program in the North. The Justice of the Peace

program has proven to be a tremendous success over the years. There are a number of long-serving justices of the peace south of the lake. A resident judge for Hay River is essential to ensuring this valuable program continues.

Mr. Speaker, Hay River is a vibrant, growing community. We need to retain resources in our community and continue to develop our infrastructure. Conversely, Mr. Speaker, this government needs to empower communities and operate within our mandate of decentralization. I believe it is imperative that we as legislators create a sustainable economy with an economic base at the community level.

Mr. Speaker, the support services for a resident judge are firmly established in Hay River. We have all of the infrastructure in place to fully support a resident judge and our location within the South Slave region is ideal. Mr. Speaker, I feel it is incumbent on the Minister and the Department of Justice to ensure that the needs of the residents...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, your time for Members' statements has expired. What is your wish, Mr. Delorey?

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude 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 feel it is incumbent on the Minister and the Department of Justice to ensure that the needs of the residents of the nine communities south of the lake are taken into consideration when determining a replacement for resident Chief Judge Halifax.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Minister to do the right thing and to ensure that a resident judge is placed in Hay River. Mr. Speaker, I think the Premier may have missed one person in the Northwest Territories. I would like all my colleagues in the House to recognize the 26 years of service Chief Judge Halifax gave to the North. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Consequence Of Shortage Of Health Care Professionals

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are all aware of the shortage of health care workers in the Northwest Territories. Today I want to speak about one consequence in particular.

There is a crisis in Hay River and across the Northwest Territories and that is a desperate shortage of resources supporting dental surgery. The hospital in Hay River cannot retain sufficient nursing staff which means that in just two years dental operating room time has been cut back by 60 percent.

The last dental surgery in Hay River was performed on June 5th and, despite a waiting list of 141 patients that is growing by the day, the next surgery will not be until November 17th again reduced probably three-and-a-half days from nine-and-a-half days.

The H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital in Hay River serves 17 communities including Hay River. According to reports we received, there are children in these communities who cannot eat properly because the nerves in their teeth are exposed. Mr. Speaker, this is not inflammatory rhetoric. This is information supplied by someone who would know: one very fed-up dental clinic office manager.

There is no use travelling to Yellowknife or Inuvik for surgery because their waiting lists are almost as long. Even if they could get an appointment, it is too expensive for many people in the communities to make a special trip into Hay River because medical travel does not cover dental surgery. Heading down south is so expensive that it is completely out of the question.

The problem is only going to worsen this fall as community nurses who perform routine checkups on school children diagnose more dental conditions requiring dental surgery. This situation is already at a crises level.

Antibiotics and painkillers can only be used for so long before they themselves become a health risk, especially for children and seniors. This government must find a solution. Dental health is directly related to general health. If people cannot chew and subsequently properly digest their food, over a period of time their health and well-being will suffer. We know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

I commend the extraordinary efforts that our northern dental professionals and clinics go to in terms of creating awareness and contributing to preventative initiatives in dental care.

When situations deteriorate and surgery is required, this government has a duty and an obligation to ensure that the necessary services and treatments are available. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions and follow-up to this to the Minister of Health and Social Services today. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement On Decentralization And Diversification Of GNWT Economic Opportunities

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise about the benefits of being a large centre in the Northwest Territories, especially when you find yourself to be the capital of the Northwest Territories and government has situated itself there and does a lot of its business in the capital.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of things we've done in the government over the years has been trying to diversify the economy to help out communities and small businesses throughout the territory. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, it seems like we've started to go back the other way. The other way, Mr. Speaker, being, I can recall, for example, in Inuvik where the government services department – stores, as they called it – had everything from copper elbows to screws to nuts and bolts to anything you can fix that the government owns. We've gone away from that, Mr. Speaker. We've gone towards each community being able to supply and develop its own professional people that can repair things in their communities and not having to ship people out of headquarters or from regional centres.

Mr. Speaker, I used to work for the government and travelled to the smaller communities to fix their equipment, and that now has been devolved so communities themselves have their own

maintenance people and mechanics to be able to fix their own equipment. We've done that throughout the Northwest Territories, but it seems that we've once again started pulling it back into the centre to try to help out government expenditures, I guess is the main reason that would be used, is that we need to save our dollars.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think as a government we have to think, are we doing the right thing by pulling things back into the centre? I'll use a specific example, Mr. Speaker. Recently, a tender was let out by the Department of Public Works and Services for over 100 computers. Mr. Speaker, over 100 computers were put out in one tender. One tender, Mr. Speaker, given out to compete across the Northwest Territories. I can tell you, since the government has gone to this system of going to every department and doing one large tender for computer services, what happens is all the small companies throughout the Northwest Territories do not get that service or cannot bid and match the services of a larger centre that deals strictly in volume. It's a known benefit, Mr. Speaker, that the more volume you get for equipment and service the cheaper you can supply a service or supply materials.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for at least one Minister, maybe more, in this area of where government is heading in regard to small businesses across the Northwest Territories and having to remind this government that one of our goals that we had for Towards a Better Tomorrow would be to have a healthy and diversified economy providing employment opportunities for Northerners in all communities. So I'll have questions for the Public Works and Services Minister later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Northwest Territories Energy Strategy

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on July 31st I had the pleasure of attending the release of the territorial energy strategy in Wha Ti. This strategy was developed after consultation with energy providers, industry, business and the public. Last February, I travelled with the Energy Secretariat to the communities within my region. I know that one of the common concerns that people share was that the rates for power were too high. People have a hard time paying their power bills, Mr. Speaker.

Over the past year, I have continually asked the Premier and the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to bring the issue of a one-rate zone for power to the table for discussion so that everyone would be treated equally and fairly in the Northwest Territories. I have been continually told that once the energy strategy was completed it would be part of the strategy.

Mr. Speaker, when the Premier released the energy strategy in July, he stated that the strategy will serve as a road map for dealing with complex energy policy decisions. The strategy recognizes that the current ways in which energy is applied, priced and consumed in the communities and to industry is not financially and environmentally sustainable. It also points out that there is strong support in the smaller diesel electric communities for a single electric rate for all consumers in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the strategy recognizes that changes need to be made. Now that the strategy is completed, I think that it needs to be discussed by the Members of this Assembly and we, as well as members from the public, need the opportunity to explore the option of recommending a one-rate zone for power or, as I suggested in the press release last October, a two-tiered levelized rate that takes into account the sources of power, whether they are diesel or hydro, that could be put into place.

Mr. Speaker, with a little over three weeks left in the life of this Assembly, I ask Cabinet if they could direct the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to proceed with an application for changing the rate structure so that the public hearings on this matter can begin. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On International Day Of Older People

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 1990 the United Nations declared that October 1st would be observed as the International Day of Older People. So today is a worldwide celebration in honour of older people. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the ongoing contributions that are made in Yellowknife and in communities across the Northwest Territories by our seniors and elders. Unfortunately, some older people are marginalized, forgotten about or even abused. We need to ensure that all individuals, older persons included, enjoy independence, appropriate care, dignity and are able to achieve self-fulfillment.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Seniors' Society is a vital and thriving organization which supports older persons all across the Northwest Territories. I'd like to recognize their efforts, as well as the efforts of the Yellowknife Seniors' Society for the important and effective work they do for seniors and elders.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that today older people across the Northwest Territories are able to enjoy a special time with their families as we all reflect on how seniors and elders have made the Northwest Territories a better place to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Benefits Of Natural Resource Development

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a day for a few accolades and I would like to make one myself, but it's going to be balanced with a bit of criticism. I'd like to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's efforts in recent days in promoting devolution and development in the Northwest Territories. Visits to the economic power centres of Canada and the United States show that our message is getting across of the increasing stature of the Northwest Territories in the Canadian economy. The message, of course, is that diamonds and oil and gas are enormous economic advantages for us and outside investors and markets and are spurring a political and social development, as well.

However, Mr. Speaker, closer to home, recent statements in the media from Finance Minister Joe Handley have sent some confusing signals from our government. In the Wednesday, September 24th, edition of the Yellowknifer he's quoted as saying the diamond cutting and polishing jobs are relatively minor benefits from the mines, the jobs are boring and don't pay much and we want to get beyond cutting and polishing and into trading and jewelry making. I wonder why the Minister is saying this. The overall value of the industry and its people deserve to be shown in a much more positive light, Mr. Speaker. Not just in Yellowknife, but in Fort Simpson and Hay River, in Edzo and Fort Smith, but all communities that have been seeking to share in this benefit.

The North's cutting and polishing industry is a fledgling industry, seeking its way in the world markets and in doing so is contributing significantly to our economy; a fact that shouldn't escape the Finance Minister. Some indicators: on an average salary of \$45,000 plus bonus and a manufacturing multiplier of 2.8, the current industry is worth \$12 million from these workers to this city alone.

With the coming on stream of Tiffany's Laurelton diamond plant and production from existing plants, we have the capacity for up to 200 people to be employed. I think that's about double the number of people in the industry today, Mr. Speaker. This is not an insignificant contribution to our economy, especially when we see it against the payroll equivalent of the Con Mine, which is closing its doors later this month.

Mr. Speaker, with proper management and collaboration, this industry can be a catalyst for even more positive impact and diversity in our economy. 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. Mr. Braden, you may conclude your statement.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, colleagues, thank you. Our message should be consistent, clear and positive. Northern polished diamonds will bring us increased benefits from exposure in North America and the world. Even today, Mr. Speaker, Aurora College is attracting students for these courses from Australia and the United States. Isn't this evidence of a further opportunity that lies before us?

The industry is triggering new immigration to Canada and to the Northwest Territories. I look forward to seeing some of these people taking the oath of Canadian citizenship as a result. If the job is as boring as the Minister suggests, I say the chance for a new life in Canada is a pretty exciting prospect for these new workers and their families.

Mr. Speaker, we can expand our opportunities associated with diamond mining. We need to build from the ground up and continue to support these companies and their workers by giving us a better future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Need For Residential Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest yesterday as my colleague, Mr. Braden, had questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services and also his statement about alcohol and drug treatment residential facilities in the Northwest Territories. He put the question to the Minister and asked if it was an indication, that being our performance in the past four years, was an indication that residential alcohol and drug treatment facilities in the Northwest Territories are no longer a priority for our continuum of care. I think a lot of residents have that sense, Mr. Speaker. The Minister was very careful to point out that our strategy has been to focus attention at the community level, to make sure that we have adequate salaries for alcohol and drug workers so that we have more people willing to work in the field, and his opinion that it made sense to work more closely with the existing facilities that we have.

I think we all recognize that with our limited resources we're not going to see new dollars poured into capital. It isn't realistic to think that we're going to find bags of money or new treatment facilities, but that doesn't mean, Mr. Speaker, that we can't do something. We've got this serious need for residential treatment and I think it's at the same time that we're seeing falling custody numbers in all of our young offender facilities right across the territory.

The Department of Justice, I think, is indicating that they had a mere 21 young offenders in custody in the Northwest Territories as of September 15th. A lot of that is due in large part, Mr. Speaker, to the Youth Criminal Justice Act changes and our change in philosophy that came into being on April 1st of this year.

Mr. Speaker, I guess to sum it up, we really have made a decision not to incarcerate young people for many crimes if we don't have to. To try to deal with them in our communities, have community sentencing options, extrajudicial measures available for sentencing and this is a philosophy that certainly not everybody agrees with. I think maybe it's easier for us to stand here and say we have a more enlightened approach now and much more difficult if you've been a recent victim of a crime.

Mr. Speaker, this is a philosophy that will bear out over time as longitudinal studies show that incarcerating young offenders simply doesn't deal with the problem. Mr. Speaker, we've got these dwindling numbers in our young offender facilities and an increasing need for alcohol and drug treatment. I know the Department of Justice is looking at reprofiling some of our facilities. I think they've done so recently at the River Ridge Facility in Fort Smith. They've got a short term option they're looking at there, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to 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. Mr. Bell, you may conclude your statement.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Certainly I think this is what the Department of Justice has to do is to make sure that if we don't have the numbers then we look at other ways to make use of those facilities. I think the Arctic Tern facility in Inuvik, which cost a lot

of money and is relatively new, has less than 20 percent occupancy.

Mr. Speaker, what we have is Health and Social Services needs facilities, the Department of Justice has some facilities that are not full and I think this makes the case that we really need to have a social envelope Ministers committee. I'll be asking the Minister questions later in the day about the number of times that the social envelope Ministers have met in the past life of this government. Hopefully he'll be truthful with me because I don't think it has been very frequent.

Certainly the Department of Justice, I think, is doing what they can to reprofile these and assess the need the best they can, but it should be at a government level. The Housing Corporation should be talking to the Department of Justice, should be talking to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, which should be talking to the Department of Health and Social Services. I don't think that's going on.

We have the Housing Corporation stuck with the Somba K'e facility because we've got no clients out there, Mr. Speaker, just as a further example. I know that our government has spent \$120,000 through the Housing Corporation since June of 2002. No clients out there, Mr. Speaker. It speaks to a real interdepartmental disconnect in my mind and, I think, the minds of residents of the Northwest Territories. It needs to be straightened out and I'll have questions for the appropriate Ministers. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recognition Of The Metis Nation

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to talk about the Northwest Territories Métis Nation. As we all know, the Northwest Territories Métis Nation is one of the aboriginal groups in the Northwest Territories and in Canada that are negotiating with the territorial government and the federal government on contractual arrangements between the three bodies.

The Deh Cho reached its agreement that was signed in 2002 and is something of a worry for the Métis Nation. They feel the Government of the Northwest Territories is not living up to that agreement and are, in fact, renegeing on that agreement, Mr. Speaker. I promised them that I would help open up dialogue between the two organizations and this is one of the ways that I plan to do so, is to raise the issue in the House. If our governments are entering into agreements with other governments, this government has to live by those agreements; bottom line, Mr. Speaker.

On September 19th, Mr. Speaker, the Powley case out of Sault Sainte Marie in Ontario, a Supreme Court decision, recognizes Métis rights as aboriginal rights with the same weight as treaty rights. That is more reason why this government has got to play a more serious role in dealing with the Métis Nation.

I congratulate the Métis people for persevering and fighting for their rights all these years. Where at one point in time they were not getting any rights at all, now we have the Supreme Court decision that says they have rights just as much as treaty Indians. My position has always been that we're all one family and that Supreme Court's decision is consistent with my

philosophy here and, I believe, the philosophy of a lot of Northerners.

So I encourage the government to continually be vigilant in their dealings with all aboriginal governments, including the Northwest Territories Métis Nation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Health Benefits For Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I raised the question to the Minister of Health and Social Services about a constituency issue that has been outstanding for three years with no end in sight, it appears.

Mr. Speaker. I have another one today which the Minister has failed to act upon for almost the same length of time and it has to do with providing health insurance coverage for those suffering from Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome.

Mr. Speaker, I first wrote to the Minister in the fall of 2001 and made statements and asked questions in this House. At the time, the requests were over \$800 in reimbursement which was rejected. The Minister indicated that he was undertaking a review of extended health benefits, as well as the list of specified diseases and conditions that would qualify for coverage. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, he felt compelled to give me a little carrot to hang on to, because in this particular case we're talking about a child who needed to be diagnosed and treated by a special pair of glasses so she could read properly and learn.

Since then, Mr. Speaker, I have written a number of letters and e-mails to the Minister and he has assured me that he would do a thorough review of the benefits and let me know. The latest letter that I received from the Minister is dated March 28, 2003, and I quote, "All of the concerns that Members have expressed about the supplementary health benefits programs during the current and previous sessions of the 14th Legislative Assembly has been documented. These are being addressed during the review that is currently underway. I will be bringing forward a progress report on this review to the Standing Committee on Social Programs prior to the upcoming session in June."

Mr. Speaker, it's now September and I haven't heard a thing and I have checked with the members from the social programs committee and I don't believe he has done such reporting. Mr. Speaker, for two years now the Minister has stated that in all things he must make careful, measured steps. We can't act in haste; we need to do it carefully and do it right. I would suggest to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, the clock is about to run out and the time to act is now, and I expect an answer from the Minister about his coverage and the results of his review immediately. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize today in the gallery the secretary to Cabinet, Liz Snider, and her aunt from Hamilton, Ontario, Elizabeth Maus.

---Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Minister for the public service, I would also like to recognize the Premier's award recipients, and particularly those who are sitting in the gallery today. I won't name everyone, but the ones in the gallery I recognize: Anne Gunn, Keith Hickling, Karyn Hicks, Joe La Ferla, Mike Kalney, Brent Rausch, Ted McLeod and Len MacDonald. I'd like them to rise and be recognized. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a constituent of mine and an employee of our Department of Education, Culture and Employment sitting over on my right, Sue Glowach.

---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 recognize constituents of mine sitting in the gallery. Joseph La Ferla who has already been recognized, and his wife, Gertrude La Ferla, who is also a long-term civil servant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not very often I get to recognize somebody from the community of Inuvik so, Mr. McLeod and Mr. MacDonald, welcome to this Assembly.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to say welcome to everyone who has come here this afternoon. It's good to see you. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**Question 344-14(6): Taxation Of First Nations People**

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Finance, regarding the issue of taxation for First Nations people. I wanted to ask the Minister if he could tell us if any personal or property taxes or fees levied against the First Nations people are being used for education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 344-14(6): Taxation Of First Nations People

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that there are, in some cases, situations where parents are asked to pay fees in the schools for extra things that are needed in the system, but all parents are being asked to make those payments. I also understand that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is reviewing their policy on that. In addition, all property owners in the Northwest Territories are billed for an education tax. This is a tax of general application and goes into the general revenue; it doesn't go directly into education or into a specific service. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 344-14(6): Taxation Of First Nations People

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this year I had a number of constituents bring the property tax invoices in and it clearly states on the invoice that education taxes are being applied to aboriginal people, regardless of if you have children in school or not. I'd like to ask the Minister if he's aware that this is happening, and if he could tell us what portion of that is being applied to the schools. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 344-14(6): Taxation Of First Nations People

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, people who are paying taxes on their property will also be paying a portion that is for education. As I mentioned before, this is a tax of general application. The money we collect from education taxes goes into general revenue, and then we pay for the costs of education out of the consolidated revenue fund. The amount that we collect in total, Mr. Speaker, from education taxes right across the Territories is about \$3.5 million. In total, this government spends roughly \$200 million on education. So some of that money is for education but, as I say, it goes into the general revenue fund and then is voted by this House. It doesn't go directly to education as such. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 344-14(6): Taxation Of First Nations People

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it's not clear. My understanding is that this government receives transfer payments from the federal government to honour the treaty agreements the federal government has, and those transfer payments are clearly identified as money for education. Then, at the same time, we have invoices that are going out to the communities and to aboriginal people, treaty people, that state they have to pay a school tax. So in a sense this government is double dipping. We're getting money from one source -- the federal government -- and we're also applying a tax to people who have an agreement, who have a treaty with the federal government. I believe it's a contravention of the treaty. I would

like to ask the Minister to explain how that works, because we have two sources coming in. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 344-14(6): Taxation Of First Nations People

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the only money that we get that is specifically for aboriginal people and a treaty right is for aboriginal health care. That is the only money that is linked directly to a treaty right. All of the other money that we get in the Northwest Territories through our formula is for all residents, it's not broken down to so much for treaty people and so much for other people. We get an amount of money based on our population and other factors, but it's for everyone. So there's only the one program that I can think of off hand that is strictly for aboriginal people, and that's for aboriginal health. There's none for education as such. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 344-14(6): Taxation Of First Nations People

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, could I get the Minister to confirm then that this government receives no money for aboriginal education from the federal government? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 344-14(6): Taxation Of First Nations People

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we, through the formula, get funding for all residents in the Northwest Territories, so we get money for everyone; treaty people, non-treaty people, everyone. But that money is not broken down and identified specifically for status and treaty people versus for everyone. So we do not get money for treaty people specifically. I think we do operate a university/college entrance program. There's some money that we manage for the federal government, but that's a program we do on their behalf, it's not money that comes through our general revenue. But other than that, there is none that I'm aware of. Thank you.

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

Question 345-14(6): Decline In Health And Social Services In Smaller Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services with regard to my Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, as we all know looking through the budget, this government increased the amount of money by \$26 million for Health and Social Services to the tune of \$226 million in 2003-2004. Yet, Mr. Speaker, we see a decline in programs and services that are essential to services such as health and social services, alcohol and drug programs and also policing. Mr. Speaker, we, again, have a situation in the Mackenzie Delta communities where communities are put on notice that only emergency services will be provided. When will this government learn that we have

a problem and find a solution to that problem? Can the Minister tell us what is the government doing to find that solution?

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

Return To Question 345-14(6): Decline In Health And Social Services In Smaller Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member has pointed out, it is a problem. There is a problem most acutely in some of the smaller communities, especially in the Inuvik region. Mr. Speaker, we've made arrangements, short-term arrangements with the UNW, so we can hire agency nurses. We have committed to a review of the classification of nurses to hopefully better compensate them once that classification review is done. That work is expected to be completed by Christmastime. So we put in millions of dollars trying to beef up salaries of alcohol and drug workers. We put in money for mental health workers and we intend to recruit those positions which are empty and work on arrangements in communities for those people who are currently in place to get them to take advantage of the new classification. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 345-14(6): Decline In Health And Social Services In Smaller Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister touched on the point that I would like to make. We are seeing that programs and services are declining and the positions aren't being filled by this government. We have money allocated to communities sitting with health boards. What are you doing to ensure that those health boards don't sit on dollars that should be implemented for programs in communities? Why is it that dollars aren't making their way to those communities and having those positions filled to provide these essential services?

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

Further Return To Question 345-14(6): Decline In Health And Social Services In Smaller Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I met two weeks ago with the board chairs and the senior staff of the department and authorities. One of the issues that was on the table was the vacancy rate, especially among the alcohol and drug workers that are going to be rolled over into community wellness workers. Now that the classification has been done and the job descriptions written, I have asked that we make every effort to put that money to use. It's retroactive to April 1st and the board chairs and CEOs were there and they have committed to do that very thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 345-14(6): Decline In Health And Social Services In Smaller Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the problems we've had in the Inuvik region is we have had situations where they have had to pay out of their own pocket to go to the Inuvik Regional Health Centre, in some cases

getting medevaced out of the health centre because of not being diagnosed in our communities. They've made the effort on their own to travel to the regional hospital to get this service. As a department, are you willing to compensate those people who have taken it on their own to find that service at the Inuvik Regional Hospital where it's not being provided in our communities?

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

Further Return To Question 345-14(6): Decline In Health And Social Services In Smaller Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to commit to a review of every case the Member can bring forward outlining that specific issue and we will give it a thorough review and consideration. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 345-14(6): Decline In Health And Social Services In Smaller Communities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister prior to the adjournment of this House, could he come back to this legislature and explain how the government could cope with the situation we've seen again in the Mackenzie Delta communities where we've had closures of our health centres to strictly emergency services? I would like to ask the Minister who is responsible for health services, what is this government doing to ensure that will not happen again next year?

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

Further Return To Question 345-14(6): Decline In Health And Social Services In Smaller Communities

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit that prior to the rise of this House, I will get the information requested by the Member to him in writing outlining the steps being taken to address issues he's raised.

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

Question 346-14(6): Dental Services At H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Hay River is the second largest community in the territory and its hospital serves half of the NWT's communities. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know if the Minister thinks that the H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital is being used to its potential considering that no dental surgeries have been performed for five consecutive months. I want to know if the Minister is aware of this and does he have any plans or suggestions to remedy the situation? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The chair was a bit concerned with the beginning of the question, however the second part of it let the Minister deal with that. You were asking an opinion and you shouldn't ask an opinion.

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

Return To Question 346-14(6): Dental Services At H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Hay River is a key part of the health and social services system. The health centre there figures prominently in the services that we provide. It's funded to provide dental surgery. It is an issue, as the Member has pointed out in her Member's statement today. There is a backlog there and attempts have been made to hire a GP anesthesiologist. It's not one that we have a solution for as we are in a similar situation in many other areas of service delivery. Is Hay River being used to its full capacity? No.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The chair is having some difficulty in picking up the sound here today. I hope the honourable Member got that answer. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 346-14(6): Dental Services At H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I heard the Minister say he does not have a solution for the problem right now with respect to dental surgery. So in light of that, Mr. Speaker, considering an offer that the office manager of the Hay River Dental Clinic has made, she feels that the situation is dire enough for dental surgery that perhaps the clinic could hire their own nurses and anesthetists in order to take care of the backlog of emergency dental surgeries. Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the government would fund a private clinic to cover the costs for what should be a publicly funded core service. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 346-14(6): Dental Services At H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the deputy minister for the department met in early September in Hay River with the Member for Hay River North, as well as the lady who runs the dental clinic and there was a discussion about the concerns. Out of that discussion, I understand, came a plan for the manager to sit down with the CEO and the health board in Hay River to discuss this issue and they haven't yet had a chance to do that. That meeting I don't think has yet to take place. I have had discussions with Mr. Delorey this morning about the concerns that I passed on to the deputy to make sure the meeting does take place so we can see what kind of common ground there is to address this issue.

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

Supplementary To Question 346-14(6): Dental Services At H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is – and I will repeat it again – if the Hay River Dental Clinic thinks that they have access to nurses and...if the health board can't hire these people and they think they can, will the government fund a private clinic to go out and do this work, so

that it can be done in a timely manner? I know about the meetings and I know about the problems with recruitment and retention by the Hay River Health Board, but people's teeth are rotting in their mouths as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 346-14(6): Dental Services At H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, when that meeting was concluded with the deputy, the MLA and the Hay River Dental Clinic, there was a plan, as I understand it, to connect up with the Hay River Health Authority which has funding to deliver the service, which I have yet to meet with the Hay River Dental Clinic to see what can be arranged. I think that's the step we should follow. If there is a plan that does come out of that, I am sure it will be acted on. At this point, I think it's premature for me to stand up and intercede before that meeting has taken place and we have the benefit of the full information from that meeting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 346-14(6): Dental Services At H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my office also had presence at that meeting. Mr. Miltenberger mentioned Mr. Delorey's office. Of course, we really work very closely together in Hay River and I appreciate that, but I would also appreciate it if he would keep me advised because this is an issue that's also important to my constituents. So will the Minister commit to apprising me to the outcome of that discussion and if it is not something that can be dealt with in a timely manner, we can revisit the offer of the Hay River Dental Clinic? Could the Minister confirm that's correct?

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

Further Return To Question 346-14(6): Dental Services At H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to apologize to the Member for implying that she's not involved or interested in these particular issues. It was an oversight on my part. I recognize in the House that she's very vigilant in putting forward her constituents' concerns. I will keep her apprised of whatever takes place in this area, as I will the Member for Hay River North. Thank you.

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

Question 347-14(6): Consolidating Contracts For Computers

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following my Member's statement in the area of government's purchasing programs, it has been for some time now that the government has started to use central purchasing as a way of reducing some of its cost, namely in the area of the technology

services centre, as a way of pooling its resources from all departments. Mr. Speaker, something we have to consider is what are we doing to our small business throughout the Northwest Territories. Referencing the contract earlier, for example, that just closed recently, September 23rd, for purchases of 112 computers, 45 of which were supposed to be delivered to Inuvik. The contractors in the small communities are disadvantaged, number one, for cost of transportation on some of the goods, but it's always more difficult to compete against a larger company that has a higher volume. That's one of the benefits of being in the capital. You are on the doorstep of government and can win a lot of their contracts. I would like to know from the Department of Public Works and Services, is there intention to break up any of these computer contracts so that smaller businesses can have a chance to bid and win? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 347-14(6): Consolidating Contracts For Computers

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is well aware of the concerns raised by the Member and raised by the business sector as well. However, Public Works did take the issue to the Senior Management Preference Committee with regard to how to award the BIP preference in relation to where the computers were going. In the first instance in March, all computers were going to Yellowknife, so Yellowknife had the BIP preference and they did win the contracts. In the second incident recently, there were two contracts awarded to Yellowknife again because the majority of the computers were going to Yellowknife. So Yellowknife bidders were given, again, BIP preference. Public Works and Services was advised by the Senior Management Preference Committee to prorata the BIP preference based on the number of computers going to different regions. Like the Member stated, Mr. Speaker, those communities, like Yellowknife, that had most of the computers obviously got the benefit of the BIP as well. So they were the ones the contracts were awarded to. Public Works advised that as an example in the last purchase of computers, there was a savings of \$55,000. That indicates to us that we should continue with large purchases rather than breaking the requirements down into smaller tenders.

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

Supplementary To Question 347-14(6): Consolidating Contracts For Computers

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has given some information that, in fact, four large tenders that have gone out have been won by companies in the capital. This prorating BIP just confuses the issue more, I believe. Wouldn't it be better if we actually broke it down? For the last tender of 112, 45 were scheduled for Inuvik, 55 for Yellowknife and I believe five for Fort Simpson is the information I was provided. Mr. Speaker, the government may have saved \$55,000 on this one tender, but if smaller businesses throughout the Territories cannot start winning some of these bids, then they are going to have to start letting employees go. Where do employees go? Either to the unemployment office or the income support office and then the government will have to pick up the tab there. So what benefit are we deriving for the NWT as a whole? Would the government consider breaking

down these tenders, so at least the regionally-based companies can afford to bid these things?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 347-14(6): Consolidating Contracts For Computers

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can commit to the Member that I will take this back to the department and we will review our purchasing programs.

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

Supplementary To Question 347-14(6): Consolidating Contracts For Computers

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While the Minister is doing that, knowing that the window of this government is quickly running out, I would like to know if he can provide information to the Members of this House with regard to the computer purchases this last fiscal year and how many have been awarded to companies outside of Yellowknife. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 347-14(6): Consolidating Contracts For Computers

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will commit to supplying that information to the Members through the House.

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

Question 348-14(6): Resident Territorial Court Judge Required In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice, the Honourable Roger Allen. Mr. Speaker, I stated in my Member's statement, Hay River is currently without a resident judge as a result of the retirement of Chief Judge Robert Halifax. I believe that it is imperative that a resident judge be placed in Hay River. Bringing in a judge from Yellowknife on occasion is not a solution that allows for continuity or relationship building with the public that the judge services south of the lake. In addition, a lot of errors can be made by a non-resident judge as they do not know the background of the accused nor their families. Lastly, it is not financially efficient to import a judge. Would the Minister please advise this House as to what measures his department is currently making to recruit a resident judge for Hay River or to replace Chief Judge Robert Halifax? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

Return To Question 348-14(6): Resident Territorial Court Judge Required In Hay River

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to use some scripted notes today, but before I do that, I would also like to acknowledge the contribution that Judge Halifax made as a territorial court judge, then chief judge. To answer

the question, to appoint a new judge, the commission will begin to review the compensation and benefits for all territorial judges. In the interim, the search for a new judge will continue, but no decision will be made until a full salary and benefits package will be known. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 348-14(6): Resident Territorial Court Judge Required In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I think I heard the Minister refer to a committee that will be reviewing and assessing applications for replacement of a judge. Could the Minister tell me if there is any representation on that committee from the South Slave? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 348-14(6): Resident Territorial Court Judge Required In Hay River

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have the names of the commissioned members but the important point I'd like to convey to the Member is that there will be two factors in trying to influence a decision and that would be to locate the judge. Number one is the requirement of the workload and also of the circuits. Also, we need to consult with the newly appointed chief judge and his colleagues, so certainly those are two of the factors in addition to the remuneration work that's being continued in contingent to the appointed judge. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 348-14(6): Resident Territorial Court Judge Required In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware of any review that was ever done or a study done in the efficiencies of having a resident judge located in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 348-14(6): Resident Territorial Court Judge Required In Hay River

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I am not aware as per se, but I know through my consultation with the judiciary and also the departmental officials that there is continued discussion on the best way to address this key question and, as I stated earlier, that a number of factors need to be taken into consideration prior to making any firm decision. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 348-14(6): Resident Territorial Court Judge Required In Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware, there is a number of positions in Hay River with the courthouse that are there specifically because there was a resident judge in Hay River. Could the Minister give us some

assurance, some commitment in the House, that there is not going to be any loss of jobs in Hay River because of the resident judge going into retirement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 348-14(6): Resident Territorial Court Judge Required In Hay River

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier, the importance is we have to consult with the newly appointed chief judge. He administers his judiciary. We will continue to advocate the need to support the Member's questions and I will continue to raise that with the departmental officials in our continued liaison with the chief judge. Thank you.

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

Question 349-14(6): Collaboration By Social Envelope Ministers

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement earlier, I talked about the need to make sure there is departmental collaboration in the social envelope because of the immense needs we have in that area as a territory. I am not sure who the lead Minister might theoretically be if we had a social envelope Ministers' committee, but I'll put it to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I'd like to ask him how many times in the past four years he believes that the social envelope Ministers have met with the express purpose of dealing with collaboration across their respective departments? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 349-14(6): Collaboration By Social Envelope Ministers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue is by my colleague in terms of the social envelope and the benefits of collaboration and cooperation is a concept that has not reached its full potential yet. We are still working on that. While we meet on issues on a regular basis, we have not, to my recollection, in almost two years sat down and had a formal social envelope Ministers' meeting. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 349-14(6): Collaboration By Social Envelope Ministers

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we are all trying not to chuckle here, but it is clear to all of us we've been into the hall Cabinet, their desks are so close together you could throw a net over the four of them, Mr. Speaker. When I see that the Department of Justice is reprofiling what it does at some of its facilities and I think it has to do this, I wonder if that reprofiling meets the test of government priorities or social envelope priorities or just the Department of Justice priorities. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if he had any involvement or discussion about the use of those facilities with the Department of Justice? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 349-14(6): Collaboration By Social Envelope Ministers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we do in fact meet on issues regularly and the issue of facility reprofiling is one that I've discussed with the Minister of Justice, also the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, I've also discussed it with the Minister of Finance and the deputies have met. It's been identified that this is not a departmental issue, it is a government-wide issue where we have facilities, as the Member so accurately pointed out, in different program areas in justice, in childcare. We have some facilities; the Housing Corporation has a mortgage that we are paying for that is underutilized. We haven't planned a function to undertake which our deputies have initiated and we want to take a thorough look, not only in Yellowknife, but in Inuvik, Fort Smith, Hay River and Deline where we have facilities where they aren't being used to their capacity and we recognize that as an issue.

While the social envelope Ministers haven't met on a thorough basis for broad strategic planning on this particular issue, there has been discussions and we are clearly trying to anticipate and do some proper planning on this issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 349-14(6): Collaboration By Social Envelope Ministers

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly think that this is an effort that we need to pursue in the next government because it is too important to watch our limited capital dollars be squandered and to see other programs that are desperately needed not be able to find homes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister for his commitment to work with his other social envelope colleagues in ensuring that this becomes a priority for the transition plan so that the next government isn't left having to try to grasp and grapple with the same questions. Will he commit to ensuring that this makes its way into the transition plan as a priority? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 349-14(6): Collaboration By Social Envelope Ministers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to making sure that before we leave office that this particular issue will be laid out in detail and the work done to date will be there for the incoming government to have at their disposal so that they can make the necessary and timely decisions. Thank you.

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

Question 350-14(6): Single-Rate Zone For Hydro Electric Power

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier, the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, discussion of a one-

rate zone for power was delayed by Cabinet until the energy strategy was completed. Now that the energy strategy is completed, will the Premier and Cabinet direct the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to proceed with an application for a one-rate zone for power? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 350-14(6): Single-Rate Zone For Hydro Electric Power

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government and Cabinet have no intentions in the future of discussing this rather controversial issue. There are no plans to discuss it or other decisions made. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 350-14(6): Single-Rate Zone For Hydro Electric Power

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Premier thinks that this is a controversial issue but, as I have said before in the House, we are here for the people, we are representing everyone in the Territories and every day we are saying that we want to treat them and make sure they get all the same benefits. By continually disregarding requests from Members from this side of the House, we are failing the people in the North. I'd like to ask the Premier again, if they will, when will they do it? Is it after the election? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 350-14(6): Single-Rate Zone For Hydro Electric Power

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it will be the next government that will deal with this issue and it will be the Power Corporation that will make application for rate changes and the way which rates are charged. It is the Power Corporation that makes application through the Public Utilities Board. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 350-14(6): Single-Rate Zone For Hydro Electric Power

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier well knows, we on this side of the House had input when he was elected to Premier for this Legislative Assembly. When we did that we expected him to work for all of us, for the whole Territories. But by disregarding some of our questions and some of the requests that people are making, he is not doing his job. I'd like to ask him again, will he do his job and give direction to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation for a one-rate zone?

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

Further Return To Question 350-14(6): Single-Rate Zone For Hydro Electric Power

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is the Minister responsible for the Power

Corporation, Mr. Handley, who has responsibility under the legislation to speak on behalf of the government and the Cabinet to the Power Corporation and the board that we have appointed to manage and administer that corporation's business. The government gives overall direction from time to time, and the Power Corporation's board manages and administers the corporation. It is very close to an election and we have recently completed the energy strategy and there is not sufficient time to give this the attention and debate that it deserves. It is the view of the Minister and myself that there will not be any direction from Cabinet regarding the issue the Member raised at this time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Your final supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 350-14(6): Single-Rate Zone For Hydro Electric Power

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have asked this question on more than one occasion. I have all the questions and answers here and every one of the answers I was given was that once the energy strategy was completed, they would deal with the one-rate zone. It is now completed. Why can't they deal with it? Why can't the Premier and his Cabinet deal with it? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 350-14(6): Single-Rate Zone For Hydro Electric Power

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the suggestion that the issue of a one-rate zone should not proceed until after an energy strategy was completed, debated and discussed and this government had found the time to set new direction and this has not happened. The corporation itself does not have the... (inaudible)... time to address that. The Minister concurs with that so that is where we are. We are at a point where there is not sufficient time to debate it. It is, as the Member knows, controversial. There is no consensus on this and I doubt very much that there is any political will or prospects of getting an agreement on it at this time. Thank you.

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

Question 351-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres For Youth

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services and it is somewhat related to the issue that Mr. Braden and Mr. Bell have been talking about. I had a constituency meeting earlier this week and at that meeting a constituent brought up the issue of a critical absence of a youth treatment centre in the Northwest Territories. I know the Minister is no doubt aware of the situation and the growing social problems we face on the streets in Yellowknife and I understand it is growing in other communities as well. This constituent understood that we may not have access to a facility right now, but asked whether or not our government has taken a look at cooperating with other jurisdictions, recognizing that Alberta is also critically short of space for youth treatment. Has the Minister considered a joint approach with other jurisdictions to see about funding a treatment centre, perhaps in the northern regions to deal with northern youth?

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

Return To Question 351-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres For Youth

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have arranged with some southern facilities and there has been some interest expressed by some southern companies indicating an interest and willingness to possibly come north to establish a facility that could be of use. We haven't proceeded much past the initial contact stage as far as I am aware. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 351-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres For Youth

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the critical shortage for this kind of treatment in the North and in the northern parts of other jurisdictions, would the Minister pursue contact with these companies or other agencies, whether they be companies or government agencies, and see whether or not there isn't some way that we could work cooperatively to ensure that we have better access to facilities for our young people?

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

Further Return To Question 351-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Centres For Youth

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will make that commitment. Thank you.

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

Question 352-14(6): Review Of Extended Health Benefits

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pursue my questions in the same topic as my Member's statement earlier today, and it is the commitment that the Minister has made over the last three years to review the extended health benefits as well as the list of conditions and diseases included, which I understand is very long and very outdated and one that he has made a commitment to review. May I ask the Minister where he is with that review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 352-14(6): Review Of Extended Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has been working diligently on the conclusion of the final draft of the supplementary health benefits review, and the plan is to have that available to be circulated to MLAs and stakeholders in its draft form before the end of session. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 352-14(6): Review Of Extended Health Benefits

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could you give me any indication as to whether or not there were any new diseases or conditions added for eligible coverage and would one of them be the Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome that I had mentioned? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 352-14(6): Review Of Extended Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the draft supplementary health benefits review document is quite complex with a number of very fundamental changes and options suggested, and you've raised that. They are going to take some discussion, and I appreciate the Member's patience and growing impatience on this issue. In the interim while we do the review and we find out where we are going to go in a broader sense with this overall program, I am prepared to make an exception under the extended health benefits program for Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome so that we can deal with the specific issue she has brought forward on behalf of her constituent. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 352-14(6): Review Of Extended Health Benefits

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to do anything that might spoil the commitment I just got from the Minister, but as a Member we are always taken aback when we get this big announcement as a surprise in the House. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister come to the committee and give us a briefing, as he has indicated that it is very complex and we weren't aware of anything like that happening? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 352-14(6): Review Of Extended Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason we are putting this out in the draft form is so that we can have the necessary discussion on the content and what is recommended, and direction. It is not going to be the final document, so I would be happy to appear before the social programs committee to make sure they get the information. Hopefully we have enough time that they can look at it. I know everybody's agendas are chock full between now and the end of session. In fact it is going to extend beyond the life of the 14th Assembly. We'll have the information out there and we would be happy to meet with the committee. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 352-14(6): Review Of Extended Health Benefits

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, may I just ask the Minister to make the commitment to see if we could finalize this before the end of this Assembly, because it has

been studied for two years and I do believe that is long enough. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 352-14(6): Review Of Extended Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, this particular issue and the options and recommendations being made and the work that is being done, I would ask and suggest is complex and we are not going to be in a position to make any final decisions within the life of this government. We want to set the pieces in place so that the good work that's been done can provide information and advice to the incoming government. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I can't commit to that. Thank you.

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

Question 353-14(6): Inuvik Regional Health Board Restructuring

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It is in regard to the board structures that we have in the Inuvik region, especially with the Inuvik Regional Health Board. As we all know, the Sahtu board is no longer part of the Inuvik region in which now we have the Beaufort communities and Mackenzie Delta communities, which consist of seven communities. I would like to ask the Minister, have you considered looking at reappointing the trustees to that board to have more community representatives on that board so that the community issues can be dealt with? It seems like it has been falling on deaf ears and no one seems to be taking these concerns seriously. I would like to ask the Minister, would you consider restructuring that board to ensure we have trustees appointed by our communities?

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

Return To Question 353-14(6): Inuvik Regional Health Board Restructuring

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that under the new governance agreement that is being worked on in the Beaufort-Delta that that is in fact what is happening and underway, and that the timeline we are working in is to be able to hopefully be able to have the trustees and the new chair of the new constituted Inuvik Health and Social Services Authority or new agreed to Health and Social Services Authority by the end of February. That was the request from Mr. Carmichael, the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, in consultation with Ms. Cournoyea, the chair of the Inuvik Health and Social Services Authority.

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

Supplementary To Question 353-14(6): Inuvik Regional Health Board Restructuring

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issues in our communities can't wait until February. We have to have some assurances that people's concerns and issues relating to health and social services, the lack of core programs in our communities are being addressed. I'd like to ask the Minister, since he seemed to have a lot of power in dealing with boards by way of removing boards and re-establishing boards, can you establish a board, say within the next month, to ensure that we have this continuity and don't have to wait six months before we see something happen?

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

Further Return To Question 353-14(6): Inuvik Regional Health Board Restructuring

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a functioning board currently in place. There is a transition process underway. By good government and by our own principles that we operate on, we are committed to working with the leadership in the Inuvik region on that development and that transition and we are committed to that process. Currently, the members that are there are doing the job that's necessary but we are working, as I indicated, with the current board, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Inuvialuit on the selection of replacements and community representatives that we'll see representatives from the communities on this board. I think we should honour that process and continue to work with the existing board in the interim. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 353-14(6): Inuvik Regional Health Board Restructuring

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel that we have a responsibility to ensure that the trustees on that board reflect the communities it represents. No offence to the aboriginal organizations you mentioned, but there are community services not being provided in our communities. I feel that every year we deal with these same problems, we bring it to the House and nothing happens. I think as a Minister, you are responsible to ensure that the accountability is there and the accountability is flowing back to our communities to ensure we are getting the services that are expected. I would like to ask the Minister again, you have the authority to implement this board as soon as possible, can you consider getting out there and trying to re-establish this board within the next month?

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

Further Return To Question 353-14(6): Inuvik Regional Health Board Restructuring

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me restate my commitment to work with the leadership in the Inuvik region to ensure that the services that are there are adequate, that any changes to the board structure are done in a way that is compatible with what the leadership up there has indicated how they want to proceed and try to honour that. We have been doing it in a whole number of areas as we work on the governance arrangements in the region. It is not up to me

or appropriate for me to try to rule by fiat at this point. We have a functioning board. The intent is to expand the membership so that there is more community representation. That process is underway in consultation with the aboriginal governments and the public governments that are there, and we are part of that process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. I just want to remind members that are in the gallery not to use cell phones in the Legislative Assembly. Please put your cell phone away and go outside to make your calls. Your final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 353-14(6): Inuvik Regional Health Board Restructuring

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister when the last time was that you have reported to the Beaufort-Delta leaders. I haven't seen you at too many Beaufort leadership meetings. I know we have been requested to show up there because of these health concerns. I'd like to ask the Minister, when will you get that consultation with the region and the communities at the Beaufort leaders' meeting since you haven't been too visible lately?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, disregard that last part. Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 353-14(6): Inuvik Regional Health Board Restructuring

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a process underway as we speak that is being coordinated through the Inuvik Health and Social Services Board and authority in consultation with the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in and the public government up there in the municipalities. They have the process in hand; we've had letters initiated by Mr. Carmichael at his request that we look at the end of February to finalize this, but to give it the time necessary to do the job they think as necessary to do it right, and I am prepared to honour that request. Thank you.

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

Question 354-14(6): Support For Secondary Diamond Industries

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley, and it relates to my statement earlier today about the secondary diamond industries that are growing around the diamond deposits in the NWT. Mr. Speaker, comments by the Minister in the media seem to indicate that our interest and enthusiasm for getting behind the secondary industries is waning and I would like to ask the Minister, does the Government of the Northwest Territories continue to support the cutting and polishing industry in the NWT? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 354-14(6): Support For Secondary Diamond Industries

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, totally. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 354-14(6): Support For Secondary Diamond Industries

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister went on to indicate in the media that we wanted to go beyond cutting and polishing and get into things like trading in diamonds and making jewelry. What other financial opportunities does this industry offer us, if we are going to go beyond just cutting and polishing? What are the other benefits that we are looking at from the diamond industry as a whole? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 354-14(6): Support For Secondary Diamond Industries

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think the Member is quoting from a reporter's observations during a constituency meeting and I was responding as an MLA. In terms of a diamond strategy and what are the other opportunities, those are more questions that the Minister responsible for the diamond industry could answer more than I can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 354-14(6): Support For Secondary Diamond Industries

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, what are the other financial opportunities that are at our doorstep as a consequence of diamond mining? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 354-14(6): Support For Secondary Diamond Industries

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, potentially there is a whole chain of financial opportunity that there are value-added benefits that go, in my view, all the way to jewelry and trading of diamonds and so on. There is also opportunity, as I expect, not for this government but for future governments on taxation and so on. There are many opportunities and I think the more people that are employed, the more income tax they pay. There could be a whole list of opportunities that the government could take advantage of as we see this industry blossom. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 354-14(6): Support For Secondary Diamond Industries

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, what steps or what kind of strategies are on the way right now to help us capitalize on those as yet unrealized opportunities? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 354-14(6): Support For Secondary Diamond Industries

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, it is the Minister of RWED who is responsible for the diamond strategy

and he is working on that. I really can't answer for him of how that is all unfolding and what the opportunities are and how they would come about and when. I think it is, again, Mr. Speaker, a question that is more appropriate for the Minister of RWED. Thank you.

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

Question 355-14(6): NWT Sport And Recreation Board

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Vince Steen. Mr. Speaker, during last session and for some time now we have been hearing a lot of talk about sports and recreation in the North and the possible creation, amalgamation of different sports bodies or the creation of the new supper board or sports and recreation board. Could the Minister please inform the House as to where the department is on this, at what stage they are at and what progress they are making on that? Especially the new board that we have been talking about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 355-14(6): NWT Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since the last session in June, I have met with Sport North and the Aboriginal Sports Circle to discuss the issues that were raised in the House at the June session, and the end result of that was that Sport North agreed to continue working towards establishing an NWT sports and recreation board which is now known as a council. Over the summer, the interim coordinating team which Sport North is taking part in, although cautiously, met three times and they were planning another meeting I believe for September 26. I am not sure if that one was held or not, but they are still working towards establishing the board. My intent is to have a document tabled in the House in the next few days, outlining the sports and recreation policy that I have planned to put in place early in October. With that, there will also be changes to the lottery regulations. Once that happens what would be left to do then is to have the sports and recreation board officially established, possibly by April of next year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 355-14(6): NWT Sport And Recreation Board

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I heard the Minister mention that Sport North was working with the other sports groups to establish the new board. Is Sport North working with, or a part of, are they in support of the new board and are they working to establish the new board? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 355-14(6): NWT Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my information is that they are a part of the interim coordinating team. They are working with departments to establish the sports north council. Officially what it will be called in the future is sports and recreation council. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 355-14(6): NWT Sport And Recreation Board

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister tell me whether the Members of this House are going to have a look at the new policies, the changes to the policies that he will be introducing before he introduces them to the House, or will we not see them until they come into the House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 355-14(6): NWT Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe I am scheduled to table in this House early next week the sports and recreation policy. It is not signed off at this point, but it will be there for Members to make comments on and get back to us. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 355-14(6): NWT Sport And Recreation Board

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering if the Minister knows of the exact date. Have we set an implementation date for this new board with the new lotteries regulations in place when all of that is going to take effect? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of MACA, your final answer.

Further Return To Question 355-14(6): NWT Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we don't have a specific date but it would require the Minister's signature to make changes to the Western Canada Lottery Regulations and put in place a sports, recreation and physical activity policies, that is what it is called. I don't have a set date. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time allocated for question period is over. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to Opening Address. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 9: REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS

Mr. Kakfwi's Reply

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a little bit of time today to share some of my thinking and thoughts with the Members here, who I've

worked with over the last four years. I have spent a lot of time in my job, in my life, thinking about the future of the territory and the future of our people, the future that they have together, and I have spent a lot of time thinking about it over the summer.

I've spent I'd say about 95 percent of my time in the last year on the road in the communities and not a great deal of time in the office, the physical office of the Premier. I have also spent a lot of time thinking about my role as an elected leader and the style of leadership that I provide and I also don't provide. There is a certain approach that I take in the work I do. It has not changed much in all the years that I have been providing my share of leadership to the people that I represent. I've served 16 years in the legislature and the entire time I've been a Member of the Cabinet, 12 years as a Minister and four years as a Premier.

Recent developments and events have buoyed me very much. After years of fighting and struggling to get attention, to get the respect and some attention and commitment to deal with the issues that are put in front of this country, I believe that the base and the foundation that we require to address and get these to conclusion are in place. We have a current Prime Minister who is committed, his government and his office, to concluding devolution and revenue sharing. We have the incoming Prime Minister, who I believe will be Mr. Paul Martin, who has committed to us that there will be a net fiscal benefit included in revenue-sharing talks.

We have made a rather dramatic change in our discussions with De Beers, clarified some rather confusing moments and statements recently and I believe I am now back on track, assuring our territory, our government, our people, that we will get a share of diamond production from Snap Lake and that the project will proceed on time.

I believe that the pipeline that we've been talking about and discussing and promoting in the South over the last three and a half years will proceed according to plan with our conditions and demands met over the next few years. The oil and gas development and the companies and industry are set to give a fair deal, a balanced approach to our communities and our people.

I believe that the lobbying we've been doing as a government, as Members of the legislature, on infrastructure will see results in the next while, thanks to the work of Minister Handley, Minister Antoine, other Members of Cabinet and you, the Members of the legislature; the business community and the Chamber of Commerce, amongst many.

Our economy, Mr. Speaker, is the envy of everyone in Canada. Those of you that have followed the Globe and Mail, the national newspaper, in the last few weeks realize, although it started a bit inadvertently by statements on my part in my attempt to get attention. We did get attention, we got a lot of attention, but more than anything we got understanding from the media, from politicians, from industry and corporations right across this country. They know what it is we're saying, they know what we want and they know it is reasonable and that it should happen.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, Hear!

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Aboriginal rights were virtually non-existent in the 1970s when I first got involved. Today and recently, we're seeing Metis people being recognized in their own standing, on their own as a distinct people with full rights.

This is a tremendous event for all our people, not only across Canada, but here in the Northwest Territories.

I believe that because of our dream, our hard work, that the quality of life is improving in our territory, in our communities and amongst our people. It is true that we have our share of difficulties -- drugs, alcohol, family abuse, violence -- and we will always have that. But I believe we are better off because we have a plan, we have an economy and we give hope to our young people, to our families. There are jobs for those that need jobs. There is a social safety network for those that need help, that need our care.

More than anything, I believe we are a strong people. We've had our share of pain and difficulties over our history, but because of that we're also stronger because we're dealing with it and we have a plan in the future.

One of the great joys of my life has been to see where I started there was very much a separation of people of treaty descent between Metis and Northern people, the business community, this government, the federal government and the different peoples that we are. Over the course of the last 30 years I have seen us become neighbours, partners and friends and this government, in particular, become much closer to truly representing all people and making all people feel that this is their government and this is their Assembly.

There is still a lot of work to be done. There are still institutions to change, but that is our work. I believe we will continue doing that in the future. What has come out of that, I believe, is a unique culture and a unique identity that as Canada starts to see us as an emerging, significant, prominent part of confederation, they also see us as a collective of peoples; a diverse mosaic of cultures and traditions coming together to be seen by the rest of the world and Canada as a very distinct people: the people of the Northwest Territories.

We've spent many years thinking about the things we're going to do, talking about the things we're going to change. We've learned one thing: that we must have a high degree of tolerance. That is the only way we can get the respect and diversity we have and have tolerance for ideas that are different, values that are different, perspectives and attitudes that are different. This leads to new ideas and new ways of doing things.

We have leaders and we are the leaders who embrace the need for change. We've learned to respect one another. Respect our cultures and our languages and our different ways of life. In recent years, I believe increasingly there has been a marked growth and increase in our enthusiasm for the future, for working together. This is where I am today.

In spite of the difficulties and the challenges we have, I am very confident about the future of our peoples, our territory and this government. Always when we started as young people...Many of us who started together had an inherent desire to bring people together. The initial documents that came out of the Dene Nation and the movement talked about tolerance and about bringing people together and having governments, not for each of us separately, but for all of us. We talked endlessly about the rights of non-aboriginal people here on our land in the territory and how to extend and make sure that we become a community and a people together.

Through the years that I've worked, I've also extended my enthusiasm for trying to support the Metis and their work, the Inuit and their work and I've taken part in helping to define the

boundary between the Inuit, the Dene and the Metis in the claims negotiations. That was the basis on which we used as a boundary for dividing our two territories.

We've been part of negotiating with many people; the Vatican, the Government of Canada, provinces, animal rights groups, BHP, Diavik, Rio Tinto and, most recently, De Beers. I think in all our dealings in recent years, increasingly people know we are serious, we are committed and we have an inherent belief that we have to be strong. We have to be warriors if we are going to get anything done and we will settle for no less.

All of us, we see strength and inspiration from our own sources and some of us from the same. It's our land, it's our elders, our youth and our families. All of us depend on our spouses, our friends, our children for strength and order in our lives. My wife Marie has believed in me, my strengths and weaknesses, and I thank her for that.

Over the course of the summer, I've thought about how much more I can contribute and if this is the place that I should continue to serve the people of the North. I thought about my constituency and I talked to my family. I talked to my wife and children. It came to a day when I needed to make a decision. So it's not something that was easy to make, but most of the time I feel very good about it. If I sound a bit emotional it's because it's taken me a little while to get to this moment.

Because I have not taken occasion to talk to my constituents in the Sahtu, I want to tell them now before I turn to you, my Members, that to the people of the Sahtu I wish to inform them now that I will not seek re-election as an MLA and that I will not seek re-election as a member for the Sahtu.

To those of you that are here as my colleagues in the legislature, I want to tell you as well that I will not be seeking election, obviously, as the Premier, as a Member of the Executive. I will not be seeking re-election to be a Member of the next legislature.

What I will do is continue to work until my last day in office as your Premier. There is still work that I can do with Ottawa, with the Premiers, with De Beers, with other partners that we have to continue advancing our agenda. We have momentum. The confidence is there, the enthusiasm is there and this is what I will promise you.

I have a huge sense of accomplishment right now. The last 16 years have been great. I've learned a great deal about myself, about the strengths I have and the weaknesses. They've become glaringly evident to all of you who have had the good fortune to work with me in my new perspective. I don't apologize for them. I know the weaknesses I've had. I've learned to deal with them. I've learned to address them. So, personally, I've grown from those things that have become evident in the course of my work. Dealing with alcoholism and many other things in my life have made me a better man for it.

Being Premier, I should tell you is the best job in the world. It is also the toughest job I've ever had. My wife was telling me, it's a statement about you because you also said that when you were president of the Dene Nation. Every job is the toughest job. It's also the best job because you enjoy it so much and you give it everything you've got.

I can tell you that I believe that all of our peoples and all our leaders are well placed for the future. I believe we're together and we can see what it is that is available to us, what we have done together. My vision is your vision, it's our people's vision. I

look forward to working with all of you, the community leaders, with the people of the North, in the future. There will be other opportunities and occasions to do things together. I will be here, always, to support you, to support the government, support our communities and our leaders as we go about those things that we know are within reach and available to us.

I want to thank the people in government who have made it possible for us to accomplish so much in the last few years. I want to make special thanks to Vital Manuel who is a constituent of mine and has worked in my office for many years, for his devotion and commitment and for being my friend as well as being my long-term office worker. I want to like my personal staff and departmental staff, Melody Morrison and John Tees, Lisa Goulet, Neysa Roberts, Debbie Baert-Reid, Drew Williams, Liz Snider, Gabriela Sparling, George Braden, all of whom I've asked to come and be in the gallery today.

On occasions like this it's important to say many things and not to forget, but I wanted to be as short and punctual, as Spartan as possible. I don't want to be emotional about it. I'm here. I want to take the occasion to thank the public, who surprised me many times over the last two years, the last four years, with the tremendous support and enthusiasm and the work that I'm doing personally for the work of this Cabinet and this legislature. This is how I read it, all of us took leaps of faith sometime in our lives and people of the North, Members here in the House, have taken the leap of faith by voting me into office and sticking with me through the many events and days and weeks and months and years that we spent together. I want to thank you for that. God bless you in your work to continue seeking election to serve people. I, on my part, will wish you all well and work to make sure that the next few weeks, next two months as your Premier, I will continue to do what I can to promote and maintain the momentum that we have created in the last few months.

I again just want to thank my wife for coming out this afternoon. She's just been great. My daughter Kayla and Amos in Calgary, my grand-daughter Maslyn, my daughter Daylyn in Fort Smith, my son Keenan in Yellowknife. My mother, who I spoke to this morning, who as usual said, when are you going to come home. I said to Mom laughingly, probably sooner than you think. She's been asking me since 1970 and we had a good laugh about it, a nice talk. I just want to thank, as well, my older brother, Everett, who's been there with me for many years. So thank you very much and thank you for being here with me. Thank you. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. I want to be the first to say how sorry I am to hear that you're not seeking re-election, but I also want to be the first to offer congratulations on making that decision and to thank you for working with me for the past 12 years that I've been in politics.

Are there any other replies to the Opening Address? If not, I think this would be an appropriate time to take a 15-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. The chair recognizes the honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 17-14(6): Report On The Review Of The Languages Commissioner's Annual Report 2001-2002

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Report on the review of the Languages Commissioner's annual report 2001-2002.

History

The Official Languages Act was passed by the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories in 1984. The act guarantees equal status for the use of Canada's two official languages for members of the public using government programs and services. The act also officially recognized the aboriginal languages spoken in the Northwest Territories.

In 1990 amendments to the act gave greater status to northern aboriginal languages and recognized the need to protect aboriginal culture through the promotion of the use of aboriginal languages. The 1990 amendments also included the creation of the position of the Languages Commissioner to be appointed by the Legislative Assembly for a term of four years.

Review Of The Official Languages Act

Section 29(1) of the act required a review of the Official Languages Act following December 31, 2000. A special joint committee was established in November of 2000 to examine the effectiveness of the current legislation to protect both Canada's official languages and the aboriginal languages of the Northwest Territories. The Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act presented its final report to the Legislative Assembly in March 2003, containing 64 recommendations accepted by the House.

Languages Commissioner

According to Section 20(1) of the act, the duties of the Languages Commissioner are:

...to take all actions and measures within the authority of the Languages Commissioner with a view to ensuring recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of the act in the administration of the affairs of government institutions, including any of the activities relating to the advancement of the aboriginal languages in the Territories.

The Commissioner has the authority to investigate any complaints made to her office or may initiate an investigation if it is warranted. The Commissioner may also issue opinions on complaints and make recommendations to institutions as she deems necessary. If, after a reasonable amount of time, the Commissioner's recommendations have not been acted upon by the institution, the Commissioner may make a report to the Legislative Assembly.

The Commissioner is also required to submit an annual report to the Legislative Assembly. Ms. Fbbie Tatti was appointed to the position of Languages Commissioner in July of 2000 and her term will expire in July of 2004.

Annual Report 2001-2002

Ms. Tatti submitted her annual report for the year 2001-2002, which was tabled in the House on June 13, 2003. The

Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight met to review the report on August 28, 2003.

Advisory Board

During the review of the 2000-2001 annual report, the standing committee was informed that the Languages Commissioner had established a new advisory board in October of 2000. While there remains some question as to the legal capacity of this board, the standing committee reviewed the board's recommendations contained within the 2001-2002 report.

Recommendations

The standing committee took note that some of the recommendations offered by the Languages Commissioner's advisory board differ from the recommendations of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act. Given that the special committee had a clear mandate and legislative authority to investigate and review issues related to language promotion and enhancement in the Northwest Territories, and since the recommendations were adopted by the Legislative Assembly, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight suggests SCOL's recommendations be given preference where the recommendations differ.

Review Of Languages Complaints

In the last report on the review of the Languages Commissioner's annual report of 2000-2001, the standing committee had requested more information be provided on the nature of the languages complaints, the type of language involved in complaints, the location of complainants and the process used to mediate said complaints. The standing committee was disappointed to see that the Languages Commissioner's 2001-2002 annual report still contained very little information about the nature of languages complaints both from prior and present years. Without information with which to better understand the concerns being raised by the public, the standing committee is at a loss to assess the actions of the Commissioner. Once again, the standing committee will, therefore, defer to the recommendations made by the special committee in the hope of addressing some of the serious issues regarding the use of languages in the NWT.

Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight would like to thank the Languages Commissioner and her staff for her 2001-2002 annual report.

Motion To Receive And Adopt Committee Report 17-14(6), Carried

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight on the review of the Languages Commissioner's 2001-2002 annual report. Therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Committee Report 17-14(6) be received by the Legislative Assembly and adopted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

The report is hereby received and adopted by the Legislative Assembly. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Committee Report 18-14(6): Report On The Review Of Bills 21, 24 And 26

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on Bill 21, Protection Against Family Violence Act; Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act; and Bill 26, Youth Justice Act.

On June 11, 2003, Bill 21, Protection Against Family Violence Act; Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act; and Bill 26, Youth Justice Act, were referred to the Standing Committee on Social Programs for public review.

The responses to its call for presentations and expressions of interest indicated there was sufficient interest to conduct public hearings in Fort Smith, Hay River, Wha Ti and Yellowknife.

The following is the Standing Committee on Social Program's report on Bill 21, Protection Against Family Violence Act; Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act; and Bill 26, Youth Justice Act. It reflects the views of committee members and those of the people and organizations that took the time to appear before committee in Fort Smith on September 8th, in Hay River on September 9th, in Wha Ti on September 11th and at the hearings held September 15th through 18th, inclusive, in Yellowknife.

Bill 21: Protection Against Family Violence Act

Introduction

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is pleased to report on Bill 21, Protection Against Family Violence Act.

The committee conducted public hearings in Fort Smith on September 8, 2003, in Hay River on September 9, 2003, in Wha Ti September 11, 2003, and, as I've mentioned, in Yellowknife September 16th and 18th.

There were several presentations that raised valid concerns for committee members.

Issues

Title Of The Act

The NWT Senior's Society expressed concern with the proposed title "Family Violence Protection Act." It was felt this wording did not reflect the importance of the victim in the title. Members of the committee had previously noted a literal reading of the title could be also be interpreted as an act protecting family violence.

Committee discussions on a possible new title concentrated on reflecting the rights of victims and describing the actual intent of the new legislation.

In the end, committee members settled on renaming the Family Violence Protection Act, the "Protection Against Family Violence Act." This new title reflects the intention of the legislation to provide emergency protection for victims of family violence.

The standing committee was pleased that the department and the Minister agreed with the request and concurred with the committee amendment to change the title.

Definitions Of What Constitutes Family Violence

Many presenters were concerned with what actually constitutes family violence. The NWT Seniors' Society's presentation to committee asked that forced confinement, neglect and stalking be added to the definition of what constituted family violence. In a presentation to committee by the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories they also requested forced confinement and stalking be added to the definition. The Standing Committee on Social Programs also identified a need to modify the definition of sexual abuse.

Forced Confinement

The Status of Women Council stated, "It could be assumed that a justice of the peace would see forced confinement as falling under Section 1(2)(d) regarding psychological and emotional abuse, but we feel greater clarity is required."

The NWT Seniors' Society wanted to ensure the full scope of the types of abuses that seniors are subject to are covered and clearly stated in the legislation.

The committee concurred with the Status of Women Council's position that forced confinement must be abusive in nature. Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs saw value in including forced confinement in the definition to clearly send a message that this type of abuse will not be tolerated.

The standing committee was pleased the Minister agreed with this position and concurred with the amendment.

Neglect

The NWT Seniors' Society requested that neglect be added to the list of what constitutes family violence. This recommendation was made in order to ensure that all types of abuse that seniors are subject to were included in the legislation.

The standing committee struggled with this issue. Neglect implies there is a series of actions or inaction over a period of time that cause harm to an individual. This legislation is intended to deal with emergency situations where there is a real or immediate danger of physical or emotional harm. The Standing Committee on Social Programs came to the conclusion that the inclusion of neglect on the list of what constitutes family violence would be beyond the scope of the bill. Consequently, the standing committee will not be recommending an amendment to include neglect on the list of what constitutes family violence.

The members of the standing committee are, however, alive to the issue of neglect of our elders and strongly recommend that the Department of Health and Social Services take a serious look at bringing forward legislation to address the concerns of the NWT Seniors' Society. As a government, we also need to

ensure that homecare and social workers have adequate training and resources to deal with issues of elder abuse when they are identified.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs will ensure the Members of the 15th Assembly are aware of this issue in our transition documents.

Stalking

Mr. Speaker, the inclusion of stalking on the list of what constitutes family violence was another issue that the members of the standing committee struggled with. In the proposed legislation there are provisions that allow the justices of the peace and the Supreme Court to limit or prohibit contact between the abuser and the victim. This remedy is also available through the use of peace bonds and restraining orders.

What becomes problematic to committee members is providing a definition and application of the word stalking itself. For example, in a community the size of Wha Ti, it would not be unreasonable for a person to run into someone against whom they have a restraining order or peace bond on a fairly regular basis, just through the process of daily living. Would and could this regular, unplanned contact be construed as stalking by a justice of the peace in granting an emergency protection order under the Protection Against Family Violence Act?

In addition, committee members also noted that many stalking cases do not involve persons who are cohabitating or who have lived in an intimate or family relationship and would fall outside the realm of this act.

In examining how other Canadian jurisdictions deal with the issue of stalking in their family violence legislation, it was shown that some jurisdictions, such as Manitoba, do list stalking. Others such as Ontario, describe "a series of acts which collectively cause the applicant to fear for his or her safety, including the following: contacting, communicating with, observing or recording any person."

Presenters from the Status of Women Council agreed that stalking is likely included in the present definition in the act. However, they wanted it made abundantly clear to those administering the legislation that stalking is both threatening and abusive behaviour.

The department advised that the present definition of family violence in the act includes any intentional or reckless act or omission that causes the applicant or his or her child to fear for their safety. It further specifically includes psychological and emotional abuse. The drafting of this definition was designed, the committee was advised, to cover a broad range of behaviours without the necessity of specifying each one. This allows for both discretion and flexibility in administering the act. Once various categories of violent behaviour are listed, there is a danger that some actions will be missed. In addition, violence can take many forms and a person's response is usually subjective.

The committee agrees that flexibility and appropriate discretion will be critical to the proper administration of the act and that this conduct is already covered in the definition of family violence. It is, therefore, not pursuing a motion to specifically include stalking behaviour as part of the definition of family violence.

Sexual Abuse

Committee members noted the original definition of sexual abuse was partially defined by listing who the victim of the abuse was. This list did not cover all eventualities. A simpler and cleaner definition of just "sexual abuse" puts the emphasis on the abuse itself rather than on an identified group of victims.

Committee members were pleased the Minister agreed with this analysis and concurred with the committee amendment.

Temporary Custody Of Children

It was pointed out to the Standing Committee on Social Programs, by the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories, there were no provisions in the proposed legislation addressing the issue of temporary custody of children as part of an emergency protection order granted by a justice of the peace. The council was concerned this omission could mean that if, for example, a man was physically abusing his wife and was the subject of an emergency protection order removing him from the family home, there would be nothing to stop him from taking custody of the children as a way to force his wife to let him back into the family home. In the absence of a custodial order, there is little the RCMP could do to force a parent to return children to another parent.

In addition, the threat of removing or taking children is often a manipulative tool in the cycle of violence. Applicants under this act need to know that specific relief is available to meet this challenge.

Committee members noted it could be argued that section 4(3)(h) speaks to this concern by stating an emergency protection order can contain "any other provision that the designated justice considers necessary for the immediate protection of the applicant or any other person at risk of harm." They also noted that a justice of the peace can order that an abuser not contact or communicate with the applicant and the children, thus effectively preventing child abduction.

The department reminded the committee that emergency protection orders are extraordinary remedies given without notice to the alleged perpetrator of violence. A custody order, even of short duration, can significantly impact the rights of parents in future custody disputes. The department was of the view that all interests must be balanced when relief is given prior to the other party having an opportunity to state his or her view of the facts.

The department also advised that a consideration of custody issues can be very complex, involving many different factors. Making decisions about custody of children would be beyond the normal duties of justices of the peace and would require significant training. Such training will also have to be provided to RCMP members and victim services workers. None of these groups have experience in this field.

The Department also reminded the committee that there is legislation in place to deal with custody issues, namely the Divorce Act, the Family Law Act and the Children's Law Act.

While training and expertise may be a concern, for Committee the larger concern is the role that using children as pawns plays in violent households. This behaviour cannot be adequately addressed if specific relief is not available in emergency situations.

The Standing Committee strongly believes such an amendment has merit.

This position is also supported by the 2003 Final Report of the Ad Hoc Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group Reviewing Spousal Abuse and Legislation, which specifically mentioned the temporary care and custody of children as one of the four components that every jurisdiction in Canada include as part of any domestic violence legislation.

However, in light of the Minister having what he considers to be serious reservations about adding this measure of relief to emergency protection orders, and the obvious time constraints imposed by this being the last session of the 14th Assembly, the standing committee did not wish to jeopardize the many important and valuable aspects of this legislation by pursuing an amendment at this time.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs strongly recommends that the Department of Justice and the next Assembly take the time to consider the merit of amending the Protection Against Family Violence Act to include the temporary care and custody of children as part of an emergency protection order.

The Supreme Court And Emergency Protection Orders

The Standing Committee on Social Programs on their initial review of the proposed Family Violence Protection Act noted a discrepancy in clause 5, which deals with the mandatory review of emergency protection orders granted by justices of peace by the Supreme Court.

Although the legislation provided that emergency protection orders could be confirmed or varied, there was some resulting confusion as to whether a Supreme Court judge had the power to dismiss certain provisions of an emergency protection order that could not be supported by the evidence, or overstepped the bounds of judicial fairness, even though the rest of the emergency protection order was reasonable and based on the evidence.

The Minister and department agreed with the standing committee's view that the present wording in clause 5 was too restrictive and limited the ability of the Supreme Court to act in an expedient manner and concurred with the committee amendment.

Implementation Concerns

Committee members heard from several stakeholders, including Major Karen Hoeft of the Salvation Army, who spoke eloquently on the need for extensive training by saying, "Every time we change an RCMP officer in the NWT, every time we change a victim services worker, every time we add JPs, there will be a need for training. If we do not do that, then the legislation really falls by the wayside and is not valid."

Several presenters, notably the Salvation Army and the Status of Women Council of the NWT, stated there was a need to involve stakeholders and the regions on a committee to guide the implementation plan.

The standing committee would recommend the government involve stakeholders and make sure the needs of frontline workers are addressed in the final implementation plan.

The committee also heard concerns about the application of this legislation and were questioned on how a person in a community without an RCMP presence would access or have an emergency protection order enforced. Members noted that applications can be made by any means of telecommunication and an applicant need not appear in person to obtain an emergency protection order. Members are aware this is not an ideal situation, but in all conscience cannot deny the use of emergency protection orders to the majority of residents in the NWT.

The standing committee recognizes these as valid concerns and has pressed the Minister and department to provide a timeline on when the Protection Against Family Violence Act could be implemented across the Northwest Territories. As it stands now, the department will continue to develop the regulations and training materials and will be submitting a finalized budget and implementation plan as part of the 2004-2005 Business Plan/Main Estimates which should be reviewed and made public by the next Assembly some time prior to March 2004.

False Accusations Made Under The Protection Against Family Violence Act

Mr. Marc Bogan spoke on behalf of non-custodial parents, who have had their custodial and visitation rights with their children curtailed or eliminated because of accusations made by their previous spouses or partners. Mr. Bogan is concerned the Protection Against Family Violence Act could enable a person to gain control of the family home and custody of the children through a false accusation. Members of the standing committee were also concerned with the possibility the legislation could be abused by persons making false accusations, but took sufficient comfort from clause 18 which creates an offence for making a false statement or application under the act which could result in fines not exceeding \$5,000, six months in jail, or both.

Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is pleased the government was able to introduce this important legislation prior to the dissolution of the 14th Assembly. The staff and Minister at the Department of Justice are to be commended for their hard work on this file over the last year.

However, the Standing Committee on Social Programs would be remiss if they did not point out this legislation will not solve the problem of family violence in the Northwest Territories in and of itself. The Protection Against Family Violence Act will be another tool for the justice system to use in addressing the issue of family violence. Members recognize we still need women's shelters, we need adequate counselling services to help dysfunctional family members heal and hopefully reconcile with their families and go on with their lives, we need programs that will help these families reunite, we need training at all levels to ensure this legislation accomplishes what it is intended to do, we need to ensure legal aid programs are adequately resourced to ensure the needs of families, mothers and fathers, and their children are respected when questions of custody and access are raised, and we need public education programs that not only promote the use of the provisions of this bill but also clearly state that family violence of any type will not be tolerated in the Northwest Territories.

The committee members are of the opinion that the passage of this legislation is just one small step in addressing the issue of

family violence. It will protect victims and their children from immediate threat and physical harm. Groups such as the Family Violence Coalition are strongly encouraged to keep advocating for better services and solutions to the problem of family violence.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn now to my colleague, Mr. Braden, to take us through Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act. Thank you.

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

Bill 24 - Midwifery Profession Act

Introduction

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and Mr. Bell. The Standing Committee on Social Programs is pleased to report on Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act.

During the past month, committee had the opportunity to consult with interested citizens and organizations in person, and have received written submissions from many more. On September 8, 2003, the committee traveled to and conducted public hearings on this bill in Fort Smith. Approximately 30 witnesses made presentations to the committee in that community. Without exception, all witnesses supported the introduction of midwifery legislation. However, concerns respecting some aspects of the bill were discussed.

On September 9th the committee conducted public hearings in Hay River. The committee conducted hearings in Wha Ti on September 11, 2003. Public Hearings in Yellowknife were conducted on September 15th and 18th of this year.

Even before this bill was referred to committee for public consultation, Members believed legislation was urgently needed to regulate the practice of midwifery in the Northwest Territories. Five provinces and territories have already established legislation, and the committee wanted to ensure that the Northwest Territories could count itself among the leaders respecting midwifery legislation in Canada.

Issues

Designated Sites Clause

There was one concern brought forward by the majority of witnesses who attended public consultations in Fort Smith, Hay River, Wha Ti and Yellowknife, and also by those who took the opportunity to make written submissions.

The legislation required that the practice of midwifery for compensation could only occur at sites to be designated by the Minister of Health and Social Services. Absent such a designation, any person practicing midwifery would be doing so contrary to the act and would be liable to prosecution.

Those who identified the issue were unanimous in their opposition to its inclusion in legislation. Many strong, varied and valid reasons were presented to committee outlining why the designated sites clause should be removed from the legislation.

An Infringement Of Equality Rights

Ms. Leslie Paulette, a midwife in Fort Smith and a member of the Midwives' Association of the NWT and Nunavut, suggested that a restriction on where midwives may practice is "contrary to the Canadian Model of Midwifery and to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

Ms. Leslie Leong, a recipient of midwife care in Fort Smith, also brought to committee's attention the issue of equality when she stated, "I want to know that I can go anywhere in the NWT and still have the same choice that I would normally have in another community."

The Right Of A Woman To Choose The Place Of Birth

The right of a woman to decide where her baby is born was mentioned several times throughout the proceedings. Ms. Claudette James, a recipient of midwife care stated, "if a properly licensed and trained midwife is available and there are no medical complications, then a family should be able to make the decision as to where they would like to have their baby." Ms. Nikki Paziek, a midwife care recipient and director of the Nik'e Niya Community Birthing Centre in Fort Smith, and Ms. Shannon Lefebvre, a Hay River resident who has plans to pursue a career in midwifery, echoed this sentiment.

Although the committee could foresee many of the arguments against the designated sites clause, members were also aware that one intent of the clause may have been to ensure that during the process of birth, women and their babies would have immediate access to surgical backup. Public consultation fostered a better understanding of the responsibilities of midwifery. Members of the standing committee were advised that registered midwives are adequately trained to assess the degree of risk to individual pregnancies. Ms. Esther Doucette, a Fort Smith woman using the services of a midwife informed us that "the designated sites clause is...redundant...because the women, as well as the midwives, will be making healthy choices around birthing." If a woman is at an elevated risk for complications, a midwife will be directed by practice standards to refer the client to a physician. "Midwifery care is for pregnancy that is not at risk," the committee was told by Ms. Nadia Laquerre, vice-president of the Nik'e Niya Community Birthing Centre.

Better Outcomes Close To Home

In a written submission by the College of Midwives of British Columbia, the committee was made aware that "current evidence indicates that better outcomes are achieved when maternity services are offered in the communities where women live, even if those services are sometimes limited in scope." The committee was provided with a document entitled Report on the Findings of a Consensus Conference on Obstetrical Services in Rural or Remote Communities that detailed the benefits of birth within a woman's home community. The National Aboriginal Health Organization, the Canadian Association of Midwives, and the Dene Nation also took the opportunity to refer the Standing Committee on Social Programs to this document.

Continuity Of Care

An important issue brought forward by Ms. Stephanie Marlow, an expectant mother in Fort Smith, and Ms. Pertice Moffatt, a registered nurse in Yellowknife, was continuity of care. Pregnant women want to be able to forge a relationship with the person who will deliver their babies. If they must travel outside of their community for scheduled checkups and birth, they will likely see several different physicians. By allowing a woman to remain within her community for the duration of her pregnancy, she has the opportunity to develop a familiar relationship with her caregiver.

Costs Of Travel

Many of those who spoke out against the designated sites clause identified travel costs, both financial and emotional, as a primary concern.

If the cost of travel is not covered by insurance, forced travel to Yellowknife or Inuvik is a significant financial burden on expectant women and their families. The standing committee was also reminded of the fact that babies are born when they are ready to be born, and do not always arrive on the estimated due date. It is common practice to send women to a larger centre two weeks prior to their delivery date. For a family to live in a hotel and eat restaurant meals for a two-week period is quite expensive, if not covered by insurance, and even more so if delivery is one or two weeks later than expected.

Also, if a woman is uprooted from her community to give birth, she lacks the emotional support she would have if she gave birth nearer to family and friends. Ms. Claudette James, Ms. Eleanor Elias, Ms. Marnie Villeneuve and Ms. Sheila Chadwick, all midwife care recipients in Fort Smith, did a fine job bringing these concerns to our attention.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, many pregnant women find it necessary to leave their other children at home in the care of a spouse or others. This often creates anxiety and hardship for the expectant mother and for those remaining at home.

Another argument against forced travel to major centres is with respect to the question of public funding of registered midwives. If this legislation is viewed through the lens of cost-saving, it makes sense to provide funding for midwives in communities in the expectation that there will be fewer costly medical evacuations and reduced travel costs for low risk deliveries. Mr. Clayton Burke, a concerned grandfather in Fort Smith, pointed out that the government "could have paid many midwives over the years for the cost of transporting these young ladies, and sometimes their escort or family, back and forth to Yellowknife." Ms. Chadwick and Ms. Gisela Becker, a midwife in Fort Smith and member of the Midwives' Association of the NWT and Nunavut, also made this point.

During clause-by-clause review of the bill, committee passed four motions which have the effect of removing the designated sites provisions from the bill. The Minister agreed to these amendments.

Public Funding

Mr. Speaker, the next most prominent issue brought forward was the issue of public funding of midwifery. Ms. Becker and Ms. Paulette, the two midwives working in Fort Smith, have been accepting what payments women and their families can give, but have, in effect, been requiring no payment for their

services. Several of the women who have used their services came forward to applaud this legislation for providing a framework that will allow public funding for a service they believe to be essential.

Ms. Jennifer Potvin, one of those women, stated midwifery "must be publicly funded so that women aren't dissuaded from using midwifery services solely because of cost." Ms. Laura Aubrey, another woman receiving care from Fort Smith midwives, said public funding is essential "so that midwives can be paid and treated like professionals, which they are."

Ms. Paulette, herself, made the point that public funding is imperative if the Northwest Territories hopes to attract and maintain midwives. As she observed, "it won't be very helpful if...women have access to midwives theoretically, but there are no midwives to provide the services."

AN HON. MEMBER: True, true.

Improved Physician / Midwife Relations

MR. BRADEN: The Standing Committee was informed, Mr. Speaker, that the professional relationship existing between physicians and midwives is often strained. Midwives and their patients told the committee that doctors view a midwife's care as a possible liability in the absence of a legislated framework, concern that physicians could be held liable for the acts or omissions of midwives with whom they practice. It was critical, therefore, that legislation establish both an acceptable scope of practice for midwives and the condition that midwives maintain independent liability insurance.

Until midwifery legislation and regulations are in place to guide the professional conduct of midwives, many physicians will feel uncomfortable working with midwives. Ms. Brenda Johnson, chair of the Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority, stated her organization sees the bill "as helping to bridge the gap between the medical and midwifery model of delivery. It will allow doctors, nurses and midwives to work collaboratively."

Relief For A Taxed Medical Care System

Across the country, but particularly in the Northwest Territories, the medical profession is under a great deal of strain. There is chronic shortage of doctors and nurses in virtually every community, and retaining those medical professionals who practice in the North is a constant concern. If midwives can be attracted to the North, they can take some of the burden off the shoulders of our doctors and nurses. As Ms. Becker has informed the committee, "midwifery is in a position to play an increased role in the delivery of maternity care services in Canada...They are the only maternity care provider group in Canada that is increasing in numbers."

Woman "And Infant:" An Extension of Scope

Ms. Paulette brought forward the position that the scope of midwifery should be extended to include care for the woman and infant in the postpartum period because, as she and her organization believe, "midwives care for the mother and infant as a unit." This would require an addition to be made to section 2(1)(h).

Committee recognizes, Mr. Speaker, that midwives certainly do have an interest in the wellbeing of the infant after it is born. However, committee appreciates the Minister's concern that extending the legislative scope of midwifery to include what is

currently the domain of physicians cannot be done without adequate consultation with the other stakeholders.

The Minister has assured committee that the forthcoming health professions act is the proper legislative tool to give consideration to the overlapping scope of the various health care professions, including midwifery. Committee anticipates the introduction of the health professions act within the next two years, based on information provided by the Minister.

“During Pregnancy”

During clause-by-clause review of the bill, committee passed a motion approved by the Minister that 4(c) be amended to delete the words “during pregnancy.”

As the act was presented to committee, clause 4(c) stated that midwives

“[consult] with medical practitioners or other health care professionals if medical conditions exist or arise during pregnancy that may require management outside the scope of the practice of registered midwives”

Ms. Paulette spoke on behalf of the Midwives' Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut to recommend “the words ‘during pregnancy’ be removed from this clause, as they limit the circumstances under which midwives may initiate a medical consultation.”

The members of the standing committee could see no reason why this amendment should not be made. In communities midwives can, and do, relieve some of the burden of other medical professionals by counseling women on health and reproductive issues. The standing committee was pleased the Minister concurred with this amendment.

Common Requirement For Renewal Of Registration

Speaking on behalf of the Midwives' Association of the NWT and Nunavut, Ms. Paulette recommended “there be one common requirement for renewal of registration for all midwives in the NWT, namely the completion of the continuing competence program established by the regulation.” Making this change would have required altering section 11(3)(a) by removing the alternate requirement that a midwife be registered and in good standing as a midwife in a province.

Initially, the committee favoured Ms. Paulette's position that only one criterion be used to grant registration renewal. Members believed the requirement that a midwife complete a continuing competence program was paramount, and to allow renewal for those midwives who had current registration in another jurisdiction but had not completed a continuing competence program could compromise the equality of NWT midwives' credentials.

The Minister and his staff stated they had considered this issue carefully. A member of the Minister's staff informed the committee that the department was concerned midwives from other jurisdictions may be needed to fill temporary vacancies in the North when northern midwives take holidays. To require extra credentials for registration would dissuade those southern midwives from coming north to relieve our midwives.

The standing committee saw the validity of this argument, and did not pursue an amendment.

Cost Of Accreditation, And Midwifery Education

Many witnesses spoke of the need for midwives in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Geoff Clarke, a nurse, and recently accredited midwife, spoke to committee about the prohibitive costs of seeking midwifery accreditation in Canada.

Mr. Clarke practiced midwifery for a number of years in his native Australia, but only recently became certified in Canada, after attending courses and writing exams in Manitoba.

He informed committee that the cost for a foreign midwife to gain accreditation in Canada averages between \$12,000 and \$15,000. The Stanton Territorial Health Board covered his costs, as it is currently doing for one other foreign midwife, but without this financial assistance, he and his colleague would not likely have taken the initiative to become certified in Canada.

Mr. Clarke spoke of Manitoba's difficulty filling and maintaining their 39 midwife positions, and warned that the Northwest Territories may face similar difficulties if it fails to adopt a proactive approach in recruiting and assisting foreign and domestic midwives.

The Midwives' Association of the NWT and Nunavut also stated they “would like to see the development of midwifery education programs in the future.”

Of course, this requires that money be spent. This committee urges the government to make funds available so the required number of midwife positions may be filled.

The Minister informed committee of the department's current initiative to recruit six midwives from Australia, in order to help fill the 14 positions that are anticipated across the territory. The standing committee wishes the department success in this endeavor.

Midwifery Advisory Committee

When the Minister and his department set about writing regulations, it is the committee members' hope they will take into consideration the comments of witnesses who have told us of the need for a midwifery advisory committee.

Ms. Becker, speaking on behalf of the Midwives' Association of the NWT and Nunavut, recommended that there be established “an advisory committee consisting of practicing midwives, representatives of the public, other health care professionals and departmental staff.”

Ms. Paulette also made this point, as did the College of Midwives of British Columbia in their written submission, when they wrote “our experience in British Columbia has been that it is extremely valuable to have the input of professional midwives and government appointed public representatives.”

Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to thank those who attended the public consultations in Fort Smith, Hay River, Wha Ti and Yellowknife, and also those who made the effort to prepare written submissions for our consideration.

Bill 24 is an important piece of legislation that will enhance the services available to new and expectant families across the

territory. It will also provide the guidance and support registered midwives' need to successfully offer their services. It assists in the development of integrated health care teams that are able to draw on various areas of expertise to provide superior health care services to our citizens.

This was one of the most satisfying legislative exercises this committee has undertaken. The Minister and his staff are to be commended for their professional and cooperative approach in ensuring the development of the best midwifery legislation possible.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to thank the residents of Forth Smith, particularly Ms. Leslie Paulette and Ms. Gisela Becker, who have worked long and hard developing midwifery legislation. Their efforts will ultimately benefit all residents of the Northwest Territories.

Following clause-by-clause review of the bill, a motion was carried to report Bill 24 as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Mrs. Groenewegen, will continue with the balance of the report. Mrs. Groenewegen.

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

Bill 26 - Youth Justice Act

Introduction

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Standing Committee on Social Programs is pleased to report on Bill 26, Youth Justice Act.

Committee had the opportunity to listen to the presentations of interested citizens, and to read submissions from other citizens and organizations who were not able to attend committee's public hearings.

Members of the committee recognize that this legislation is important for the Northwest Territories, as the bill will align territorial legislation with the newly adopted federal legislation, the Youth Criminal Justice Act. The federal legislation provides the means for dealing with youths who are alleged to have committed Criminal Code offences or offences under federal legislation. Bill 26 will provide the means to deal with youths who are alleged to have committed offences under territorial enactments. Generally speaking, such offences will be less serious and it is important to have alternatives to formal court procedures available to communities.

Issues

The Need For Extrajudicial Measures

While conducting hearings in Wha Ti, the committee heard a passionate speech from Chief Charles James Nitsiza. Chief Nitsiza spoke of the difficulty that the youth of his community face when they are sent to correctional facilities away from their home community. "These young people...have been born here and have lived here, they know the cultural and traditional way of life. When you take these children out of the community they go through a very difficult time," he said.

Mr. Jimmy Nitsiza, another resident of Wha Ti, gave the committee an insight into how the youth criminal justice system can impact a family. He shared his family's story of having a son sent away, and stated, "maybe if the justice committee had the capacity to deal with minor crimes within the community...it would have been better for my family."

These concerned citizens spoke in favour of the extrajudicial measures introduced by this legislation. They believe that granting the judicial system a greater degree of flexibility to deal with youth is a more sensible approach than what is currently done, and the committee agrees.

Community Involvement In Youth Justice

While in Wha Ti, the committee heard from three witnesses who felt community involvement was going to be the decisive factor in improvements to the youth justice system.

Ms. Mary Anne Jeremika, a social worker in Wha Ti, told the committee "unless people get involved, there is not much that can be done."

Mr. Jimmy Nitsiza and Ms. Carolyn Simpson, a justice of the peace and concerned citizen, told the committee that they looked forward to the opportunity for family and other youth to participate in the youth justice system.

The committee anticipates a stronger role for community involvement in the youth justice system if this bill is passed.

Funds And Support For Youth Justice Committees

The committee has been advised by the Department of Justice that there are 24 youth justice committees operating in the Northwest Territories.

Members were concerned that there would be needless duplication if a separate entity known as a youth justice committee was established in communities, but members were assured by the department that justice committees would fulfill the role of youth justice committees when the need arose.

Several witnesses spoke of the need for funds to be directed towards the youth justice committees. Chief Nitsiza stated, "we need more money for the justice committee so that they can do more work...to refine and revise to make it better for our youth." Ms. Simpson and Major Karen Hoeft of the Salvation Army also pleaded for more funding for these committees.

When the committee met with Minister Allen on September 18th, members were pleased to hear that the Minister was aware of the need for extra funding for youth justice committees, and would readdress the issue in the new year.

The committee also heard from Ms. Simpson that training for youth justice committee members was an issue that needed attention. As when any new piece of legislation is brought forward, adequate training for those who will be administering the law is a necessity.

The committee brought this matter to the attention of the Minister, and was pleased that the Minister acknowledged that training of youth justice committee members was an issue to be addressed by the department.

Funding and training are not the only requirements for youth justice committees. Administrative support at the department

level is also a necessity. Ms. Simpson informed the committee that the Wha Ti Justice Committee "have lost the Yellowknife Justice Committee coordinator; she moved...People come and go and I think that that is a hindrance to us in the community."

The committee believes that the Minister and his department must do all that is possible to maintain support for youth justice committees. The effectiveness of such community-based committees will depend largely on the training and support offered by the Department of Justice. With such involvement, it is hoped that experience will be gained by the youth justice committees which will benefit both youths and the communities in which they reside.

Youth Program Funding

Major Hoeft brought to the committee's attention the need for funding of youth programs, separate from funding of youth justice committees. "There are few resources in the Northwest Territories for youth who have issues dealing with addictions, behavioural issues, and sexual abuse," she said. Further, Ms. Hoeft stressed "we need to spend money when children are young. If we spend all our money on the community justice system, it's way too late."

The committee recognizes that the department must adequately fund youth justice committees, but every bit as necessary is money devoted to programs for younger children. Although the social return on these financial investments won't be immediate, communities will benefit in the long run when fewer youths come into conflict with the law.

Equality Of Citizens

During the committee's consideration of this bill, members became concerned that the principle of equality among citizens may be jeopardized if access to youth justice committees is not the same for citizens in different communities. Members brought this concern to the attention of the Minister.

The Minister's staff admitted to the committee that equality is a concern when delivering any program in the territory, but the department felt that the benefits of offering youth justice committees outweighed the disadvantage that certain communities would face if they did not have access to a justice committee.

The Minister informed the committee that the onus is on communities to request justice committees, and that once a request is made, the department provide assistance in the establishment and operation of a committee.

The committee is pleased to learn that the department will be receptive to community requests for justice committees, and looks forward to witnessing the creation of such committees in all communities across the Northwest Territories.

Annual Reports

The committee believes that annual reports from youth justice committees would be a useful device to help gauge their performance. Committee asked the department if annual reporting had been considered.

A member of the Minister's staff informed the committee that the department was in the process of developing an information system to collect data relevant to the performance of youth justice committees.

The committee will be pleased to view these reports on an annual basis.

"and respond to"

Major Hoeft brought to the attention of the committee Section 8(2)(c)(iv) which lists those characteristics that ought to be respected when measures are taken against young persons who commit offences, and instructs that "the needs of aboriginal young persons and young persons with special requirements" be further responded to.

Major Hoeft suggested to committee that the characteristics of gender, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences listed in the legislation should also be responded to, as this suggested stronger consideration be given than if those characteristics were only respected.

The committee appreciated the rationale behind Major Hoeft's suggestion, and asked the Minister to explain the intent of the legislation's wording.

The Minister's staff informed the committee that the wording of 8(2)(c)(iv) mirrors exactly that of the Canadian Youth Criminal Justice Act. Further, it is important that the legislation in place in the Northwest Territories has the same principles as federal legislation. These same principles and philosophy must be applied to those who may be in conflict with territorial enactments as those who are dealing with Criminal Code or federal enactments.

The committee accepted the explanation provided by the Minister's staff, and sought no amendment to this section.

Admission Of Guilt

Major Hoeft shared her concern with members of the committee that a youth who appears before a youth justice committee will be obliged to admit guilt, thereby contravening the justice principle that an individual should not be forced to self-incriminate.

Members brought this concern to the attention of the Minister.

The Minister's staff assured the committee that any youth who come before a youth justice committee will not have to admit guilt, per se, but will have to "accept responsibility." From a legal perspective, accepting responsibility is not the same as admitting guilt.

The Minister's staff stated any youth unwilling to "accept responsibility" is under no obligation to appear before a youth justice committee, and could instead appear before a court. Youth justice committees are an option for youth who are prepared to accept responsibility and who prefer an alternative to court regarding consequences.

The committee was satisfied youth will be protected from self-incrimination under the new legislation, and did not seek an amendment.

Legal Aid For Youth

The committee was informed by the department that youth always have the right to consult with legal counsel before deciding whether to appear before a youth justice committee or a court of law. This led committee to question whether youth have adequate access to legal aid.

The committee is waiting for a formal response from the department on whether or not legal aid is available to youth who become involved in the youth justice system and the option of extrajudicial measures.

The committee is seeking assurance from the department that youth have adequate access to legal aid at any stage of proceedings, and regardless of whether extrajudicial measures are invoked.

Youth Under Age 12

The Youth Justice Act covers those youth between the ages of 12 and 17. Members of the committee are aware that youth under the age of 12 do become involved in criminal activity.

Members asked the Minister what considerations would be made for youths under the age of 12 who became involved in crime.

The Minister's staff informed members that the Youth Justice Act is not the appropriate legislative tool to deal with a young child who breaks the law. Other acts such as the Child and Family Services Act are better equipped to meet the needs of troubled youth under the age of 12.

Furthermore, the Minister's staff explained that coverage of 12 to 17-year-olds has a long-standing history in legislation, and there has been very little impetus to lower the age of inclusion.

The committee was satisfied that 12 years of age is an appropriate lower end for coverage by the Youth Justice Act and did not seek an amendment.

Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to thank the citizens who voiced their concerns for and appreciation of the Youth Justice Act, as well as those citizens and organizations who made the effort to prepare written submissions for consideration by the committee.

Bill 26 is an important piece of legislation that aligns territorial and federal law. It will allow community involvement in the sentencing of youth, and will provide greater flexibility in sentencing options for those who find themselves in conflict with territorial enactments.

In conclusion, the Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to extend particular thanks to the citizens of Wha Ti, and Major Karen Hoef of the Salvation Army. Members of the committee developed a deeper appreciation for the importance of this bill from their passionate and informative presentations.

During clause-by-clause review of the bill, one amendment of a minor and non-substantial nature was agreed to.

Following the clause-by-clause review of the bill, a motion was carried to report Bill 26 as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The chair now recognizes the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 18-14(6) And Move To Committee Of The Whole, Carried

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleagues, Mr. Braden and Mrs. Groenewegen, for helping me deliver the report. Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on the review of Bill 21, Protection Against Family Violence Act; Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act; and Bill 26, Youth Justice Act. Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable for Hay River South, that Committee Report 18-14(6) be received by the Legislative Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. We have a motion. The motion is in order. Is the House ready for the question?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

The committee report is now received by the Legislative Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 89-14(6): Revised Business Incentive Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two items I would like to table. One is a press released dated August 15, 2003, entitled revised business incentive policy.

Tabled Document 90-14(6): Public Information On Government Contracting And Revised Business Incentive Policy

The second is a package that has been going out to businesses in the North. It's entitled Contracting with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. 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: Bill 19, Write-off of Debts Act, 2003-2003; Bill 20, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2003-2004; and Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Safety Act, with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I call Committee of the Whole to order. We have a number of items to discuss. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend we consider Bill 19, followed by Bill 20.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Will the Minister of Finance introduce the bill? Mr. Handley.

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

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the purpose of the Write-off of Debts Act, 2003-2004, is to authorize the write-off of the debts listed in the schedule to the act.

Pursuant to section 24 of the Financial Administration Act, the write-off of government assets or debts exceeding \$20,000, must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

Pursuant to section 92 of the Financial Administration Act, the write-off of debts owed to a public agency, exceeding \$20,000, must receive Legislative Assembly approval. The write-off of debts owed to the Workers' Compensation Board exceeding \$50,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

The write-off being proposed in this act will not require a new appropriation. The write-off will be charged against allowances for bad debts which were established in the department budget at the time it was determined that collection of the debt would be unlikely.

I wish to emphasize that the write-off of a debt does not relieve a debtor of the liability for repayment or mean that the government will not continue to attempt to collect the outstanding amount. Through continued reviews by my staff, future recovery of the debt may still be achieved. In addition, in the case of debts owed by companies, we track the principals of each firm for future credit reference.

Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to answer Members' questions on the proposed write-off. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. The chair recognizes the chairman of the standing committee, Mr. Dent.

Standing Committee On Accountability And Oversight's Comments

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 19, Write-off of Debts Act, 2003-2004, on August 28, 2003. This bill wrote off \$162,433.72 in debts owed to this government and its public agencies. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will write off this entire amount as it is comprised exclusively of student loans that have been deemed uncollectible.

The committee would like to thank the Minister of Finance and his officials for presenting the bill. This bill authorizes the write off of debts in accordance with the Financial Administration Act. Section 24 and 82 of the Financial Administration Act require an act for the write-off of a debt or an obligation owed to the government or public agency that is worth more than \$20,000.

Mr. Chair, no debt or obligation or part of a debt or obligation that is written off shall be remitted, satisfied or forgiven as a result of the write-off. Debts contained in the bill will be written off as they are considered uncollectible.

The write-off proposed in this act would not require a new appropriation. The write-off will be charged against allowances which were established in the respective department budget at the time it was determined that collection of the debt would be unlikely.

Mr. Chairman, during review of the bill, the committee suggested the department should do more to encourage qualified students to utilize the department's interest relief program. The program assists students who reside in the NWT and experience difficulty repaying their student loans. Based on their gross family income and number of dependents, monthly loan obligations could be deferred if monthly payments exceeded a proportion of their gross family income. While receiving interest relief, students do not pay the principle and the territorial government absorbs the interest. Students may receive up to 36 months of relief. For example, some former students may not earn enough income to service the interest portion of their student loan. Consequently, their debt continues to compound with no chance of successfully meeting a repayment plan. The interest relief program may provide some people a chance to get on their feet so they can start making loan payments later on.

Mr. Chairman, from documents provided to the committee by the government, committee members understand that very few students have accessed the program. From that, we presume that many students who might qualify for the program may not be aware of its existence. The committee encourages the department to undertake more diligent efforts to further publicize the interest relief program. It may help us to avoid writing off some loans in the future.

Mr. Chairman, following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 19, Write-off of Debts Act, 2002-2003, to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole. Additional comments or questions may be posed as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Does the Minister wish to bring in any witnesses? Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in.

Mr. Handley, for the record, could you introduce your witness, please?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with me is Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. The chair will open the floor to general comments. Mr. Dent.

General Comments

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, briefly, as alluded to in the comments from committee, in reviewing the details of this bill, we found that at least one of the people had been trying to make payments, but could just not possibly keep up. That's what led us to ask about the interest relief program and whether or not it was going to be publicized. I would just like to ask the Minister if he's had a chance to talk to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about that program and publicizing it so that people know that there is an opportunity for them not to have to declare bankruptcy or something else to get out of a debt, but this is a way that they could maybe defer

their payments for a couple of years to get themselves on a solid footing in a job and get themselves in a position where they could make payments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is making sure that all students are aware of the interest relief information. That information is now available on the student financial assistance Web site. It's in the student guide. It's with their notice to begin repayment. When they receive their first letter, their demand letter, before the files are sent to collections, they are notified again of it. They are notified as well when they are in default status. I think the departments, both Education and FMBS, are doing everything they can to make students are aware of this program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a brief question. We will be dealing with another bill later called Forgiveness of Debts Act. We are right now dealing with legislation that would enable the government to write off some debts that arise out of student loans. For the record, could I get the Minister or Mr. Voytilla to explain what the difference is between the debts the government writes off and the debts that are forgiven? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will let Mr. Voytilla explain the difference between those two.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The write-off is a debt that we have deemed to be unlikely of collection. So from an accounting perspective, we don't want to report it as an asset, as an accounts receivable, because we don't expect that it will be paid and realized. So we write it off. We take it off of our financial statements as an asset. That doesn't relieve the debtor of the obligation. We still vigorously pursue collection of the debt, but it would be inappropriate to report it as an asset because, in our view, it has little realizable value. That's a write-off. For the forgiveness, of course, is different than that. Forgiveness is where for various reasons, we are actually taking the debt off of our books and won't pursue it. Usually that's because a debtor has gotten released through the courts in a bankruptcy or there's been a negotiated settlement on the debt and we no longer have recourse to collect or there is some other valid reason or interest to do it. Sometimes debts that are owed by volunteer organizations or things like that where the organization no longer exists and there's no practicality in pursuing the debt are put forward for forgiveness as well.

The difference is, on forgiveness that's it, it's off our books, we don't pursue it anymore. The debt is forgiven.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Voytilla for elaborating on that end and answering to what I was actually going to ask next, which is, even though these debts will be written off, that collections will still be pursued because I appreciate that all these debts that are being written off arise

out of student loans and there are probably a number of legitimate cases where these people who had got loans from the government to pursue their educational goals were not able to pay that up and the government has deemed them almost uncollectible. At the same time, I know that there are hundreds of...Every year there are lots of people who get student loans and most of them are paying off their debts, so we want to make sure that everybody's treated equally and all those people who have the advantage of getting a student loan to go to school should be asked to pay back. I don't have any question on that. I just wanted to put that additional information on the record so that the public can be aware of the purpose of writing off debts of the government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. No question there. Are there further general comments? Clause by clause. Bill 19, Write-Off of Debts Act, 2003-2004.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Schedule of debts written off, total, \$162,433.72.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that Bill 19 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill 19 is now ready for third reading. I'd like to thank the Minister and his witness for appearing.

Okay, as previously agreed, we'll go on to review Bill 20, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2003-2004. I'll call on the Minister for opening remarks on Bill 20. Minister Handley.

Bill 20: Forgiveness Of Debts Act, 2003-2004

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The purpose of the Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2003-2004, is to authorize the forgiveness of certain debts listed in a schedule to the act. Pursuant to section 25(1) of the Financial Administration Act, the forgiveness of a debt or obligation to the government exceeding \$1,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval. When a debt is forgiven, no further collection action shall be pursued.

The forgivenesses being proposed in this act will not require a new appropriation. Allowances for doubtful accounts were charged to an appropriation and at the time it was determined that the collection of the debts was considered unlikely.

The accounts being recommended for forgiveness are the result of bankruptcy, compromise settlements and/or public interest. In cases where a compromise settlement is reached the following factors have been considered:

- the possibility of future recoveries;
- the cost to continue legal actions; and
- the value of security. For example, do the personal guarantees hold a realizable worth.

Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared to answer Members' questions on these proposed forgivenesses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. I call on the chairman of the standing committee, Mr. Roland.

Standing Committee On Accountability And Oversight Comments

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 20, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2003-2004, on August 28, 2003. The committee would like to thank the Minister of Finance and his officials for presenting the bill.

This bill authorizes the forgiveness of debts in accordance with section 25 of the Financial Administration Act. This section requires an act be passed through the House for the forgiveness of debt or obligation owed to the government that exceeds \$1,000. This act will forgive \$952,881.09.

As the Minister explained, a debt forgiven when the government has decided that the collection of the debt is not possible and no further action will be taken to recover the debt, many accounts are forgiven as a result of bankruptcies and negotiated settlements.

Committee was told that forgiven debts do not require new appropriations. Allowances for doubtful accounts were previously charged to an appropriation when it was determined that collection was unlikely.

The original Bill 20 proposed the forgiveness of \$1,071,413.47 in debts owed to the government. However, the government made last minute amendments to the bill that resulted in an adjustment of \$952,881.09. Had this bill been considered as scheduled in the June session instead of the fall session of the Legislative Assembly, a number of debts would have been forgiven that would have required further adjustments after their collection. This also caused the committee to question just how exhaustive the collection process is.

The government explained that payments were received from clients that were not anticipated when the accounts were advanced for forgiveness recommendations, as all reasonable efforts had been expended. The new net amount reflects changes in circumstances to three accounts. One account was paid in full. Another account received an additional payment from a negotiated settlement. The third recommendation for forgiveness of debt was withdrawn as one of the principals did not receive an absolute discharge from bankruptcy as originally reported. Once all dividends, if any, are received and the remaining principal's bankruptcy is absolute, a new recommendation for forgiveness may be considered at a later date.

Committee members suggested that in the future the government should verify the findings of the bankruptcy trustee. Apparently the trustee informed the government in error that the client in question had been absolutely discharged from bankruptcy. The committee notes that if the original bill had passed in the June session, that client would have been prematurely absolved of his debt to this government.

Mr. Chairman, following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 20, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2003-2004, to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole. Additional comments or questions to Members may be posed as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Does the Minister wish to bring any witnesses? Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witness in, please.

For the record, Minister Handley, could you introduce your witness, please?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me is Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Chair will open the floor to general comments. Mr. Krutko.

General Comments

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is around the area of bankruptcy. The legislation that we have that was followed in the Northwest Territories when someone files bankruptcy is very outdated compared to other jurisdictions such as Alberta. What we're seeing is there seems to be a trend that a lot of these people that have these outstanding debts have gone to Alberta and declared bankruptcy because they can get a better deal by filing for bankruptcy in Alberta than they would in the Northwest Territories.

I've raised this question many times in the House, in the previous 13th Assembly and now here again. I've talked to federal people and people who've been involved in the bankruptcy legislation and helping people with bankruptcy. They have a real problem when they come to the Northwest Territories to understand what's offered through the bankruptcy exemptions. Yet right next door in Alberta it seems like it's a pretty straightforward, stream-lined process.

I'd like to ask the Minister, what is this government doing to hopefully not start to see a trend where everyone that has a debt with this government is now going to go to Alberta to declare bankruptcy because they can get more of that debt written off and be able to have more security by way of holding household items? Have you looked at this and are you talking to our federal counterparts about amending our bankruptcy legislation so we do bring it in line with other jurisdictions such as Alberta?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it's a good point and it's one I'll have to take up with the Minister of Justice and he, I expect, would want to work with the federal government on this as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Does the Minister have any idea when this is going to happen and are we going to see it in the life of this government, or is this something that we can put forth by way of a recommendation to the new government coming in? We are at the 11th hour here and I don't realistically believe that we've been...I believe that this was one of the things we had on our wish list when we got elected to this government to look at something like that and today nothing is happening.

I'd just like to ask the Minister, how soon can you get back to us on this? Are we going to see any action on this or is this something that we have to pass on to the next government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will speak with the Minister of Justice today, if we have time, or in the morning. This is really an issue that will have to be dealt with through our Minister of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another area that I have concerns about in going through this process is that there are people being able to work out these negotiated settlements to the tune of \$5,000 to forgive a debt of some \$200,000, and I think that if that's the avenue that's going to be taken are we consistent? Did we offer that to other clients that we have out there who may have a similar predicament? They have a debt with the government and they can simply make a negotiated offer for pennies on the dollar and basically walk away from this. Yet we're going after students with student loans and saying sorry, we're going to continue to hound you for the rest of your days to recoup this student loan. Yet we're writing off hundreds of thousands of dollars to certain clients by simply negotiating a negotiated settlement with a minimum amount. I think that if we're going to be fair, let's be fair across the board to everyone, including students with student loans.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we always attempt to get every penny that's owed to us. Every bad debt is a little bit different. They're all unique in their own way. Certainly we use the same criteria in arriving at compromised settlements with anyone who has debts with us. We look at what the possibilities are of getting some future recoveries from the individual. What's the cost of the legal action we might take in order to get that money back? Also, the value of any security we may have against the debt. Is it worth anything? We use the same criteria, but I have to say, every one of these settlements deals with a little bit different case. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Are we, as a government, going to reform our whole collection system? To use an example, I have an elderly lady who has cancer who's been going through chemo treatment, she's stuck in arrears with housing and she's gone through a divorce with her husband. She's stuck holding the bag because the lease was in her name, yet her husband worked and he was making the majority of the income. He's no longer there and she's stuck with a large debt and no real means of paying it back. In order to get into housing, in most communities social housing is the only area you can get

housing. Because of these arrears it has an effect on the thing. Technically speaking, it's not her fault that because of circumstance she finds herself with this debt, but there's no way this government will consider writing that off. Same thing with student loans.

I'd like to ask the Minister, are we looking at considering revamping our whole lending system or collection system or even write-off of debts to have an inclusive system that we look at everything from education grants to housing or loans and other grants and loans that are out there? That's what really ticks people off is, they know that there are millions of dollars being written off every year by this government by way of business grants and loans to businesses and people simply just get up and walk away and it's written off. But an elderly lady trying to raise a family, dealing with coping with a disease such as cancer and to have this over your head and the government saying, sorry, there's nothing we can do about it, you have to pay it back. So I'd just like to know, have you looked at reforming some of these types of write-offs in the whole government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, our policy is the same. We want to collect the money that we can. We want to do it in the same way, using the same criteria I just mentioned a few minutes ago, in each of the cases. So it's possible for anyone to attempt to reach a settlement and we would have to use our judgment whether or not that was a fair arrangement to get into whether there really is no way of being able to collect. It wouldn't matter if it was a student loan or housing arrears. The Housing Corporation has their own policy on collection of arrears.

I think in any kind of situation we first of all want to collect the money. Second is that we want to ensure that if we're getting into a settlement, that there really isn't any hope of getting any more money out of it and so on. In terms of compassionate reasons, because someone is elderly and possibly sick, those, I suppose, also come into play, but again that comes to part of whether or not we really feel there's any chance of recovering any more of the money owed to us. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Well, that's exactly my point. In order to stay within public housing and in arrears you have to make the attempt to pay or you get booted out. Yet we know of hundreds of thousands of dollars that's been basically spent and never repaid. Also we have major outstanding debts with different agencies of this government; the Power Corporation, the Housing Corporation. What attempts are we making for them to pay down their debt? Yet we're getting elderly people in social housing in the Northwest Territories to have to pay off their arrears. When is the government going to get those people who owe us some arrears too, like the Power Corporation and Housing Corporation, to pay down some of our debt? That's where it's coming from is those two organizations. If we're going to go after the elderly lady with cancer, why couldn't we go after those corporations that continue to spend and never pay back their debt?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We want to be fair to everybody. We want to be fair to the people who are paying their debts, even though it may be a bit of a hardship on them. We want to be fair to people who are unable to pay their debts. There are limits and there are rules in terms of which ones come here and which ones the administrator of whatever the program is has the authority to make the settlement. I'm sure there are settlements being made by administration in the Housing Corporation and other places every day that we never see.

The main objective here, though, has to be to get the money, but also be fair to everybody. I think often people don't realize that this avenue is open to them and if there's an area where we can make some improvement in the future in another government is probably in making sure that people are aware of the fact that they're expected to pay back the money. If they can't then we don't just send a collection agent in. There are ways of working with them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. The chair will recognize Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I move we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion on the floor is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

The chair will rise and report progress.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, committee has been considering Bill 19, Write-off of Debts Act, 2003-2004, and Bill 20, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2003-2004, and would like to report process, and would like to report that Bill 19 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre seconds the motion. Ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development at adjournment tonight; tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Orders of the Day for Thursday, October 2nd.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 15, To Rescind the Revised Business Incentive Policy
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
 - Bill 31, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, No. 3
 - Bill 32, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2003-2004
 - Bill 33, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2002-2003
 - Bill 34, Tlicho Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement Act
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 20, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2003-2004
 - Bill 21, Protection Against Family Violence Act
 - Bill 22, Waste Recovery and Reduction Act
 - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Safety Act
 - Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act

- Bill 26, Youth Justice Act

- Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and
Protection of Privacy Act

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 19, Write-off of Debts Act, 2003-2004

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, October 2, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.