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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2000****MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

MR. SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 27-14(2): Commissioner Dan Marion**

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I congratulated Ms. Glenna Hansen on her appointment to the Commissioner's Office. Today, I would like to thank the current Commissioner, Mr. Dan Marion, for his service to the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Marion served four years as Deputy Commissioner until April of last year, when he became the first Commissioner of the new Northwest Territories.

Although he currently resides in Rae-Edzo, Mr. Marion has, over the years, lived in many other Northwest Territories communities. In each place he has lived, he has participated in community life and contributed to the well-being of those around him.

Before his appointment as Commissioner, Mr. Marion already led a very active public life. He has served the people of his community and the Northwest Territories in a number of capacities.

He has been elected eight times to the Rae-Edzo Hamlet Council, serving as mayor of Rae-Edzo for three terms. He is a former member of the Rae-Edzo School Society, a past executive director of the Dene Band Development Corporation and has served as a member of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation's board of directors.

Through his own business interests and through business organizations in which he participated, Mr. Marion also contributed to the economic growth of his community.

Mr. Marion's life experiences prepared him well for his duties as the first Commissioner of the new Northwest Territories. During his travels last year, Mr. Marion was known in every community he visited. His familiarity with the people, history and geography of the North has enriched the activities of his office.

Mr. Marion can relate to people on a one-to-one basis. When you are talking with him, you know that he is focused on what you are saying. This personal touch carried through in his duties as Commissioner. He cares about people.

Mr. Marion, like most Northerners, has also learned to adapt to changing conditions and make the best of any given situation. I can recall an event in Deline where he was asked to represent Canada in his role as Commissioner.

As the day unfolded, circumstances beyond anyone's control resulted in Mr. Marion representing not only his country but also two absent federal Ministers.

Faced with the task of delivering three speeches, Mr. Marion decided instead to combine them into one. He then proceeded to pick and choose the best parts of each of the speeches on hand, careful to give credit where credit was due, all while standing at the podium making his presentation. I thought he was a very resourceful Commissioner indeed.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, all of the Ministers and myself, I would like once again to thank Mr. Marion for his years as Deputy Commissioner and for his time he served so well as Commissioner. I wish him the best in his future endeavours. Mahsi.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier Kakfwi. Later today, the House will be showing its appreciation to Commissioner Marion in a presentation. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement on United Nations World Day for Water**

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the United Nations had designated March 22nd the World Day for Water. Since 1993, World Day for Water has drawn attention to the importance of water to human life.

It is important to consider how we must protect the world's water resources. Water is an important part of our daily lives. We need water to drink, for cooking and for cleaning. Water is also needed for agriculture and industry.

In Canada, we are fortunate to have an abundance of water to meet our daily needs. Sometimes we take water for granted. Other countries are not so lucky. There are many people around the world who do not have access to safe and affordable drinking water. Many more do not have access to basic sanitation for their water sources.

Between three and four million people die every year from water-borne diseases. This is not always a problem somewhere else. As Canadians, we must keep that in mind.

The Northwest Territories has an abundance of fresh water resources, but this does not mean we will always have access to clean, safe water supplies. Recently, problems with THMs in Fort McPherson's water supply show us that we must continue to take great care of our water resources in the Northwest Territories.

The World Day for Water recognizes the importance of safe water in our lives. The theme for this year was "Water of the 21st Century". This theme was chosen because we have to make decisions on how we protect future water resources. Drinking water must be treated to protect us and keep everyone healthy. Waste water must also be treated before it is disposed, to avoid pollutants in our water supplies.

Careful and effective management of our water supply today...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Krutko, your time has expired.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for the Mackenzie Delta is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Krutko, you may continue.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Careful and effective management of our water supply today will help ensure continued access to safe water for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, access to safe water is an important issue in our communities. I would like to invite my fellow MLAs to join me today in recognizing that water plays an important role in all our lives, and we must take care in protecting that resource. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Rationale For Voting Against Motion to Reduce Executive Supplementary Funding

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the committee of the whole discussion yesterday, I voted against a motion to reduce the government's supplementary budget by \$160,000. Due to a procedural misunderstanding on my part, I missed an opportunity to explain my position. I would like to take this opportunity to do so.

Mr. Speaker, the stated reasons for this motion were: to reinforce the importance of fiscal responsibility; and as a symbolic gesture, to force the Premier and the Executive to lead by example.

I carefully listened to both sides of the argument on this motion in and out of this House. In the end, I concluded that I could not vote for it for a number of reasons. At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that I respect the right of all Members of this House to introduce and pass a motion. But I also respect my right to disagree and state the reason.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, in my view, this motion was not rationally connected to the stated reasons. With respect to the need for a symbolic gesture on the part of the Premier and the Executive, I note this was already accomplished by the

reduction of \$100,000 made in the interim budget. There was no further rationale for asking for another symbolic gesture.

On the issue of fiscal responsibility, Mr. Speaker, I want there to be no doubt that I believe in this government's need for fiscal responsibility in all manners of spending. But I also believe that this cannot be achieved by a piecemeal approach of a miniscule reduction of an arbitrarily picked number from a small section of one department.

Mr. Speaker, in this Session, we have reviewed and passed an interim appropriation upwards of \$326 million. The capital spending had to take a cut of \$10 million. We have heard the protest from every Member in this House for the cuts that had to be made in their own riding.

The fiscal situation of this government is in a dire situation. It calls for a big vision and big decisions, not small, symbolic gestures.

Mr. Speaker, we know we need more money than we have. For example, as I have stated many times in this House, the Highway No. 3 reconstruction that my constituents want so badly will cost \$60 million to build. But the reality is, this is more than the total capital interim budget of this government. It does not take a math genius to realize that the way for me to find \$60 million is not a small, miniscule, irrational cut of \$160,000 from last year's budget.

I believe what we need is for this House to work together for a common vision and fiscal leadership.

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, your time has expired.

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

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Range Lake is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Ms. Lee, you may continue.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I believe what we need is for this House to work together for a common vision and fiscal leadership. That requires an honest and comprehensive debate between both sides of this House on all revenue options and spending priorities.

In the short time we have had, we have not had the opportunity to do this. Further, Mr. Speaker, until such time as we have a party system, we operate under a consensus system. For better or worse, this means there is no official opposition party in this House. I know my voters did not elect me to oppose everything in this House. They elected me to use all of my resources to make good decisions and to contribute to a good government for the good of all people.

I firmly believe, Mr. Speaker, as an Ordinary Member in a consensus government, I have a real opportunity to do that. I have a say on setting priorities and setting the agenda for the government. I will not forfeit the responsibility by a piecemeal approach. I will not give up that leadership role.

In my view, this motion was contrary to the real power and influence I have in this House in the overall decision-making process.

Mr. Speaker, I helped select this Cabinet. I want to see it work. At the very least, I want to give it a chance to work. I know the people of the Northwest Territories want this government to work. It has only been ten weeks since the Cabinet was selected. Personally, if I were given a job of governing, I would expect people to give me more than ten weeks to prove myself.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as we close this Session today, I know the Premier will be setting out soon to meet with the Prime Minister to discuss the need for investment in our people and economy in more detail. I want to express my support for his endeavour, and let him know I sincerely hope he succeeds in advancing this agenda. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, if he does not succeed, there is no doubt in my mind that everyone in this House will face a decision 100 times tougher than a motion to reduce a mere \$160,000 from the government's budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on PeopleSoft System

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to discuss and speak to the issue of the PeopleSoft system. During the recent committee of the whole review of the Financial Management Board Secretariat, I started to ask questions about the PeopleSoft project. With each answer I was given, the whole situation looked worse.

Mr. Speaker, during the 1990s, the government used a home-grown human resource system to track people and positions, which also had the ability to track competitions. This was not a perfect system, mostly because departments did not keep up information. However, from what I have been told, the staff found it very easy to use and access information. It could be used without extensive training.

Someone decided we needed a better system. The Financial Management Board Secretariat came up with the pre-made PeopleSoft system. The project has been three years in the making so far and has cost millions of dollars and thousands of hours of time, at a time when we are trying to watch our costs and make the best use of our resources.

Based on the information we have received, Mr. Speaker, I have a concern that we may have bought a white elephant. The system was supposed to be up and running early in 1999. Health and social services boards are still not all on board. The project is \$2 million over budget so far. Although the Minister indicated otherwise, when you look in the GNWT's phone book, it shows more than a dozen people still working full time in the Financial Management Board Secretariat on implementing this system.

I also understand it does not have the ability to track competition information. If it does, this information is not available to departments. The users complain, Mr. Speaker. I have been approached countless times about how complicated the system is and how non-user-friendly it is. The training alone is five days, with imported PeopleSoft trainers. This is even more money, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we also discovered the system runs a payroll, which the old system did not. However, when it does run a payroll, three days out of every ten, the system is unavailable for any other use. So for 70 percent of the time, no information on employees or positions can be checked, added or revised. If you have a problem with your benefits during that time period, you have to wait. It would seem we have a system that costs millions but can only do one thing at a time.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Miltenberger, your time has expired.

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

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have also heard that any changes to reflect specific GNWT needs are very difficult and costly, and of course have to be done by the PeopleSoft company, which means more contracts. I point out that in the last contract document alone, there was \$1.3 million in PeopleSoft contracts.

A clear reflection on how well this program works was made apparent when we talked about Nunavut. Nunavut was supposed to be a partner in this system, Mr. Speaker, but they were so dissatisfied that they pulled out and have left us holding the bag, and a leaking bag at that, Mr. Speaker.

The bottom line was supposed to be better information. The recent information and dispute over positions in this House, and the last document tabled by the Minister responsible for Finance, a document that is a masterpiece of equivocation and plausible deniability, shows the information is no better. The departments and the government cannot clearly define where all the positions or the resources are.

We have made a significant investment, Mr. Speaker, but we have to take a careful look at where we are going and what we are doing. Do we keep sinking our money into this PeopleSoft system, which can and may be, and all practical indications are that it is a black hole in terms of finances.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure this situation does not occur again. As we look at tangible asset systems and pension systems, we cannot afford to have \$2 million cost overruns. During the next Session and business plans, I will have further questions for the Minister on this issue. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Release of Towards a Better Tomorrow – 14th Legislative Assembly Vision and Priorities Document

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly believe that the future of the Northwest Territories is bright and holds great promise. In order to reach that potential, we felt that it was important to set a direction for the next four years and to share it with Northerners so that both the Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories can be held accountable.

Later today, on behalf of all Members, I will be tabling our vision document called, Towards a Better Tomorrow. It provides a framework that sets a broad strategic direction for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Towards a Better Tomorrow offers a vision for the future, sets attainable goals, and offers a plan of how we will get the job done over the next four years. This spirit of optimism was inspired by the words of a prayer by Fort Providence elder, Mitch Landry.

We believe the goals outlined in Towards a Better Tomorrow are attainable if we all work together to overcome the challenges. "We" means all of us, working in partnership with other governments, communities, regions, families and individuals, because the territorial government cannot accomplish this alone.

Mr. Speaker, that is why it is important that we develop a shared, common vision and work together to put our framework into action. Based on what we have heard from our constituents, we developed this vision document and now we want to find out if we got it right. This requires hearing back from Northerners to see if we are on the right track. We would like to encourage Northerners to participate by sharing their thoughts and ideas by contacting their MLA.

The document will be distributed to every residential and business mailbox in the Northwest Territories, and to a broad range of governments and agencies. It is also posted on the Legislative Assembly website.

Mr. Speaker, it is our hope that we can go down this road together so we can make a difference and reach the potential that is out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on First Birthday of the New Northwest Territories

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is April 1st. I know it is April Fool's day, but only until noon. It is also the first day of the new fiscal year, a significant day for at least some of us in government.

But it also has other significance, as it is our first birthday as the new Northwest Territories.

-- Applause

Is it a cause for celebration? We all know the history and the reasons. It is our friends and neighbours in Nunavut who are the ones who really have something to celebrate, or at least ponder, about their first year as Canada's newest partner in confederation.

Here in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, I expect our first birthday will be a rather melancholy kind of day. I do not see any plans for parades or fireworks. However, I am not disappointed.

That is because we have not finished the job of building the new Northwest Territories. In reality, we have just started, and I am in no hurry. I take a page from the history of Nunavut, which

goes back 30 years to the days when John Amogolik, Peter Erneck, and Tagak Curley created their vision for their own homeland.

It took them two decades to achieve their dream. We are a bit like them, Mr. Speaker. We have big ideas, as well as big problems. We are still struggling to get the powers in Ottawa to really pay attention to us.

Later today, our colleague, Mr. Nitah, will table our Assembly's vision of how we will proceed towards a better tomorrow. We will have more birthdays, Mr. Speaker, before we really, truly say we have come of age and we have become, in every sense of the word, the new Northwest Territories. It will take time. But by then, we will have carved out our place as a strong, proud and prosperous part of Canada.

So I say, happy first birthday to our neighbours and colleagues in Nunavut. And to the people of the Northwest Territories, I say our big day still lies ahead of us. We still have a lot of talking and thinking and commitment ahead of us before the day when we, too, will unfurl our new flag, our new purpose, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, our new name for the rest of the world to envy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Ministerial Visits

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on March 13th and 14th, I had the privilege of visiting the communities of Rae Lakes and Wha Ti with the Minister responsible for Housing.

The feedback I received was overwhelmingly positive. Residents were pleased to see a Minister and an MLA make the effort to visit the community together. People could see that we are working together to hear and address community concerns about housing.

I would value the opportunity to visit my constituents with other Ministers, and to perhaps do some home visits. I think it sends a powerful message to our people that we are actively involved and committed to creating a better North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Accountability Through Access to Quality and Detailed Information

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also want to be part of a team that builds a strong, new Northwest Territories. Although we have had some trying times over the interim appropriation, early in our life, I think those are growing pains.

I want to be able to contribute to the development of the Northwest Territories in a positive way. That is why, Mr. Speaker, when I review interim appropriations, the main estimates, bills that come forward, I request a fair bit of

information to ensure I am accurately reading what is put before me.

Having a bit of experience from the 13th Assembly, I like to use that experience to help me continue to do a good job, or at least try to. Mr. Speaker, we know it has been a short time to get up and running and put an interim appropriation in place. We saw it pass. We heard a lot of questions, and there was some debate.

We have put the first piece of the puzzle in place. Mr. Speaker, I believe yesterday the Minister responsible for Finance showed a bit of commitment by tabling the capital plan comparisons to put that information out there. I know it is a short time and the departments were probably working long hours to make sure this information was available.

It is that information that I require to do my job properly. As I reviewed the information in the comparison to the interim appropriation, I think I will still need a bit of clarification. Some of the numbers that are in this document are different from what I have viewed in the interim appropriation.

Mr. Speaker, I talked about doing a good job. The government has talked about accountability and transparency. Working together, we can show the people of the Northwest Territories that we are all working for the best cause, and that is the people, not the government.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will seek further clarification from the Minister responsible for Finance later today. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Canadian Championship Dog Derby

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the Canadian Championship Dog Derby. Mr. Speaker, this derby has a history going back more than 40 years. It is a grueling race which takes place here, starting on the ice of Frame Lake and out onto Great Slave, for a total amount of 150 miles spread over three days.

Mr. Speaker, the race starts today at 12:30 p.m., and at 12:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. This year, it features more than 20 teams from across Canada, some from as far away as Spain.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Championship Dog Derby is now part of a points formula for mushers, which means, as befits a world class race, it will attract more mushers from across Canada and the rest of the world in the future.

Mr. Speaker, dog-team racing is a very important part of our history. It has produced some world-class mushers from the North. On behalf of all of the Members today, I would like to wish all of the mushers good speed and safe racing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. I have it on good authority that it is a very fast trail this year. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement on Recognition of Fort Providence Pages

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is the fifth and final day for the pages that are here from Fort Providence. I want to thank them for coming here and working for us. They have all worked very hard, been polite, patient and able to maintain their sense of humour.

We were off to a difficult start, this being the first time since I have been elected that we have brought pages from Fort Providence. We had problems with accommodations, our food arrangements, and yesterday our chaperone had food poisoning. It has been quite an ordeal. I am scared to check how much homework was done. But overall, the pages have been very patient, and I want to thank them for that. They have been very good company for me.

I want to say thank you to Robyn, Ashley, Victoria and Julie, and also to the chaperone, Tamara. Most of all, I want to say thank you to the staff of the Legislative Assembly who made this all possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Indeed, our appreciation goes out to the pages for the excellent job they have done in this House. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on Funding for Adult Basic Education

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we come to the end of the fiscal year, I think we have a very bright future. I think there are a lot of positive things ahead. I would like to take a minute to mention one of the things I consider not so positive. It is the end of the fiscal year, and at midnight tonight, funding for the Community Skills for Work program in Education, Culture and Employment will sunset.

Mr. Speaker, this will mean that adult basic education will take a million dollar a year hit. I certainly think ABE should be one of this government's priorities and a priority for all Northerners. I do not think it is fair to suggest to people who were not able to receive their education in their younger years, that we are simply going to write them off. I am hoping this government will come forward in its business plans with money for adult basic education.

Looking down the list of groups that will be affected by the funding cuts, we have a thick list here, Mr. Speaker. From Yellowknife, I notice the Yellowknife Association for Community Living will take a hit. I notice that the Native Women's Association will take a hit. I notice the Vocational Trade Centre will also take a hit, as will the YWCA of Yellowknife. I am disappointed. I think these are all very important programs. These are very dedicated and committed groups who deliver the service. I think it is a sad day.

As this sunsets tonight at midnight, I am saddened. I hope this government will look to find money in the mains when we come back in June for these programs. I think the amount of money, being that it is one million dollars, does not seem like a lot of money. When one of my colleagues suggests that \$160,000, which we cut from the budget yesterday, is inconsequential and trivial, I find that hard to accept. I do not feel I was part of something trivial or inconsequential. I think it is important that this government focuses resources on adult basic education and other worthwhile programs. I will have some questions for

the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment later today, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Edmonton Oilers Alumni Hockey Game

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last evening, I had the opportunity to play with a number of minor hockey players from Yellowknife. We played against the Edmonton Oilers Alumni hockey team.

I mentioned to the young, aspiring teammates of mine that I would make a Member's statement congratulating them on their fine effort. Mr. Speaker, I recollect my youthful days as an athlete, looking up to idols of the past.

I sensed a similar emotion in the dressing room last night, as the young aspiring hockey players prepared to go on the ice. These young players displayed a good sense of sportsmanship, and I could see the hard work they put into trying to defeat the alumni team.

I apologize to the Members for losing my line-up card, but I am sure they know who I am talking about.

I especially want to say thanks to my defence partner, master Zeb Fournier, for bailing me out on a few occasions, as I lost more than a step or two. I would also like to thank Grand Chief Billy Erasmus for arranging my participation in this game. I should also mention that Mr. Harold Cook also played on the same team. Mr. Cook and I were teammates on the National Junior Cross-Country Ski team in 1968-69. That tells you how old I am.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that as future fundraising activities for smaller communities, we can introduce such events at that level. As the Minister responsible for Youth, I am looking forward to working with other Members to find ways of bringing teams such as the Edmonton Oilers Alumni to their communities to broaden this interest level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Recognition of Hay River Pages

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all of us who serve in this Legislature acquired our interest in public service from some experience in our lives or ideals that were instilled in us by role models. For many of us, this may have occurred many years ago in our youth.

One small way by which we can reach out to young people in our constituencies is through offering to sponsor them for first-hand experience in the Legislature through our paging program.

Today, I am pleased to recognize two fine young women from my riding of Hay River South who have served as pages during this past week. Christine Morgan and Holly Schauerte, the niece of our esteemed deputy clerk, have had a chance to observe the process in this House. I hope it has been a positive experience, which might lead them to consider putting their names forward for elected public office at some point in their future.

Hearing Ms. Lee's Member's statement today has reminded me again of how important it is to have strong women in positions of leadership. Holly and Christine have represented themselves and Hay River well, and I thank them for their service to this House this week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Question 170-14(2): Senior Housing Programs

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was asked a question by Mr. Krutko on March 30, 2000, regarding the amount spent by the Government of the Northwest Territories for the Alaskan Seniors Pilot Project.

Mr. Speaker, there will be no cost to the Government of the Northwest Territories for the pilot project to construct a five-unit seniors' complex in the community of Stebbins, Alaska. All costs for the pilot project are being borne by the Government of the United States of America through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation expects to make money from this sale, which will also benefit Northwest Territories manufacturers, suppliers, and a Northwest Territories construction company, which will be sub-contracted to build the complex. What the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation brings to the table is its expertise in Arctic construction and logistics.

This deal has been termed a pilot project because it is the first time the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has worked in conjunction with the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. If this project is successful, there is the potential for increased business with these two American organizations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Premier Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three returns to oral questions.

Return to Question 138-14(2): Arsenic Transported Within the City of Yellowknife

The first return is to a question asked by Ms. Lee on March 28, 2000. I am responding as the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, regarding arsenic transport within the City of Yellowknife.

In response to the Member's question, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has developed the following information on the transportation of mine ore between the Giant and Miramar mines:

As part of the process being used by Miramar Mining Ltd. to operate the Giant Mine, approximately 300 tons of gold-containing rock is transported daily by truck between the mines. Other than the normal traffic risks associated with such large vehicles using the road system in Yellowknife, no additional risks are thought to exist because of the nature of the rock being transported.

I will be providing additional written information to the Member regarding the monitoring of this activity that she can make available to her constituents.

Return to Question 99-14(2): NWT Labour Legislation

My next return is to a question asked by Mr. Dent on March 21, 2000. I am responding as the Premier, regarding NWT labour legislation.

A preliminary review has been done of steps required for the Government of the Northwest Territories to enact territorial labour legislation and pension standards legislation. The first step would be for the federal government to agree to devolve this responsibility. Currently, the priorities on the devolution agenda we are developing with aboriginal governments are northern control over northern resources and resource revenue sharing.

In the interim, our government will continue to urge the federal government to be vigilant when regulating private pension plans and amend its pension and labour legislation, which would address the concerns raised to date.

Return to Question 119-14(2): Listing of Summer Student Employment Opportunities

The third response, Mr. Speaker, is to a question asked by Mr. Miltenberger on March 24, 2000, concerning a listing of summer student employment opportunities. I am again responding as the Premier.

On March 24, 2000, Mr. Miltenberger, MLA for Thebacha, asked for information on the formal process that is in place within the Government of the Northwest Territories to identify student employment opportunities.

In late January-early February each year, corporate human resources services in the Department of the Executive begins to notify students about the central referral service. This notification includes advertisements and information in the GNWT's Student Financial Assistance students' newsletter. Resumes from students generally start to arrive in late February. Departments are also reminded about the referral service.

At the same time, departments begin to identify potential opportunities for students. This includes reviewing specific project work as well as summer replacement needs. By early April, all departments have an initial list of possible summer jobs.

Between May and August, departments may also identify needs for additional casual staff and will provide those opportunities to students as well.

To date, our government has identified 221 possible casual positions for student summer employment. Details on these positions by department and community-region, have been provided to Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Ms. Pat Thomas, possibly for the last time. She is going to be retiring. I would like to thank Pat for her commitment to the teachers of the Northwest Territories and also her commitment to overseeing procedures in this House day in and day out. I wish you all the best, Pat. Take care.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Welcome to the visitors' gallery, Ms. Thomas. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the owner of Deh Gah Services of Fort Good Hope, former chief of Fort Good Hope, a fiddler, guitar player extraordinaire, Everette Kakfwi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. That name does sounds familiar. Welcome to the gallery. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

I would like to take a page from Mr. Roland's greeting book and recognize my mother, Emelia, at home in Fort Smith, who will be celebrating her 83rd birthday tomorrow. Happy birthday, Mom.

-- Applause

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 174-14(2): NWT Water Quality and Availability

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement, I made reference to the United Nations declaring March 22nd as World Water Day. Mr. Speaker, we in the Northwest Territories are fortunate to have an abundant supply of water. I think we also realize that we are not immune to environmental hazards around us. Water is essential to the survival of all living things, including plants, animals and especially human beings. We must do everything possible to maintain the quality of the water for today and for the future.

However, some of our present water supplies have some problems, especially in my riding. The water supply in Fort McPherson no longer meets the Canadian water standards that are set. It exceeds them. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services what is her department doing to ensure the drinking water of all our communities in the Northwest Territories are meeting the

present standards that are set, the Canadian drinking water standards? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 174-14(2): NWT Water Quality and Availability

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, indeed the Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for the health and well-being of Northerners. However, I do not believe that water quality in general is specifically related to this department. It might better be directed to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 174-14(2): NWT Water Quality and Availability

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the environmental health department falls within the responsibility of the Minister. That was where I was phrasing my question to. I would like to know how much money did the government put in place, in regards to interim appropriation or into future budgets, to ensure that safe drinking water is accessible to all residents in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 174-14(2): NWT Water Quality and Availability

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not know how much money was allocated for the specific area Mr. Krutko refers to in the interim appropriation. I would have to take that question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 175-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair for the Stanton Regional Health Board

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. It is in regard to the Stanton Board. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that a chair has just been appointed by the Minister. I would like some clarification on the process for the appointment of the deputy chair. My understanding of the practice and tradition is that the Minister appoints the chair, and that the board picks the deputy chair from among its members. I would like to ask the Minister if she intends to honour that practice and tradition? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 175-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair for the Stanton Regional Health Board

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. The chairman is appointed by the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services and the deputy chair is selected from amongst the other members. I have been advised that this is what the by-laws of the Stanton Regional Board indicated at this time. I had a chance to have dinner and meet with the Stanton Board on Monday night. In my remarks, I asked them to consider allowing me to appoint the deputy chair as well. We did have quite a good range of names come forward for the chairmanship and that request has been made to the board. It will be up to them to decide if they comply with that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 175-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair for the Stanton Regional Health Board

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if the Minister could clarify why she would think it was necessary to not only appoint the chair, but also the deputy chair, which would be totally contrary to practice, convention and tradition? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 175-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair for the Stanton Regional Health Board

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is not totally contrary to tradition. It would be a change. It would be something different that has not been done in the past. I do not believe it would be contrary to tradition. However, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we did have a number of good names come forward for the chairmanship. It was a difficult choice.

We chose Mr. Elkin. We have felt, on an ongoing basis, it would be good to have a chairman from Yellowknife and a vice-chair from one of the communities and one of the regions. Mr. Elkin brings over 30 years experience to the chairmanship's job. It was also felt that for the sake of future continuity, to have someone working very closely with him that was not an elected member from one of the community health boards or chair of one of the community health boards, might help in transferring some of the expertise and experience of Mr. Elkin to a vice-chair at some point in the future, who may wish to take on that role of chairmanship. Mr. Elkin is also retired and does like to, as I am sure, as any retired person, travel when he can. It is a very big job. It is a very huge budget, it is \$40 million. It is a thought that has been floated with the board and it will be up to them as to whether they decide to amend their by-laws accordingly. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 175-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair for the Stanton Regional Health Board

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would require some further clarification from the Minister. Is the Minister suggesting that she would pick from the existing remaining board members and appoint a deputy chair or is she talking about trying to bring some other person on board as deputy chair? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 175-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair for the Stanton Regional Health Board

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am talking about an additional person being appointed to the vice-chairmanship. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 175-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair for the Stanton Regional Health Board

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister clarify if the board does not heed her suggestion and amend their by-laws, will she let the matter stand where it is or is she going to somehow try to enforce her will so that she can bring somebody in from outside and be appointed? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 175-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair for the Stanton Regional Health Board

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thought I already made it clear that I have asked the board if they would amend their by-laws to allow me to do this. It will be a decision of the board. Thank you.

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

Question 176-14(2): Community Skills for Work Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. I wonder if the Minister could tell me how many adults accessed training last year through the Community Skills for Work Program across the North? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 176-14(2): Community Skills for Work Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have that information on hand here, Mr. Speaker, and I will have get back to the Member with the information. It involves the colleges as well as the Skills for Work Program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 176-14(2): Community Skills for Work Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to getting that information. Certain groups are accessing or have been accessing the Community Skills for Work money and it has been an ongoing process, for the last three years. The government made a decision not to seek funding for this year for something that has been funded for the last three years. I am wondering if the Minister can discuss how he has been able to inform these groups that the government would no longer be seeking funding for this program? I wonder if he can get into detail for me? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 176-14(2): Community Skills for Work Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As is common with a number of programs, and especially with the Skills for Work Program, they are offered for periods of time. They may be four weeks. They may be eight weeks. They may be 12 weeks. They were planned to be completed by March 31st, and through our staff in the regions, we have checked to see if there were any programs that were planned to be beyond that and if the organizations were informed of that. I am informed that from the start, they were informed that these programs would terminate as of March 31st. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 176-14(2): Community Skills for Work Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would expect, Mr. Speaker, that every year these groups have been informed that their funding would terminate on March 31st, but yet for the last three years, it has not been the case because the government has been able to get additional funding. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that expectations have been built up that these programs obviously are worthwhile and would continue. The Minister in this House made a commitment in informing all of the groups who access this funding and contacted them to let them know that their funding would cease tonight at midnight and he committed to do that before 5:00 p.m. today. I was wondering if he can give us an update on how that is going? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 176-14(2): Community Skills for Work Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am informed that all the Community Skills for Work projects have been contacted and nobody is aware of any layoffs in regard to these projects because they were all informed ahead of time that they were to be completed. The deliverers, the people that teach the

programs, are hired on a contract basis to deliver these projects for the period of time that they are delivered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 176-14(2): Community Skills for Work Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just some clarification, all groups have been notified, Mr. Speaker? There will be no layoffs as a result of the lapse of this funding, and the Minister has had, again, contact with all these groups to discuss that it was the government's choice to not seek to refund this program? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 176-14(2): Community Skills for Work Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department works closely with many of these organizations and most of these programs have ceased already, Mr. Speaker. I am informed, as I said earlier, the Community Skills for Work projects have been contacted and that the people who have been working on this were people who were hired specifically to deliver those programs for the period of time that they were to be delivered, for four weeks, six weeks, eight weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 177-14(2): Capital Estimates Information

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, we were well aware that we have had to get into the business of grumbling on behalf of the people and trying to put budgets in place in a short amount of time. We have heard it many times from across the floor, the difficult working conditions Ministers are in to try and put this together and the tiredness they have felt. But Mr. Speaker, as an Ordinary Member, I feel I need to be able to do my job. To do my job, I need accuracy in the figures in the proposals put before me.

Mr. Speaker, for much of the interim process we were given a document to do our work and review it with departments. It is bad enough that we do not have a lot of time to go through that process and get into a lot of detail. What is even worse is that I have come to find out through the processes that there are some huge projects and changes in the plan that were not at all identified. It was not until questioning in this House that we were able to find out that information.

I would like to first of all thank the Finance Minister for taking it upon himself to table document 39-14(2), yesterday in this House, on the 2000-2001 Capital Plan Comparison. In the short time I have had to do my review, Mr. Speaker, I have found some differences within departments; Municipal and Community Affairs, Public Works and Services, Health and Social Services, Justice, Education, Culture and Employment, Transportation. Some numbers are small, but there are some

major changes. We have just passed an interim budget based on a certain set of numbers. I would like to know from the Finance Minister, is this document that is being tabled the document we are going by, or it is the interim appropriation we are going to go by? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 177-14(2): Capital Estimates Information

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We go by the numbers in the commitments that are made during review of the interim appropriations in approving the interim appropriations. Members, though, have all been asking us for a capital plan, what cuts are being made, what makes up the \$10 million that we have reduced the capital plan by. That commitment is a commitment that goes back to the 13th Legislative Assembly. We have chosen to follow through on it. And as we speak, departments are doing work on preparing for the 2000-2001 main estimates.

In order to try and respond to the Members' needs, we have given you a copy of what we call a current 2000-2001 capital plan. It is only current in the sense that this is where we are today. As we speak, departments are working on these and refining them. As we get into the final preparation of the capital plans that will be part of the main estimates, then you may find some of these numbers will be still moving around a bit. Each department is still working on this. This is a living, working document as we have it right now. It is not an approved 2000-2001 capital plan. That will not happen until we see the main estimates. We have given you a piece of information in advance that normally, I suppose, would not be given at this stage. There will be differences. I can tell you when we come to the main estimates, you will find some other little adjustments that departments have made based on priorities, based on issues that have come to their attention, based on the need to balance their estimates within the targets that are given to them.

Do not take this as being the final 2000-2001 document. It is not. It is just the capital plan as it currently is. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 177-14(2): Capital Estimates Information

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I am hearing from the Finance Minister is, in fact, these numbers are as in comparison to the shifting sands in the Sahara. We are going to have a hard time reading from one day to the next it seems.

I understand that there is going to be some flexibility. But as a Member of this Assembly, when I cast a vote, I have heard the defense of the numbers, I have heard why some numbers are put forward. I have concerns, in fact, that there is a fair bit of shifting that is going to happen. Especially in light of the fact that we have just passed almost 50 percent of the budget, for our whole year for the interim appropriation. Can the Minister inform me if there are going to be further changes in this document, will Members be kept apprised of the situation, so they are able to deal with it in their communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 177-14(2): Capital Estimates Information

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will just ask Mr. Roland to please be patient. We are working on the main estimates and we will do it as quickly as we can. I do not expect that there is going to be, as you say, a fair bit of shifting around in the capital plan, but there will be some changes.

As we prepare main estimates, there is a lot of shifting going on. I suppose you could compare it to shifting sand. There are a lot of things. There are thousands of things that each deputy minister and their staff have to take into consideration as they develop a budget as a response to the needs that are being expressed. There are a lot of things that are still a bit up in the air.

Do not take this current document as the final one and then come back and try to compare numbers later on and say what happened to this \$10,000 or \$5,000. This is the capital plan as it is today and I will tell you there may be some changes as we prepare our main estimates. That is part of the normal process, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the Member's questions, are we going to keep you informed, I tell you we made a commitment that we want to be open and transparent, even though you may not believe us. I am going to be as open and transparent as I possibly can. I have done it already by giving you a document that is current as of today, and I am being very honest in telling you that there will be some bit of shifting around as departments put their budgets together, but bear with us. That is part of being open and transparent. The alternative is to wait until we have everything nailed down and then give it to you. I do not want to do that. I will share it with you. If there is any major shifting, then we will absolutely let every MLA know. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 177-14(2): Capital Estimates Information

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am getting a little razzled. He has dazzled me once again. It has gone from the shifting sands to quicksand.

-- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, the fact that I found a whole campus has disappeared into the sand overnight, I am quite concerned of the notice I will be given. As I said I voted on a budget based on the information provided by departments. I hope that the Minister by his saying, and I like his honesty, there is going to be some shifting and I understand that. But I am very concerned that, in fact, there will be huge shifts and we will see mountains disappear. I only know of one book that has been talked about where you can move mountains, and that is the Bible. However, they are starting to show me that they can almost move mountains overnight.

Mr. Speaker, once again, can the Minister commit to us that there will be fair, advance notice of any changes in the budget that we just approved? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 177-14(2): Capital Estimates Information

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for rattling the honourable Member. I did not mean to rattle him. I wanted to dazzle, not razzle. Mr. Speaker, to comment on the disappearing campus. The campus did not disappear. It was the last government that decided to take it out of the P3 projects. It is in the plan, as the Minister responsible for Education has told you. It was taken out of the P3 projects because we are going through a review process and it was pulled off that list. It was put back into the capital plan, as the Minister responsible for Education has already told you, I am just telling you some of the history you already know. It was put back in the 2003-2004 capital plan. It is there. It has not disappeared.

In terms of assurances, we absolutely assure you we will be open and transparent on our capital plans and any changes we make. If they are major changes, we will let you know ahead of time. If they are minor changes we will work through the system as we go. We are not trying to hide anything here. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 177-14(2): Capital Estimates Information

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have heard on too many occasions from that side of the floor of the work of the 13th Assembly. We are in the 14th Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister said that the P3 project was changed, referring to his response, changed in the 13th Assembly. I know for a fact that that was not the case. It was changed by this government.

Mr. Speaker, can he confirm, if he wants to be open and honest here, that, in fact, the changes happened during the 14th Assembly? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 177-14(2): Capital Estimates Information

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can tell the Member with all the confidence in the world that I did not make the decision to move that project out of P3 and into the capital plan. I can check to see exactly what the process was for moving it. It was not a decision that I made. That decision was made before I became Minister responsible for Finance.

Further, I know I have referred back to the 13th Assembly on a number of occasions. I will be really pleased when we get further down the road and I develop our main estimates and I do not have to drag that bag of commitments the past

Assembly has made along behind me, and we can have a budget that is totally my own. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Question 178-14(2): Allocating Resources to the North Slave Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Finance, the Honourable Joe Handley. Yesterday, in my Member's statement I pointed out how the North Slave region appears to get short-changed in the budget because it is not recognized as a distinct area.

I would like to ask the Minister if Cabinet is looking at separating the North Slave from other regions in the next budget session in June? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 178-14(2): Allocating Resources to the North Slave Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier mentioned yesterday during question period, we are not the only government here. If we try to push ahead alone on our own on making some major changes that affect other governments, particularly aboriginal governments, our chances of success are reduced.

As we look at the regions, then we have to work with the aboriginal governments to make sure we are doing it in a way that is viewed positively by them. When it comes to realigning with the North Slave region, then yes, that is certainly an issue. We are looking at how can we realign ourselves to fit with all of the claim areas. That piece is a complicated piece because you have to work with the governments. Some of the areas are not settled yet.

That is something this government is definitely looking at doing. Can we do it for the June budget? It is a pretty short timeframe because we are now working on the main estimates to be tabled in June. Those will be made available to the AOC and the standing committees, I believe in early May.

Realistically, I would have to say to the honourable Member that I do not think we can do it in time for June, but we will commit to working on it as quickly as we can. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 178-14(2): Allocating Resources to the North Slave Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask the Minister if they do not put it in the June budget, are they willing to do it part way through the rest of the House, when the land claims are finalized with the Dogrib regions? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 178-14(2): Allocating Resources to the North Slave Region

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could commit that we are ready to do that kind of realignment as soon as we have approval to do it, with most of the aboriginal governments and with this House. I think when we do it, we cannot do it by isolated region by region. We have to do it as part of a much bigger plan which realigns all of our regions.

Would it be part way through a year? That is possible, but again, we need to work closely with the aboriginal governments and the House to make sure that everybody is on side with the changes we are making. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 179-14(2): Road Conditions Near Fort Providence River Crossings

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was glad to hear the comments from the Minister responsible for Transportation the other day. They based their budget on traffic volume, which forces me to add to the growing list for chip seal. Mr. Speaker, my constituents have voiced their concerns regarding the condition of the road from the Fort Providence ferry crossing to the Fort Providence winter road crossing. Concern regarding the dust that is raised now, not only from the spring and summer seasons, but also during the winter due to the fact that we have an increase in traffic volume. So much so, that in the last couple of years, it has become a hazard for the drivers and also for the people that utilize the area. We have approximately 20 families that have cabins along that stretch of road and activity in the area increases during the spring months as the weather warms up.

When the ferry becomes operational, we have an increase of traffic flow from the tourists and from the fishermen from the south. We can all relate to the dust and the hazards that can be created from it. We can also relate to the unattractive appearance the landscape along the road can take. I understand that several years ago, this was a budget item, to chip seal this stretch of road. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Transportation if he can inform me if there are any plans in the future to chip seal this road? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 179-14(2): Road Conditions Near Fort Providence River Crossings

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently put the question to the department and I received the response that we do not have any plans at this time to chip seal that section of road. We are aware of the dust problems there. The department plans to use calcium on that highway on both sides of the river, the eight kilometre stretch on one side and the two kilometres on the other side. Both sections will be calciumed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 179-14(2): Road Conditions Near Fort Providence River Crossings

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if he can foresee any potential to chip seal the road in the next few years?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 179-14(2): Road Conditions Near Fort Providence River Crossings

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I said, I am not even aware whether it is in the five year capital plan at all, but I will put the question to the department. I am sure that by the time we develop our business plan, we will be able to address this situation as to whether it is in the five year capital plan at all. Thank you.

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

Question 180-14(2): Circumpolar Opportunities for Northern Manufacturers

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen. Mr. Speaker, the question deals with the Housing Corporation's role in the Ninety North sewer complex that is to be sold to the Alaskans. Mr. Speaker, in the release, the Minister stated that this is part of an ongoing effort to market Northwest Territories goods and services available to other parts of the circumpolar world. Mr. Speaker, what is the market that is available to the people and businesses in the Northwest Territories, in the circumpolar world for Northwest Territories goods and services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I missed part of the question, so may I ask the Member to repeat the question, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Nitah, would you please repeat the question for the Minister.

MR. NITAH: I certainly could do that. The question, as it relates to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's ongoing marketing of Northwest Territories goods and services to the circumpolar world, I am just wondering if they have a clear understanding of what that market is to date, as this is part of an ongoing process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 180-14(2): Circumpolar Opportunities for Northern Manufacturers

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a couple of important things I would like to present to the

Member. First of all, I would just like to point out that it is very important that we look outside of the small community markets we have here in the Northwest Territories, if we are going to develop some kind of revenue generated through the sale of housing and those products.

One of the things we look at in terms of the international market that the Member is speaking about, is that we are trying to market northern manufactured products through the sale of Northwest Territories Housing Corporation units to Alaska, in particular. I believe that in terms of its economics, we have great potential that we cannot ourselves in the Northwest Territories support. If that answers the Member's question. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 180-14(2): Circumpolar Opportunities for Northern Manufacturers

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister stated there is great potential in the circumpolar world for Northwest Territories goods and services. I believe there is great potential beyond the circumpolar world for Northwest Territories goods and services. My question is, is the Housing Corporation planning to increase its marketing of Northwest Territories goods and services in the circumpolar world and beyond? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 180-14(2): Circumpolar Opportunities for Northern Manufacturers

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to state that we are seeking to demonstrate our northern design of manufactured products that are saleable outside of our own region. If it requires exportation of those products to either southern parts of Canada or the circumpolar world, that is to our benefit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 180-14(2): Circumpolar Opportunities for Northern Manufacturers

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The five senior citizens homes complex that are going to be built in the North have a training component attached to it, which I find very encouraging. Where in the Northwest Territories are these complexes going to be built using northern labour? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 180-14(2): Circumpolar Opportunities for Northern Manufacturers

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not familiar with the specific question. I am assuming that the Member is talking about the project we have going in Stebbins,

Alaska. That, Mr. Speaker, is a coordinated effort between our government, including Aurora College, to provide some level of training over there, in the context of a pilot project initiative. The supplies are delivered through the Northwest Territories. We are also including in that northern manufactured products. The overall component of those five units is mainly done through the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation designs and delivery of those services. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 180-14(2): Circumpolar Opportunities for Northern Manufacturers

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that the Minister stated this is a pilot project and as pilot projects would indicate, there is a future for it. Later today, I will table a document, Towards a Better Tomorrow. In that document, there is a clear need that we have to diversify our economy in the Northwest Territories. As this pilot project looks forward, I have a vision also in this area, particularly in the forest industry where there is a centralized location selected in the Northwest Territories with good transportation links to build a factory, and where in this factory, you build pre-fab homes and other products using northern lumber for sale in local markets where it could be in Alaska, Nunavut, Greenland, Russia, Alberta, United States.

This factory could use lumber mills from all over the North. The reason I am going this route, I am trying to support the sawmill business in Fort Resolution and to do that, you need a market for it. To find a market, you need products to sell, so that is the area. That is my vision. I am just wondering, as part of this pilot project, is that vision consistent with the Minister's vision for the future of the Housing Corporation and to diversify the northern market? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Just to remind Members, towards the end of the supplementaries, they should be brief and to the point. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 180-14(2): Circumpolar Opportunities for Northern Manufacturers

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could not agree more with the Member here. I believe we have all extrapolated the philosophy from the Sessional Statement where it puts a priority on Housing. In terms of resource development, Mr. Speaker, we have gone into the communities and regions, trying to identify what is the most affordable way to build houses. I agree there is a great opportunity for our communities to develop secondary industries to meet the housing needs. I look specifically to Fort Resolution where they have a large inventory of timber. I believe we can put our resources into the community. The Premier and I have discussed it at some length a few weeks ago that we could develop lumber products to build rafters and floor joists. Those are some of the things we should really be looking at in the long-term, to utilize our northern resources.

Obviously, on free enterprise, I agree we should develop northern products. It is just going to take a matter of time, consistent with our vision statement, consistent with the policy of this government, with the philosophy of change as to how we are going to make revisions to the Northwest Territories

Housing Corporation's overall delivery system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 181-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair to the Stanton Regional Health Board

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. I would like to question the Minister about the Stanton Regional Hospital Board. Mr. Speaker, in answering the Member for Thebacha, the Minister questioned whether or not there was a tradition about the board appointing the deputy chair. I would say that, unless you have a very strange definition, there is indeed a tradition.

I would say that there is a tradition for regional make-up on the board. Could the Minister please advise the House, what the regional make-up of the Stanton board is?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 181-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair to the Stanton Regional Health Board

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I indicated that the by-laws dictate the make-up of the board at this present time. Whether it is a tradition or not, the by-laws have been complied with and that is what the history of the board has been. I believe the make-up of the board is about 50 percent Yellowknife and 50 percent regional. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 181-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair to the Stanton Regional Health Board

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it all the of the boards in the service area of the hospital are represented on the board; Inuvik Health and Social Services Board, the South Slave, et cetera, the Deh Cho. If I heard her right when she was answering the Member for Thebacha, she indicated that she was proposing to add a position to the board. Can the Minister advise, what is the number of positions right now? Is she actually talking about adding an additional position?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 181-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair to the Stanton Regional Health Board

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I am talking about adding a position. As to the number of people on the board at the present time, I cannot say for sure. I believe it is all the chairs of the other health boards that are associated with Stanton. When I say about 50-50, I believe that six of the members are from Yellowknife and that, I stand to be corrected, I believe it is six and six and this

one will make 13. This additional position will make 13. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 181-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair to the Stanton Regional Health Board

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lucky 13. I would note that this board seems to have been doing its work fairly well. It is representative of the population the hospital serves. Can the Minister tell us why she feels it is necessary to interfere by appointing somebody who will disturb the regional make-up of the board? Does she have the location or the community from which that person would come in mind?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 181-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair to the Stanton Regional Health Board

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not attempting to disturb the make-up of the board. I am attempting to put in place a vice-chair appointed by the Minister to work closely with the newly appointed chairman, who was the recommendation of all Yellowknife members. I took this into consideration, and appointed a Yellowknife chairman. Mr. Speaker, I am not attempting to disturb the make-up of the board. As Members know, there is somewhat of a turnover in the chairmanship of the various boards and this is a significant budget. It is around \$40 million.

The Member says that the board is operating well. The board is operating all right. I do not think it is a secret that there is projected deficit or there is a deficit right now on the Stanton board of about \$900,000 which is going to have to be addressed. There is significant work that is going to be carried out by this chairman. I thought that, for the sake of continuity, it would be good to have a vice-chair in place who could work closely with the chairman to carry out this role. Yes, I did have someone in mind, but it would be tentative and hypothetical at this point to say who that is. It does come from the list, as I indicated before, of nominations that came forward for the position of chairman. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 181-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair to the Stanton Regional Health Board

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the Minister has chosen to turn this into a Yellowknife versus the regions issue by mentioning she has chosen a Yellowknife resident as chair. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has confirmed that there is a regional balance on this board, by saying it is six and six right now. I think that I have not yet heard a compelling reason for the Minister to break with tradition and ensure that the deputy chair is appointed from within the board. We know that we have people on the board who are interested in health and social services. They are already serving on health and social services boards in their regions. If we need a deputy chair from one of the regions, why not ask the board to consider someone from the regions as

deputy chair instead of trying to interfere with appointment practices? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 181-14(2): Appointment of Deputy Chair to the Stanton Regional Health Board

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not trying to interfere in the appointment practices. As a matter of fact, as the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, I am responsible for all the boards and the appointment of all members to all boards. I would hardly call this interfering in the appointment process, seeing as I appoint all the members. However, it is a request that has been made to the Stanton board and I will await their response on it. It will be decided democratically by a vote from the board and the majority will rule. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 182-14(2): Plans for Regional Palliative Care

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are addressed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services on a different issue. It is the issue of palliative care. It was raised in this House earlier in this Session by my colleague from Hay River North. It was in regard to what services are available.

Mr. Speaker, in Fort Smith, through our Home Care Program and local nurses that are trained in this area, we are able to offer palliative care. I would like the Minister's assurance that as she looks at this issue, she will look at palliative care on a community by community level basis and not contemplate any centralised service for palliative care out of headquarters. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 182-14(2): Plans for Regional Palliative Care

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are no plans for regionalized palliative care services. I have been able to determine that every physician has the ability and certainly a level of experience with dealing with patients who are terminally ill in the control of pain. What Mr. Delorey raised earlier was whether or not there were specialized services in this area.

I have also been able to determine that I do not believe that there are any physicians in the Northwest Territories at this time who have received specialized training in this area. There are no plans to provide regional services at this time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 182-14(2): Plans for Regional Palliative Care

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we all recognize, based on the numbers of projects we have seen with an aging population, that this particular component of care for people is going to be increasingly important. It is increasingly important and necessary that we start planning for that and try to focus on this level of care at the community level where the families are. I would like to ask the Minister if she has any plans, recognizing the trends and the upcoming projected need for this service, to develop training components so that more caregivers can be trained in this area at the community level?

Fort Smith has indicated some of the nurses have taken specialized courses. But it is going to be critical we gear ourselves for this need by training local health care givers, using Telehealth and other available training mechanisms. Could the Minister indicate whether she will be putting that into her plan for the department? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 182-14(2): Plans for Regional Palliative Care

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through the agreement we have in place now with the Alberta Medical Association, we have access to a pool of doctors who could provide services on a locum basis. If any of those locum physicians have specialized training which is very current and up to date in terms of the latest research and methods for dealing with palliative care patients, it might be something our department could look at. We could look at bringing someone in who could offer in-service training to physicians and nursing staff, providing them with the most up to date information for the care of Northwest Territories patients. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 182-14(2): Plans for Regional Palliative Care

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we focus our attention, when we talk about palliative care, on more than just the doctors. The actual round-the-clock care will be provided by the community caregivers. The doctor plays a critical role, but the people who live in the communities that are hopefully trained are going to be the ones who are going to be very fundamental to the success of this service.

I would like to ask the Minister, as they look at this particular area, along with many of the others like nurse practitioners and such, will she ensure that it focuses on more than just the doctors? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 182-14(2): Plans for Regional Palliative Care

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my previous answer, I referred to in-service training being made available to doctors and other health care professionals. I would expect that would include nurses as well. One of the key areas why it would be important for doctors to partake, of course, is because they would be the ones who would be prescribing medications and those sorts of things. But certainly it would be provided for nurses. They are there around the clock delivering the services. Both levels of caregiver would be extremely important to be aware of the most recent information in this field of medicine. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 182-14(2): Plans for Regional Palliative Care

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue. It is an important issue to every community, and I think every Member.

My final supplementary is, can we anticipate, as we gear up for the business plans in May, to see a reference to how the Minister intends to address this particular issue in her business plan? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 182-14(2): Plans for Regional Palliative Care

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in cooperation and a collaborative effort with the Standing Committee on Social Programs, and the department, I would be pleased to see a reference to palliative care services in the business plans. Thank you.

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

Question 183-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to confirm and clarify with the Minister, in his last response to my earlier question, the Minister did not rattle me. I was impressed with his razzle and dazzle. I might almost say he has been doing some work in front of the television, watching Muhammad Ali doing the shuffle, because he is pretty good at doing the shuffle, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, the shifting sands, I think in the Northwest Territories we can refer to the drifting snow. His numbers seem to drift all over the map. I would like to know from the Minister that, as we finished off reference to the P3 process, it changed. My understanding is that the P3 process sits under his bailiwick as the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Can he inform me if that is the case and when that decision was made? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 183-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It may appear to the honourable Member that things are shifting and so on. Things are moving fast and I hope we all keep up with it. We have to move fast. We have a big agenda to accomplish.

In answer to the question, yes, the P3 projects fit within my mandate. When were the decisions made? I can tell the Member that in November, 1999, the Financial Management Board Secretariat made a decision that the Inuvik Hospital would go ahead as a P3 project, and that the other projects would be put on hold pending a review of the implications of the P3 initiative. When those projects are put on hold, Mr. Speaker, those projects do not just disappear somewhere. The alternative is, I suppose they could disappear right off the earth, but the other alternative is that they then revert back to our traditional practice or form of capital planning.

Mr. Speaker, it was in November 1999 that the Financial Management Board Secretariat made that decision. That was not this government.

Mr. Speaker, I should let the Member know as well that when the results of the review are analyzed and decisions are made, if the review shows that continuing with P3 projects is the way to go, then it would be put back into a P3. If not, it will continue to stay where it is right now in the capital planning process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 183-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I feel I am getting a different response from the Minister at this second go around. In fact, he has informed us that in November 1999, it was confirmed that the Inuvik Hospital would continue as a P3, but the rest of the projects under P3 were under review. As a Member, I am aware that the review was supposed to be ready for this government to start making decisions on. There was no final decision. He is saying that it is under review, and if that review changes, it could possibly go back to it. Could he confirm that, in fact, the review has not been completed and no decision has been made? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 183-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the review is underway but is largely done. There is also an analysis of the information we have right now going on right now by the department. I can confirm for the Member that, yes, depending on the results of that review and our analysis of it, it is possible we could go put projects back on P3 and continue with that form for construction of these facilities.

On the other hand, it is possible we would find that the traditional way of managing these capital projects is the way to go. That decision has not been made final. But in the interim, this project, if the Member wants to know where it is, it appears in the capital plan. Other than that, as I have said earlier, it just has to disappear into thin air. You will find it in 2003-04, where it could be fitted into the capital plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 183-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am getting concerned that the Minister, on two occasions now, is telling me that it can disappear. I am quite concerned with that. He is presenting me with a mirage. Mr. Speaker, he is saying it is under review and no decision has been made. However, the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment informed me in this House that it was changed from a P3 process to a regular capital process. In fact, there was a decision made and it was made by the 14th Assembly. Is that not correct?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 183-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The facility we are referring to is in the capital plan right now. That is where it sits and that is where it will stay until we know the results of the review. I am not going to prejudice the conclusions that will be reached through the review process, but it could go back to a P3. I do not know. It could stay right where it is in the capital plan. The 14th Assembly has made no decision on keeping it there or moving it anywhere until we know what the results of that review are.

In reference to it disappearing into thin air, I am only giving that as the only other alternative to what we have done here. I am not suggesting that is where it is going to go at all, Mr. Speaker. There was no intention to have it disappear somewhere. It is there in the capital plan. It will stay there until we know the results of it.

Mr. Speaker, the only project we are proceeding with right now is the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Centre. That one proceeds as a P3 project. We have made that decision and we will continue with it. Other ones are in the capital plan. When we get the results and we know what it is, then we will certainly share those with the Member. If we make a decision to go with P3s, we will go with P3s. If not, they stay in the capital planning process where they are right now. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 183-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact is it is under review, that much is clear. I would like to thank the Minister for

confirmation that it will stay in the capital plan. But, two different answers, Mr. Speaker.

It is under review, so how then could the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment tell me it has been changed? That is what I need some clarification on. The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat has told me it is there. It is under review. But the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment informed me during committee of the whole that, in fact, this program was changed from a P3 to a capital. That to me sounds pretty final and that it is no longer under review. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 183-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not know how to say this any simpler. In November of 1999, the Financial Management Board Secretariat directed that the hospital project go ahead and the other ones be put on hold pending the review.

When they were put on hold, they were placed in the traditional capital plan. Today, they remain in that capital plan. That is where they are. They have been shifted from here, P3, over to the capital plan. That is where they sit. They sit there and we do not intend to move them or do anything further with them other than leave them in the capital plan until we know the results of the review. As soon as we have those results, then the ultimate destiny will be decided. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The time allocated for question period has expired. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to revert to item 6, oral questions.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to revert to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Lafferty, you have unanimous consent. We will reset the clock for one more period. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

REVERT TO ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Oral Question 184-14(2): Road Conditions Near Fort Providence River Crossings

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Transportation, the Honourable Vince Steen. The question is regarding the Mackenzie River crossing. Sediment and gravel on the ice road cause the surface to deteriorate earlier than is normal, because of warm temperatures. Can the Minister tell me if chip sealing the access to the Mackenzie River crossing would provide a longer life span out of this crossing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 184-14(2): Road Conditions Near Fort Providence River Crossings

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that question to the engineers, and get back to the Member with an answer. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 184-14(2): Road Conditions Near Fort Providence River Crossings

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Preventative maintenance, like removing gravel from the ice and the access when the weather warms up can increase the life of the ice crossing, by even a few days. On that, I would like to know if the Minister is willing to look at making the chip seal a priority since it affects not only the Fort Providence residents, but everyone on Highway No. 3? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 184-14(2): Road Conditions Near Fort Providence River Crossings

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Member is aware that a lot of the gravel and the mud on the ice crossing is falling off the trucks and equipment using the ice crossing. It is not just from the road itself. The department, as I said earlier to the Member for the Deh Cho, is going to take the Member's concern under consideration and see whether or not we can chip seal those approaches.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to give anyone false hope that we may be doing this in the near future, because there is only a fair volume of traffic on that road in the winter, whereas there is very little traffic on the same section in the summer. The only people that would use that section of road are mainly those people who live on it. I do not want to give anyone any false hopes here. There is no doubt that the department does take into consideration whether or not removing the gravel from the ice road would in fact prolong the life of the road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Oral Question 185-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just going through the unedited Hansard, when we were in committee of the whole with the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, in reference to the Aurora Campus facility being changed. I would like to know from the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, in fact, has this project, as he stated in this House, been changed from a P3 process to a regular capital process? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 185-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister responsible for Finance stated, in November of 1999, it was decided to proceed with the P3 project for the Inuvik Hospital and that other projects be assessed. In the interim, these projects have been converted back to the territorial capital plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 185-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I noticed that the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment was conferring with the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, so, hopefully, we can get one answer from both of them now. Is it a fact that this is still under review and that it has not been changed from a P3 process? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 185-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because it is in the capital plan, currently it is not a P3 project. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 185-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware that as the P3s were considered, it required a record of decision on Cabinet to change it. So, I want to understand this. In fact, has there been a decision to reverse this? If not, then is it still a P3 process? When I go back to Hansard, Mr. Speaker, I questioned Mr. Ootes on March 28, 2000, during committee of the whole. I said, "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the conversion from a P3 to a capital or from a regular capital project, when did this occur?" Mr. Ootes responded, "yes, it has just occurred through the budget review process." So, he is saying it is changed. I am hearing two different stories. Can I get it clarified? P3 or not?

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

Further Return to Question 185-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, it is not a P3. It is back in the capital plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 185-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since I know there is a required decision on this by Cabinet, there should be another decision to reverse it. Is the Minister willing to table that decision? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 185-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the final decision is made on this, then we will table it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Oral Question 186-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. So the final decision has not been made. There is a review under way and while there is a review under way, the P3 project is put on the capital list. Is the Minister telling us the decision has been made by default? If it has been made by default, is that the sign of the kind of planning and leadership we are going to expect? Is it back into decisions? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 186-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to defer this question to the Minister responsible for Finance. Thank you.

-- Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for your advice, gentleman. The Minister cannot defer it himself. He has to answer the question, not answer the question, or take it as notice. He has the three choices. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 186-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not quite hear what the Minister intended. Is he taking this as notice or is he just not going to answer, as is his right?

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

Further Return to Question 186-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am repeating myself. In the interim, it has been put in the capital plan pending a review of the P3 projects. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 186-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that we have some clarity here, we hear from the Minister responsible for Finance that they are prepared to take it out, if that is what we want. What we would like, Mr. Speaker, is some clarity. When will Cabinet get around to deciding if it is a P3 or a capital project? Although they have lumped it, as they have indicated, in the capital plan, although they say it is not technically a capital plan. They just parked it there because they had no place else to park it. Can the Minister indicate when they think they are going to find time in their very busy agendas for this very major project to clarify this? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 186-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the review of these projects is completed, that is when we will deal with it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 186-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate when that review will be complete? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 186-14(2): Timing of Changes to Aurora Campus P3 Project

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Possibly by the time the main estimates come forward. Thank you.

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

Oral Question 187-14(2): Alaskan Housing Projects

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. In regard to the investment in projects that are happening in places such as Alaska, can the Minister tell me if we have made any money on these investments or projects? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 187-14(2): Alaskan Housing Projects

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, this is a pilot project. I had advised the Member yesterday that we will not know how much we have realized until the project is complete. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 187-14(2): Alaskan Housing Projects

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that we have done several different projects in Alaska in which the intent of those projects was to generate revenues for this government. I would like to ask the Minister what have they done with the revenues or the profits they were supposed to make off these ventures? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 187-14(2): Alaskan Housing Projects

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to advise the Member that we have reinvested profits from previous projects back into social housing programs in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 187-14(2): Alaskan Housing Projects

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell us exactly how much money he has put back into social housing programs? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 187-14(2): Alaskan Housing Projects

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although I have some background information on the previous projects in Alaska, I do not have the specific numbers with me this morning. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 187-14(2): Alaskan Housing Projects

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister give me and other Members of this House an exact breakdown of the monies that have been received through these ventures or

projects, to see exactly where these dollars were allocated? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 187-14(2): Alaskan Housing Projects

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I am more than pleased to offer that to the Members of this House. If I can, I would like to present it in a written form. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 14-14(2): PeopleSoft Project

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question is to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

The PeopleSoft project is consuming significant GNWT resources but does not seem to be meeting the original objectives for a new human resource system. The Minister is asked to provide the following information:

1. A chronology of the history of the PeopleSoft project, from the initial decision to replace GHRS to now.
2. A list of GNWT staff who have been involved with the project from its inception, including the length of time they have been working on the project.
3. A list of all contracts or consultants hired for this project from its inception, including their place of origin and the total cost for each one.
4. A detailed list of all costs over \$10,000 associated with the project from its inception.
5. A comparison of the original project cost estimates and schedule to the actual costs and schedule to date.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 5-14(2): Report on Priorities and Objectives Workshop

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a report from the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight on our Priorities and Objectives Setting Workshop.

Mr. Speaker, on March 15, 2000, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight participated in a Priorities and Objectives Setting Workshop. The workshop was a follow-up meeting to the committee's Operational Planning Workshop held on February 18 and 19, 2000. The purpose of our workshop was to identify the short, medium and long-term goals the committee wishes to pursue during the life of the 14th Legislative Assembly. Members had many topics of consideration that they felt should be addressed over the next four years. During the workshop, the committee was cognizant of the mandates of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, and refrained from encroaching on these mandates.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the workshop, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight had 13 broad goals. These are only our initial goals and we know that they are not static. The committee will continuously refine them to meet the changing needs of Northerners.

Our goals are:

- to achieve progress and constitutional and electoral reform;
- to advocate for the rights of the public and those needing a voice in dealing with government;
- a public service that is representative of the population it serves and is treated fairly and managed effectively;
- a more effective government organization, structure and operations;
- survival of the official aboriginal languages;
- a cohesive and current workers' compensation system and the associated governing authorities to meet the changing environments;
- an energy strategy to address the shifting Northwest Territories environment and relevant outside influences;
- a strategy for sharing control of and responsibility for Northern resources; and
- to maximize the benefits of recreational activities and to foster the positive affect that recreation has on community health and well-being.

Mr. Speaker, the ongoing goals of our committee that are explicitly included in our mandate include:

- the comprehensive overview of the Government of the Northwest

Territories' budget and fiscal framework;

- the consideration of budgets and the financial management of the Northwest Territories Workers' Compensation Board, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, and other similar government boards and agencies;
- examination of the Auditor General reports; and
- coordination of House business scheduling and planning in cooperation with Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of work to be done by the committee in order to fulfill our goals. We have a full agenda before us and look forward to our future dealings with the government in achieving these goals.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes Committee Report 5-14(2), Report of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight on our Priorities and Objectives Setting Workshop. Mr. Speaker, I move that Committee Report 5-14(2) be received and adopted.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. 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 Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 41-14(2): Towards a Better Tomorrow – Vision and Priorities for the 14th Legislative Assembly

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today, on behalf of all Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly, to table our vision document called Towards a Better Tomorrow. In this document, we set out our four main priorities.

1. Self-reliant individuals, families, and communities working with governments toward improving social well-being;
2. Better governments through partnerships;
3. A Northern controlled economy that is based on balanced, diversified, stable and vibrant; and
4. Adequate resources helping all levels of government to become more self-reliant in meeting the needs of the people they serve.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all people in the Northwest Territories to review this document and to come back to their MLAs with their ideas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two documents I wish to table today.

Tabled Document 42-14(2): Aurora Fund (1996) Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 1999

First, I wish to table the following document entitled, Aurora Fund 1996 Financial Statements for the Year Ending June 1999.

Tabled Document 43-14(2): Aurora Fund II: Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 1999

Second, I wish to table the following document entitled, Aurora Fund II, Financial Statements for the Year Ending June 30, 1999. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 13, tabling of documents. The House will recess for fifteen minutes.

-- Break

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 14-14(2): Request for Comprehensive Audit of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (Defeated)

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS it has been four years since the amalgamation of the Departments of Renewable Resources, Economic Development and Tourism, and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, in an effort to realize program efficiencies and expenditure reductions;

AND WHEREAS the mandate of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development includes responsibility for both environmental protection and economic development;

AND WHEREAS there exists both a perceived and real potential for conflict in striving to achieve objectives in these two program areas;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable to determine the extent to which the department is fulfilling its broad mandate in achieving the projected program efficiencies;

NOW, THEREFORE, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that the Legislative Assembly request the Auditor General of Canada to undertake a comprehensive audit of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and report thereon to the Legislative Assembly;

AND FURTHER that the Assembly request the Auditor General to complete this comprehensive audit as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is important to address this motion. While audits are necessary in the part of ensuring that governments always operate and manage their resources and deliver services and programs in the best way possible, it is also important to know the context in which they should be used. In short, Mr. Speaker, the motion is addressing two things.

First, we are asking someone from outside the jurisdiction of the Government of the Northwest Territories to look at the way we structure ourselves, the way we govern ourselves, and give us advice on whether or not we are doing it properly and in the best way possible. Mr. Speaker, I say categorically, this is a political decision. It was a political decision some years ago when we decided to take three departments and form one department out of them. It was a political decision made primarily to address the serious fiscal situation we were in at that time, which is not much different from the situation we face today.

It begs the question, can we afford to ask a question? Are we better off to set up another department where we are being currently served, I would say well served, by one department? Who wants to make the motion that will suggest we want to create yet another department, when we are creating this message that we have very few dollars, very few resources to deliver programs and services? That we are trying to convince Ottawa that we are in dire fiscal circumstances and we need special and urgent attention? I would say we cannot afford to ask the question, but it must be asked.

There is not much sense in asking an auditor to do things that we should address ourselves right here in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to point out, as I said yesterday and the day before, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has managed its mandate and delivered its programs and services very well. The results are there. I have outlined the results. It is not like we have not produced anything. We have.

We have delivered things like the Protected Area Strategy. We have delivered on commitments to develop a secondary diamond industry. We are now moving to foster the initial activities of oil and gas companies moving back into the Territories. There is a whole range of initiatives we have done, managed, and brought to the substantial progress stage.

What compels the Members to ask this question? That is not clear to me, but I would say the auditor would find no substance whatsoever in this motion to suggest that he is being asked to do something on a serious basis. There is no substance provided. Is there a problem with the way we do our work? It has not been mentioned. There is no detail. There is no suggestion. It is simply a question asked. The answer could very well be, if you would like, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, to set up two departments. That is your prerogative. I think that is what the auditor would say. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister's questions are very well framed, as was his spirited and vigorous defense of the department on the aspect of a

perceived conflict in our committee of the whole yesterday afternoon.

My perspective, Mr. Speaker, is not that this is an attack on the philosophy of combining the mandates of those who protect and those who should promote our resources. Rather, it is a test of the success of that philosophy. I indicated in my remarks in committee of the whole that I believe it is a positive and proactive way of achieving better delivery of services.

The audit, Mr. Speaker, was called for as a test, as a review of the success and the progress of the department to date. It is certainly my hope that such a review would show where areas could be improved and where we can continue this very proactive and very positive effort.

I also appreciate the Minister's remarks about bringing someone in from the outside to have a look at this and tell us what our own business should be. The office of the Auditor General has done very good work for this government. It is perceived, I think, or felt that their conduct of this audit would indeed be an objective one. They bring in a field of experience and a scope of knowledge from other jurisdictions that I believe could help us.

Another factor in this, Mr. Speaker, is that it has been the practice of the Auditor General to do a comprehensive audit of one of our departments on an annual basis. This is done, Mr. Speaker, at no charge to this government. Those are the justifications for proceeding with this audit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to comment very briefly on the motion, in two respects. First, the financial one and then second, just on the functioning of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

First of all, I do not have any problem with doing audits as long as we have a very clear purpose for doing the audits. I am sure the Auditor General has a very busy schedule and he is going to have the same kind of concern. If we are doing an audit, then we seriously want to make some changes. We want to do something differently.

In the case of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, this department was only created in 1997. At that time, there was a lot of consultation that took place with environmental groups, with industry, with aboriginal groups, with government, and certainly a lot of consultation in this House. Many of these issues were dealt with then. How do we resolve issues from an environmental perspective and from a development perspective? At that time, it was only three years ago, after much discussion, there seemed to have been an agreement that this was a reasonable way to go.

In doing the amalgamation, there was \$5 million saved upfront, basically by putting two departments together, and a little wee one called Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. There was a \$5 million saving. Then, part way through the process, there was an additional \$5 million saving. This enabled \$10 million to be saved by reducing these three departments and putting them into one. That is \$10 million that then can be

spent on housing, on education, or on other things that are a higher priority than building more bureaucracies.

I think it is important, given the messages we have heard ever since we have been here, about the need to have our priorities right. I just have trouble, in my mind, coming to grips with spending, maybe not \$10 million, but spending a lot of money to create two departments now. I do not think we need two departments. If that is the objective, to try to create two, then we are treading into an area that just leads to more bureaucracy, more departments, and so on.

So that is a concern on the financial side. Let us keep our money in the areas that are of priority to us. On the financial side, let us not spend money creating bureaucracies.

Now, when it comes to working with environmental issues and development issues, I was the deputy minister responsible for Renewable Resources at a time when there were two other departments, Economic Development and Tourism, and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, whose focus was on development. Mine was on protection, on conservation and so on. It was not terribly functional. I found a lot of banging of heads, a lot of disagreements because, in the bureaucracy, you tended to have people spending their time taking positions. That is what happens when you separate these two issues.

Putting them together caused the people whose responsibility is development and production to also take into consideration environmental issues. It caused the environmental people and the conservation people to also take into consideration production issues. That side of it caused the department to be a much better functioning place.

We can go now and ask somebody from outside to come in, from the Auditor's office, to come and do a comprehensive audit. I do not know what he will measure it against. But as the Premier said, I think he will tell us to do whatever you want. You have two issues here. You could deal with them with one department. You could deal with them in two departments. You could deal with them in three departments, if you want. I am not sure we would really get that much further ahead.

I am afraid of where this may take us, though, particularly from a financial perspective, given the need to be tremendously careful with the limited resources we have here. I have a little bit of trouble understanding what the real purpose is here. What is the auditor going to measure it against? That is something we have to measure here, not an auditor. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. To the motion. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier mentioned in this House, I think it was yesterday, when he was describing how the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, how a political decision was made three years ago to smash, as he said, three departments together. It was clearly a political decision. That was three years ago.

We are in the business of trying to provide good government and what we are looking at is a program review of what was a major amalgamation. Since I have been in the 14th Assembly, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has been under considerable amount of

discussion as to what it is doing. Should it be split, should it not be split? Should programs be done a certain way or not done a certain way?

But this is not a political review. We are not asking, as far as I know, and I am not asking the Auditor General to tell us if we should split this department again. What I am asking or hoping the auditor will tell us, as he did in the 13th Assembly when we asked for an audit of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, was to do a program review, which they did. They came back with a whole number of very good recommendations, the majority of which were acted on. Recommendations the department responded to and the committee had a chance to look at. I believe we improved the service of that department as a result. This is not something that should be feared. This is something we should be welcoming as a way to improve how we do business for the people of the Northwest Territories.

I recognize the Premier has been the Minister responsible for this department since its inception and the Minister responsible for Finance was the former deputy, and they put a lot of effort into making this department work. Now it is time, as good business tells us to do, to take a look at whether or not it was the right decision. Are things working absolutely perfectly as they would tell us, or are there ways we can improve service to our people? Mr. Speaker, that is the way I am approaching this.

I have no desire to see this department split at this point, but it has been a subject of discussion. I would ask the Members of Cabinet not to be alarmed. What we are practicing is good business, good government and trying to find out, from a program point of view, if there are improvements and how well things are working. Maybe they will tell us it is absolutely in tip top condition and there is no room for improvement. Then we will be sitting here heaping kudos and throwing rose petals at the feet of Cabinet for the good management of that department.

But I look forward to this and I think it is important. The Auditor General will do it. The Auditor General has a long history in the North, as Mr. Braden indicated, and there is no cost to this government. We should be laying out the departments we want to see evaluated over the next four years, to give us, as legislators, guidance. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were talking about this audit. I believe we are talking about looking at the programs and services, looking at the customers that are affected and seeing if these customers are getting what they should be getting out of the various programs and services.

It is not at all our intention to be on a witch hunt. I do not think that is the intention of the Ordinary Members. No one is trying to criticize either the Minister or the former deputy for how this department was amalgamated. I think it is good practice to routinely take a look at our departments to see if things are working, see if the customers are satisfied and move from there.

As the Premier suggests, we have delivered the goods. It is not like we have not done a lot of good things. I would agree with him. I think it is not a bad practice to take a look at all of our

departments, see how they operate, see what they are doing and see where we could make improvements.

Mr. Handley mentioned that by amalgamating these departments, we were able to save \$5 million and then \$10 million. I think that was a great idea and it certainly seems to have made sense. But I think we should look at how we do business and see if there are other adjustments that could be made to improve things.

I suggested the possible creation of a department of industry. That may be something that will be suggested down the road, or it may not. This is just something I have floated out there for discussion. Other Members have discussed it as well.

As Mr. Handley mentioned, to simply create bureaucracy is not the intention or the goal here. Other departments could possibly be reorganized and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development could be changed to incorporate different things. I think structural things are something we should look at. We have to ask the people of the Northwest Territories if they are happy with the service from the programs and services. I think that is all we are asking this auditor to do.

As Mr. Kakfwi mentioned, we need a good reason to be doing something like this because it is going to be expensive. I think we are putting the cart before the horse. We are not talking about splitting up departments. We are talking about an audit by the Auditor General, an audit that will not cost this government a cent. I think it is good practice. We have discussed in committee that it may be a good idea to audit one department a year. I think this is simply the first one that has come to the forefront and that is really where we are going with this. Again, this is not intended to be a witch hunt. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, agree with my honourable colleagues that spoke to the motion. I think in the spirit of co-operation and partnership in working with other governments in the Northwest Territories, an audit of this nature is required. Right now, when there are environmental reviews done for project development, we see aboriginal governments doing reviews. You have territorial governments doing reviews. You have federal governments doing reviews. All are reviewing the same things. That is duplication upon duplication. It is costing this government and all governments involved a lot of money.

In the future, when we go through the inter-governmental forum and building partnerships with aboriginal governments, community governments, federal governments, we have to have a clear idea what our contribution should be to the role of resource development through the preservations of our environment, our wildlife, our waters, etc.

I think by doing a program audit within the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, that will give us some ideas as to where we can and cannot contribute to this process. We are not asking for two different departments. If that suggestion results from that audit, then we have to take a serious look at it. At this time, it is not costing this government anything. It is just an audit of the programs and service delivery of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic

Development. I do not see a problem here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think there is a need for an audit at this time. We have done the amalgamation. I think in most cases, like anything new, we do have to review. Is it operating as effectively as we thought it would? Has it met the mandates that were set when we established these different agencies to co-exist within each other? Are they carrying out the responsibilities they had? Especially with this department, it is so complicated to figure it out.

On one hand, you have responsibilities with regard to wildlife. You have responsibilities with regard to the environment. You have responsibilities with regard to oil and gas, minerals, forestry, and also forest fires. Because of the convoluted aspect of this department, I think it is long overdue. We have to realize that an audit is good.

Consider that we had an audit last year where we found some discrepancies, especially in the area of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, where this department forgot all about the question of environmental liabilities that these municipalities have. Because of that, we had to take action and ensure that an environmental audit was done to see exactly what the implications and long term costs to this government were going to be to clean up these hazards that are in a lot of our communities.

I think because of that we have to seriously look at what this will do. I think there has been an effort by the Auditor General to do at least one department a year. That has sort of been the practice. I think, at this time, it is probably more appropriate to look at the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development with the economic pressures it is presently under. We have diamond development and oil and gas development. We have the whole aspect of the environmental concerns that are coming forth, and impacts about economic development. How do we fit those together, making sure that those are working?

I believe the process has taken place in other departments. I do not believe there is anything to hide. We talk about openness and ensuring we are open to the public. In regard to amalgamations, there have been major changes to Nunavut in the east, where the amalgamations that did take place before division are now being struck down.

They are saying we should go back to the old process that was in place, especially in the area of energy, mines and resources where it is hard for developers to see exactly who is in charge of what and what the process is they have to go through. I think with that it will make things better not only for us as legislators, but also the general public, to see exactly whether or not we have been meeting the mandates we set for ourselves. And to see if we have met the goals the amalgamation was going to accomplish in the first place. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this motion. I think, as we saw in the House yesterday and through discussions today, it is obvious that the economic policy issues are ones that are very complex for all of us. When we were talking about a non-renewable resources policy, we also have to take into consideration the need for control of economic policy powers. We are pursuing advancing resource revenue from the federal government, and then at the same time yesterday, there was an economic round table that is being discussed. There is an economic strategy panel that is going to be producing a report very soon. We are also involved in an inter-governmental process where the resource revenue sharing is being discussed. I have a concern on this in that we may be just adding one more complication to the whole picture on economic policy strategy. It is obvious to me, Mr. Speaker, that this is an area we should really have a full in-depth discussion about where we are going with it. Maybe we should be keeping the control of decision making in this House.

I do not have a problem with the principle of the motion, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that review is a good thing and an audit is a good thing, but I am worried about the time that it is going to take as well. I think we are looking at a minimum of two years, and I am not sure if I want to leave the responsibility of making the kind of decisions that need to be made for two years, waiting for a comprehensive audit without us being able to provide a clear guideline or terms of reference as to exactly what it is we are looking for. I do not oppose the principle of the motion, but I am questioning the timing of this at the moment. Maybe we should have more time to talk about it. I am also worried about adding extra weight on a department that is faced with many issues at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in favour of the motion. I, like the Minister responsible for Finance, do not believe in spending money creating bureaucracies. I would point out that I have never called for the splitting up of this department. Mr. Speaker, in both the 13th Assembly and the 14th Assembly, I have heard a number of Members around the table who are concerned about whether the department can achieve its sometimes conflicting goals between protection of the environment and encouragement of development. I have heard this not only from Members in this House, but also from constituents. Mr. Speaker, good government requires review. In fact, as the Minister responsible for Finance is probably aware, the Financial Management Board Secretariat has recently reorganized to decrease their ability to do audits for fraud, but to increase their ability to do performance audits. Obviously, this government already recognizes the need to do performance audits.

In this case, we have the ability to get outside advice from the auditor who currently audits the books of this government, which includes the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. This allows us to ask the auditor to also undertake a functional review. Does the department achieve what it sets out in its goals and objectives?

Mr. Speaker, when the auditor comes back with the recommendations which, as Ms. Lee pointed out, will not be quick, because typically a functional review takes a period of

time for the auditor to undertake and an even longer time to report on. When those recommendations come back, the politicians in this House have to decide whether or not to accept those recommendations. Mr. Speaker, it is not something that automatically has to be accepted. It is still something that we, the politicians, would have to choose whether the recommendations fit what we wanted to see in terms of the accomplishments for the department.

Again, Mr. Speaker, knowing that this government has recognized the need to do functional audits and performance audits, and the fact that the Financial Management Board Secretariat has recently reorganized the audit bureau to ensure they can take on more of these audits, I would think that this government would welcome some outside assistance, bringing the assistance of the Auditor General to the table. After all, as I have said, this auditor already audits the books of this government. The auditor should be entirely aware of what is happening within the department on a fiscal basis. We are asking for an expansion of the review to recognize that what this government has said is one of its goals.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe we should get back into the practice of asking the Auditor General to do comprehensive audits of all of the departments on a rotating basis of this government.

As has been pointed out, the recommendations that came back from the last audit on the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs led to some observations where the department was doing a good job, and some observations where the department could improve. By and large, those recommendations were accepted. I believe the operations of the department have improved.

Mr. Speaker, I would strongly argue that by passing this motion, we are in fact moving our government along towards improving the delivery of services to the public in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am listening with interest to the arguments that are being put forward with respect to this motion that has come to the floor for debate today.

Mr. Speaker, audits of departments can be good. I do not disagree with Mr. Dent's most recent comments about perhaps having a more comprehensive look at the operations of the government, and perhaps looking at other departments on a rotating basis.

However, I would like to point out that the Auditor General's office is very busy. I do not think this will be viewed as a priority. It will take some considerable amount of time. They do not have unlimited resources.

The previous speaker said that the audit by the Auditor General's office is at no cost to this government. That is also questionable. It would take, on the part of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development staff several thousand man-hours in order to provide the information required for the Auditor General's office to do the assessment.

I agree that the timing on this is off. The department is extremely busy right now. We are on the verge of a number of unique and extensive opportunities for Northerners to participate in various areas of development. I would say this would not be a good time to take the attention away from the limited resources of the department and spend a tremendous amount of time providing and compiling information for the Auditor General's office.

I also believe that the assessment of the working of the department is something we have the capability to look at within our government. On a more limited scale, it is possible to assess areas where there may need to be minor changes made. I am reluctant to see if we are talking about dividing this department up. I am reluctant to take that kind of decision away from this Assembly and go to outsiders and say what should we do? I believe it is, to a large extent, a political direction. I think this government should be able to take it if that is where they decide they want to go.

We have heard many comments made in this House over the last few days about costs of various departments, certainly the focus on the Department of the Executive. We have heard Members speak to the fact that this department would be better divided up again. That is a bit contradictory, considering you would be looking at more staff, more bureaucracy as Mr. Handley has said.

I have a problem with asking a question that we could answer ourselves. Also, asking a question which we may not have the financial resources to carry out at this time. I also have a problem distracting the employees from this department by providing comprehensive piles of information to the Auditor General's office at this time. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to be able to speak to this. I was part of the resource management committee several years ago which looked at and reviewed the amalgamation of these three departments. We spent a considerable amount of time and effort to look at this particular amalgamation. I believe there can always be improvements no matter where we look. We always have the ability to find a new way of doing things.

But I believe the department is doing the job that it was set out and structured to do. I believe it saved a lot of money, and that was one of the primary reasons for doing it at the time. We were under a tremendous crunch to start looking at cutting costs. We did that with a number of departments. It was not just Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development that was a part of that. Health and Social Services was done in the same fashion.

If that is the case, I appreciate what the Members are saying. Maybe it would be good to have an audit. But you have to remember that this is not done by people walking into your operation and no one is affected by it. Everybody is affected by that. We will have staff disrupted for long periods of time.

Those of us who have been in business, if you are ever audited by a federal auditor, you know darn well what kind of pressure it puts on you. It consumes a lot of people.

If you are just dealing with financial matters, it takes hours, days, even weeks to do a little business. I know, for I have been through it. So do not tell me that this is not going to cost the department or this government anything. It does. It consumes people's time, efforts, stress, et cetera.

If there was something wrong, fine. But I do not see a lot wrong. I can honestly say we can probably make improvements here and there. There is no doubt about that. But I feel the timing of this motion is premature. We have some developments happening here in the Territories, the diamond mine situation, oil and gas development, tourism, and other areas we want to concentrate on. Those are the issues that should be our priority.

I think there is an opportunity to make suggestions. We have a business plan process which Members can go through with their committee to review the financial situation of the department and review what is being spent. They have the opportunity to ask questions. We just went through an interim budget. You had a chance to really look at things. I am not sure it is all that profitable to go through this process, just so we can say thank you very much at the end of the day. To me, it is not worth it at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ootes. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we have heard, it has been past practice of Assemblies to request audits of departments. It only goes to show prudent management to review the process and previous decisions of government. I believe this is the time to do that. There is no better time than early in the life of a government to do such a review, especially since it was the largest amalgamation that this government has seen.

There have been many changes to the departments involved. There have been many policy changes. There will be no waiting for business as usual. We will continue doing the work of government, as good governments would, until this government deals with a report. The report would be reviewed by this government as a whole.

Yes, it might come up with some ideas as to how we can tweak the department to try and improve how we deliver the service to residents of the Northwest Territories. That is what we are here for.

I think we need to show we are being prudent in our management, to review what we do in the business of government. How do we deliver the service? We have heard around the table of all of the concern when it comes from private sector, hunters and trappers, the developers, of our role. This might just point out the fact that we can either come in tune with the aboriginal governments in certain ways, or come in tune with Ottawa. It might help our argument for the resource devolution even more.

I think it is something we need to look at positively. Mr. Speaker, this government has stated it will be open,

accountable, and transparent. I must say that I am surprised that our Cabinet seems reluctant to show support for the motion. It is straightforward. It is operational. Even though the Minister responsible for Finance is talking about it costing dollars, the fact is the Auditor General will provide this service free of charge. If there is a follow-up action and some changes happen, it could save us even more money. I think the Finance Minister should be very happy about the fact that I will not hound him as much if he has more money.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is straightforward. It is prudent management. It is showing that, as a government early in its life, we are open to new ideas and a way of delivering service to our residents that is top quality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am supporting the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, you may close the debate.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not go through the whole thing again, but I believe it is time to get on with business and to show the residents of the Northwest Territories that we are proactive and looking out for their best interest in how we deliver services and programs to the residents overall. With that, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Roland, Mr. Dent, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Bell, Mr. Nitah, Mr. Braden, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those opposed, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Ms. Lee, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Steen, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Handley, Mr. Allen, Mr. Ootes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those abstaining?

Thank you. The results of the recorded vote: eight in favour and eight opposed. The motion is tied. Under the rules of the Legislative Assembly, I am able to cast the deciding vote. I shall cast the deciding vote in favour of the no side.

-- Applause

The motion is therefore defeated.

-- Applause

Order, please. Order. Item 16, motions. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Motion 15-14(2): Enactment of Human Rights Legislation (Carried)

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

WHEREAS the dignity of the person and equal rights for all people are the very foundation for freedom, justice and peace;

AND WHEREAS these values are at the core of democracy and our efforts to protect and enforce the human rights of all individuals;

AND WHEREAS the human rights of all individuals should be protected and enforced to the fullest extent of the law;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories caused to be circulated a comprehensive discussion paper on the development of a human rights code for the Northwest Territories in 1984;

AND WHEREAS no legislation was developed in response to this discussion paper, and whereas the Northwest Territories is virtually unique in Canada by virtue of the failure of the Government of the Northwest Territories to enact a human rights act with the appropriate protections;

AND WHEREAS a human rights act would give the Northwest Territories the appropriate jurisdiction over those human rights which this Legislature is committed to protect;

AND WHEREAS the enactment of human rights legislation is desirable in order to avoid duplication and confusion between federal and territorial legislation;

AND WHEREAS this Legislature wishes to demonstrate its commitment to human rights and the protection of all Northerners,

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that the government introduce legislation regarding a human rights act no later than November 30, 2000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Order please. Order. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I quote:

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience, and should act toward one another in the spirit of brotherhood."

Mr. Speaker, these are the opening words of the United Nations universal declaration of human rights created in 1948. Mr. Speaker, it is our duty to reflect in the laws of our country and the Northwest Territories the principles expressed in these words.

However, Mr. Speaker, our current legislation does not go far enough. Because of that, the courts have found, that this government is subject to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Mr. Speaker, our own Fair Practices Act is in many ways similar to a Human Rights Act, but it is deficient in certain areas. In the Northwest Territories, we need modern, comprehensive human rights legislation, including a tribunal process to ensure fair consideration of complaints.

Mr. Speaker, this new legislation must ensure that every resident of the Northwest Territories has equal rights and opportunities without discrimination, including discrimination resulting from sexual orientation.

Mr. Speaker, our legislation must also provide the means by which these rights may be enforced and protected. I believe that through consultation across the Northwest Territories and

with proper cooperation between all parties, human rights legislation can be proposed that reflects the ideas of our northern society.

Mr. Speaker, unlike in 1984, I believe that this time we will be successful in bringing forth the Northwest Territories human rights act, one that protects and enforces the human rights of all our people.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is truly an honour and privilege to be the seconder for this motion early in my life as a politician. I think the motion itself very clearly lays out the rationale behind this legislation. I would certainly urge all of the Members to vote in favour of this motion.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have a lot to say, other than to read from the fact sheet provided by the Northwest Territories Women and Human Rights Group. It says, with respect to fairness and respect:

"We also want to be treated fairly and with respect. Discrimination means being treated unfairly or pre-judged because of our sex, race, age, religion, language, disability or where we come from. Or maybe because of our income level, marital status, political beliefs, or sexual orientation. Discrimination is a violation of every person's basic right to be treated fairly and with respect."

On the question as to whether this affects aboriginal rights, the fact sheet says:

"Respecting human rights does not take away from special rights that some people have. Aboriginal people have aboriginal rights to the land, self-government and to services guaranteed through treaties and land-claim settlements. Human rights laws can complement aboriginal rights by helping any individual who is being discriminated against because of their race, sex or other factors."

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add that this was one of the most commonly raised issues in my constituency during my election. The second point I would like to add is that I do not believe establishing a human rights act in our territory creates any new human rights. I believe we already have these rights under the Canadian Human Rights Act. This simply brings the human rights legislation into our home, so we have control over how it is governed, we have control over who sits on the commission and who is appointed to that commission. I urge the Members here to vote in favour of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed, please signify. All those abstaining? No abstentions. The motion is carried.

-- Applause

Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters, Minister's Statement 1-14(2): Sessional Statement, Tabled Document 14-14(2), "Our Communities, Our Decisions: Let's Get on With It!", Final Report of the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services, Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act, Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act.

By the authority given the Speaker by Motion 13-14(2), the committee of the whole may sit past adjournment until it is prepared to report. Item 19, committee of the whole, with Mr. Krutko in the Chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee to order. We have several items to deal with. I would like to ask for direction. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend we consider the bills in this order today, Bill 1, Bill 4, followed by Bill 3, Bill 7, and then Bill 5.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will begin with Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act. Mr. Ootes, do you have any opening remarks?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are here today to discuss Bill 1, an Act to Amend the Education Act. Bill 1 reduces the pupil-teacher ratio from its current level of about 18 to one to a level of 16 to one. The reduction would occur over the next four years. It also increases the funding for student support services. At the present time, student support services are funded at a level of eight percent of the overall funding provided for schools. Over the next four years, should this legislation receive approval, funding will be increased to 15 percent of the school's budget.

This bill meets the conditions described in the Memorandum of Agreement between the Executive Council of the Northwest Territories and the NWTTA, which was signed on January 22 of this year. The bill also meets the objectives of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's strategic plan. The plan was updated in December, 1999, following consultations with students, teachers, education councils and many others.

During this review, we heard that we have made some excellent progress in our education system, but there is much more that must be done if our children are going to meet the challenges that lie ahead. The need to increase investment in selected areas of the education program was identified as a key priority.

Mr. Chairman, these changes represent an investment that will strengthen our education system. Effective expenditure of these additional monies will occur following discussions with representatives of divisional education councils, education authorities and educational administrators, and the approval of

the departmental main estimates by this Assembly.

The legislation being considered today is important to the work of this Assembly. Passage of Bill 1 at this early point in our mandate will establish a firm basis for action and would demonstrate our collective commitment to strengthening the future of our children. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are there any remarks from the committee overseeing the department? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Social Programs is pleased to report on its review of Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act.

Bill 1 was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Programs on February 25, 2000.

The committee held public hearings on this bill on March 22, 2000. The standing committee would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations who made presentations at the public hearing.

Mr. Chairman, this bill proposes to amend the Education Act to fulfill the Government of the Northwest Territories' commitment to the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association. The bill also gives the Minister additional regulation making authority respecting operation and maintenance amounts upon which student support services funding percentages would be calculated.

Members made note of the precedent this has created, with no other jurisdiction having the same degree of detail and specificity with respect to the terms of employment being set out in their Education Acts. This also leads to the concern that other unions may decide to follow a similar process, requiring terms of employment to be dealt with through legislation.

In the course of our review, the committee passed a motion and amended Clause 2 of the bill to correct numbering and punctuation errors and an unintended reference to education bodies.

In presenting the bill on behalf of the Minister responsible for Education, the Premier stated that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will supply additional monies for the increases to student support funding, detailed under section 2(1.1)(b) of the bill. However, the committee noted that these obligations arising from the legislation could also possibly be met by a reorganization of the funding formula for education authorities.

The committee would also like to emphasize that the pupil-teacher ratio not be confused with class size. The pupil-teacher ratio is a formula used for determining funding to schools. The pupil-teacher ratio is not indicative of actual class sizes and does not limit the number of students that may be in a classroom.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment acknowledged that this legislation addresses the pupil-teacher ratio and not class sizes. Further, the department expressed that there was no means of forcing boards to decrease class sizes other than the use of an accountability framework to ensure that the boards met government priorities.

Mr. Dan Schofield, chair of Yellowknife School District No. 1, stated their district has approximately 39 percent of the total students in the Northwest Territories and approximately 26 percent of the teachers in the Northwest Territories, yet they were not consulted in the negotiations leading up to the preparation of the legislation.

In their presentations to the committee, both Yellowknife school boards stated they would have appreciated being consulted about proposed changes to the legislation prior to the public review of Bill 1.

This lack of consultation with the Yellowknife districts was a concern to the committee, especially since the legislative changes will result in an additional cost to the taxpayers of Yellowknife, if these districts choose to meet the public expectation of similar class size reductions to those outside of Yellowknife.

As a bit of background, Mr. Chairman, Yellowknife Education District No. 1 and Yellowknife Catholic Schools are different from other Northwest Territories education authorities in two ways.

First, their teachers are not employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Secondly, they receive only 75 percent of their funding levels from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's formula for kindergarten to grade 9. The additional 25 percent is raised through municipal taxes. This financial arrangement date backs to the 1950s, when the federal government was responsible for the delivery of education in the Northwest Territories.

Both school districts pointed out that the changes arising from Bill 1 will cost their districts money if they wish to meet the public expectations that arise from the decreased pupil-teacher ratios and indicated that the citizens of Yellowknife would have to raise the additional monies through taxes.

However, in spite of the additional financial burden, both boards support the proposed changes to the Education Act as overall, the changes will benefit the students. The Yellowknife school districts further indicated that they believe it is time to have "some minor refreshing of numbers in the funding formula".

Premier Kakfwi, sitting in for Minister Ootes, agreed that a meeting could be set up with the Yellowknife boards to discuss the formula. The committee believes that, at least in relation to the incremental monies that would flow as a result of this bill, the Yellowknife boards should get 100 percent of the funding.

The committee recommends that the Department meet with the Yellowknife district education authorities to discuss the funding formula and report to the committee on the results of that meeting before the next session.

In his presentation, Yellowknife Catholic Schools superintendent Mr. Kern Von Hagen highlighted the issue of the number of teachers and infrastructure to the committee. Presently, there are schools that are operating at 100 percent or over capacity. The education authorities do not have the physical room to increase the number of teachers. He stated the additional funding for the reduction in the PTR might be used to apply support services in a targeted way.

The committee was informed that education authorities have

the discretion to use funds earmarked for decreasing the PTR for student support services. Conversely, monies for student support programs can be used to hire additional teachers. The committee then wondered since monies for these two funds are so interchangeable, perhaps there is duplication and inefficiency in the funding formula.

Ms. Thomas, President of the NWTTA, noted that in Canada, up to 40 percent of children are at risk of failure in school because of an array of emotional, social and health problems. Ms. Thomas indicated that there is no doubt that the numbers for the Northwest Territories will be higher.

The committee heard of the existence of magnet communities, which have special situations and elevated demands on student support services. The completion of the student needs survey that is presently underway will hopefully reflect the additional demands placed upon the magnet communities.

Mr. Chairman, the committee does support the passage of this bill. However, we do not see it as being the perfect solution. In the future, we hope that there will be no further use of legislation to resolve contract negotiations

This bill does get more badly needed money into our education system. It appears to the committee that it would be more beneficial to put monies into student support services as opposed to reducing the pupil-teacher ratio. Whether the money is used to affect class size or supplement student support services, the delivery of education in the Northwest Territories will be improved by passage of this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in any witnesses?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please escort the witnesses in?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with me today are Mark Cleveland, deputy minister for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Paul Devitt, director of financial and management services, and Diane Buckland, legislative counsel for the Department of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. Are there any general comments or questions for the Minister regarding Bill 1? Detail? Clause by Clause? Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are on tab one of our binders, page 1, clause 1. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill as a whole? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 1 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 1 is now ready for third reading.

-- Applause

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you, witnesses. We will move on to Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he has any opening remarks. Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to discuss Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act. I would like to make a few comments about the bill itself and the redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program that will result from the passage of this bill.

The key objective of the changes to the act is to pave the way for providing increased levels of financial support to students attending colleges, universities and technical schools.

Mr. Chairman, the changes proposed to the act are relatively minor. If this bill is approved, the individual lifetime loan limit will be increased to \$47,000 and the size of the revolving loan fund increased to \$33 million. However, as all Members are aware, these changes are being made to permit comprehensive redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program.

To understand the importance of the proposed redesign, it is important to recognize that postsecondary students in Canada face rising tuition, book, living allowance and travel costs. A study of 27 Canadian universities in 1998 indicated the average education costs across Canada had increased significantly. While costs have been rising, there have been no increases to the level of funding provided to students under the SFA program since 1992.

Postsecondary education and training are extremely important to Northerners. While 80 percent of Northerners with postsecondary diplomas, and 90 percent of those holding degrees, are employed, less than 50 percent of Northerners with less than grade 10 are employed. Employers are now requiring many of their employees to have postsecondary education, due to the increasingly technical nature of many jobs. Recent studies in Canada show that nearly 70 percent of all new jobs require postsecondary education.

Given the rising costs for postsecondary education, its importance to the northern labour force, and our current limited financial resources, we face the challenge of finding a way to give more money to students in a prudent and fiscally responsible manner.

Since 1997, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has been consulting extensively with the public, students, aboriginal leaders and legislative standing

committees, regarding reform of the Student Financial Assistance program. This consultation included a Minister's Forum on Student Financial Assistance made up of members who represented a broad range of public interests. The group held public hearings in a number of locations and talked to representatives from virtually every community in the NWT. The final report of the forum, tabled with the Minister of the day, outlined a series of recommendations, virtually all of which have been addressed in the program redesign.

Since the completion of the Minister's Forum, there have been further extensive discussions with legislators, aboriginal leaders, students and other interested Northerners. We have received many excellent comments and suggestions targeted at ensuring we have a strong and effective program. These suggestions have been very useful — and many, but not all of them, have been accommodated within the program redesign. The result of all of this work is a program that balances the wide variety of interests that have been expressed, but continues to keep a very sharp focus on the financial needs of students.

I would like to highlight a few key facts. Under the redesigned Student Financial Assistance Program, tuition allowances will increase to a maximum of \$1750 a semester from the current amount of \$1250. Funding for books will increase to \$300 per semester. Living allowances will increase by no less than seven percent. All of these increases will directly benefit students.

In addition to these increases in benefits, we are increasing the amount of funds a student can borrow. However, we are also limiting the maximum so that unnecessary student debt is not built up.

This program redesign was done in a manner so as to ensure that overall costs for the program would be similar with those of the current program. However, as a result of the public hearings of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the committee's subsequent recommendation, we have added the option for Metis and Inuvialuit students to receive either a grant or a remissible loan to cover living costs. This change has resulted in an increase to overall program funding of approximately \$500,000.

Mr. Chairman, we must act now. Students expect us to assist and it is vital that we move quickly; if we do not, the current trend of erosion of support will continue. If students are to receive additional benefits in the 2000-2001 academic year, it is essential that the finalization of program regulations occurs quickly and that program information is effectively communicated.

I would like to close by emphasizing once again that we must focus on the needs of the students. We want and need postsecondary graduates to work in the North and to contribute to the development and growth of our communities, our businesses and our Territory. The program redesign is a balanced approach to supporting student needs as well as recognizing the interests and commitments of this government and all Northerners. Thank You.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee overseeing the department have any comments? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Social Programs is pleased to report on the review of Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act. Bill 4 was referred to the Standing Committee on Social Programs on February 25, 2000. The committee held public hearings on this bill on March 23, 2000.

The standing committee would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations that made presentations at the public hearing.

Mr. Chairman, this bill proposes to amend the Student Financial Assistance Act to increase the aggregate of the principal amount that can be loaned to an individual student to \$47,000. The bill also proposes, over the next two years, to increase the maximum revolving fund amount available in Schedule 1 of the act to \$33 million.

Members of the committee were aware that the proposed amendments to the Student Financial Assistance Act were made in order to provide for the redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program.

The presenters to the committee also understood that Bill 4 was essentially enabling legislation that would allow this redesign to occur. All the bill does is allow the amount each student can receive and the amount available in the revolving fund to increase. The majority of the presenters and committee Members had no problems with the bill itself.

The problems, Mr. Chairman, are with the redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program. How the SFA Program will work and how students can access available funding were of more concern to the presenters and committee members than the content of the bill itself.

A common theme in the presentations made to the committee was that the department did a poor job in consulting on the final redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program. The Tree of Peace Friendship Centre, the Metis Nation, the South Slave Metis Tribal Council, Metis Local No. 66 and the NWT Students Coalition all made reference in their presentations to this lack of consultation.

Regardless of the amount of consultation that occurred when the Minister's Forum on Student Financial Assistance visited the communities in the summer of 1997, it remains a fact that the final report of the forum was tabled in this Assembly over two years ago.

Mr. Chairman, the department would be well served in the future to consult in a timely manner with aboriginal governments and other recognized stakeholders on major initiatives before introducing legislation in this Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, another major concern of committee members and several of the presenters was that the redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program created different classes of aboriginals in the Northwest Territories. Because the federal government does not recognize any special tax status for Metis and Inuvialuit students who receive a grant under the present Student Financial Assistance, these student's grants were taxed as income.

The redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program proposed to deal with this divisive issue by making Metis and Inuvialuit students eligible for remissible loans instead of

grants. This would remove the potential federal tax burden for Metis and Inuvialuit students. Status and treaty aboriginals would still be eligible for non-repayable grants and would continue to enjoy tax-exempt status.

Mr. Chairman, this was not acceptable to committee members. Clarification was sought from the Minister as to the costs that would be involved with giving Metis and Inuvialuit students the option of whether they wanted a remissible loan or a straight grant for their post-secondary education.

The Minister responded in correspondence dated March 24, 2000 that the extra costs involved with providing that option to Metis and Inuvialuit would be in the neighbourhood of \$500,000.

Mr. Chairman, the unanimous decision of the standing committee was that the Minister should be encouraged to seek the extra funding from the Financial Management Board to address the department's ability to provide Metis and Inuvialuit with the option of either a remissible loan or a straight grant.

Committee members made this request of the Minister in the belief that the territorial government's policies and practices should not be construed to be favouring one aboriginal segment of our population over another.

Mr. Chairman, the committee is pleased to report that the Minister and the Financial Management Board agreed with our assessment of the situation. The Minister has provided the Committee with a written guarantee that the necessary funding will be found to allow the redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program to include an option for Metis and Inuvialuit students on whether they wish a remissible loan or a grant.

Another issue that was brought to the committee's attention by several presenters was the need to revisit the required course load to be eligible for continued Student Financial Assistance.

Mr. Chairman, the redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program proposed that to remain eligible for student financial assistance, a student would be required to pass 60 percent of a full course load in the first year, and to pass 75 percent of a full course load in subsequent years.

Committee members, as well as presenters such as Mr. Brian Armstrong of the Northwest Territories Students Coalition, and Mr. Bill Enge, representing Metis Local No. 66, were of the strong opinion that this requirement to take 75 percent of a full course load in the second and subsequent years placed an unfair burden on students. Students from our smaller communities who may be adjusting to life in larger centres may not do so well in their first year. This could mean that the students would be placed on academic probation by the educational institution for their second year. The requirement to take 75 percent of a full course load may doom this student to failure before their educational career gets properly underway.

Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Social Programs requested the Minister re-examine the proposed redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program and make changes to the course load requirements for continued eligibility.

Mr. Chairman, the committee is again pleased to report that the Minister has agreed to the committee's request. The department will change the Student Financial Assistance

Program so that students are only required to take 60 percent of a full course load in the first and second year of their post secondary education and 75 percent in subsequent years.

There were many other areas of concern for committee members and in the presentations made during the public hearings on Bill 4.

Some, such as the request of Mr. George Kurszewski of the South Slave Metis Tribal Council to transfer the money for post secondary to those aboriginal governments that are ready for the responsibility, can be negotiated at the appropriate land claim or self government table.

Other areas of concern, such as how the Student Financial Assistance Program relates to the government's Affirmative Action Policy will require much more study and consultation before positive change can be effected. The Standing Committee on Social Programs plans to keep this concern at the forefront of its participation in the anticipated redesign of the Affirmative Action Policy.

Mr. Chairman, one area of concern that committee members and several presenters identified was the need to remove the Minister as an avenue of appeal on matters pertaining to individual Student Financial Assistance complaints.

Members of the committee and the public strongly recommended that the proposed redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program remove the Minister from the appeal process. The standing committee believes that removing the Minister from the appeal process would remove any question of political interference. The committee looks forward to realizing this recommendation in the final redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program.

Mr. Chairman, the simple reality is that the proposed redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program that Bill 4 enables will not make everyone happy in the Northwest Territories. Hard choices have had to be made.

The committee had also requested that the Minister examine the possibility of increasing the dollar amounts available to students for tuition and books. The proposed redesign will increase the tuition allowance for students to \$1750 from \$1250, increase book allowances by \$100 a semester and increase living allowances by not less than seven percent. Members requested that the Minister examine increasing these amounts.

The committee's final request was that the Minister consider matching the rate of forgiveness for remissible loans so that one year of supported education would be forgiven for every year of residency in the Northwest Territories.

The Minister could not support these requests at this time because he believed that to do so would require a further injection of funding for the Student Financial Assistance Program over and above the \$500,000 he had already committed to.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs is prepared to accept rejection of these two requests at this time, given the limited funding available to all departments. However, the committee recommends that the amount of funding available to students be examined on an annual basis. It is vitally important that the Student Financial Assistance Program keep pace with

inflation. Eight year waits for increased funding are not acceptable.

The committee is of the opinion that the Minister showed sufficient good faith in accepting the two major recommendations of the committee on the proposed redesign.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Social Programs is of the opinion that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Program, will allow the redesign of the Student Financial Assistance Program and recommends passage. Individual members of the committee may bring up concerns during committee of the whole discussion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he could introduce his witnesses for the record.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me are Mark Cleveland, the deputy minister of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and Paul Devitt, the director of financial and management services of the department, and Rebecca Veinott, legislative counsel. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. Are there any general comments on the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are dealing with Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act. Clause 1, Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 4 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 4 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Thank you.

-- Applause

As we agreed, the next bill we will deal with is Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act. I would like to ask the Minister if he has any opening comments. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the purpose of this act is to amend the Financial Administration Act to provide retroactive approval to the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs to enter into, as at April 1, 1999, an indemnification agreement

with the federal, provincial and other territorial governments for the exchange of information under the Cooperative Enforcement Agreement On Consumer Related Measures.

The Cooperative Enforcement Agreement is intended to reduce inter-provincial-territorial consumer related fraud through the exchange of information or assistance. Cooperation under this agreement includes, but is not limited to, requests for:

- Assistance in the enforcement of a statute listed within the schedule to the agreement; and,
- Information respecting a person regulated by any statute listed in the schedule which relates to:
 - (a) number and types of complaints against that person; and
 - (b) financial information on a particular business other than that collected as part of a business registration process.

The agreement requires the requesting party to indemnify and hold harmless the party supplying the information or assistance from any or all claims arising out of the requestor's use of the information. By their very nature, such indemnities are not quantifiable until such time as a court judgment or an out of court settlement is reached. Were the Government of the Northwest Territories to be sued for "misuse" of this information, it would be expected that this would be an exceedingly rare circumstance. In addition, mechanisms are already in place to report contingent liabilities such as pending lawsuits within the public accounts of the Northwest Territories.

Consequently, the request by the former chairman of the Standing Committee on Government Operations that Members be given 14 days advance notification of any indemnities under this agreement would not be practical. Therefore, no provision for such has been made in this bill. The former chairman was informed of this decision and its rationale prior to the submission of this bill.

I would note that this agreement has been signed and the bill seeks a retroactive effective date. The timing of the signing of this agreement was due to the timing of the intergovernmental initiative by which these agreements were worked out. To avoid taking any action that may give rise to a liability the government has made no requests pursuant to the agreement and will not make any such requests unless this bill is passed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee responsible for overseeing this department have any comments? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee On Governance And Economic Development reviewed Bill 3, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act at its meetings on March 20th and 22nd, 2000.

The committee would like to thank the Ministers of Finance and Municipal and Community Affairs and their officials for presenting the bill and responding to the committee's questions.

The purpose of the act is to amend the Financial Administration Act to provide retroactive approval for the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs to enter into an

indemnification agreement with federal, provincial and other territorial governments for the exchange of information under the Cooperative Enforcement Agreement on Consumer Related Measures, effective April 1, 1999.

This inter-jurisdictional agreement provides for the sharing of valuable consumer-related information between jurisdictions. This information is intended to give our northern consumers protection from persons or businesses who are known by other jurisdictions to have carried on questionable commercial activities.

Mr. Chair, the standing committee supports these proposed amendments and awaits further discussion during the clause by clause review of the bill. This concludes the standing committee's comments on Bill 3, An Act To Amend The Financial Administration Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Lee. At this time I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in any witnesses?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses in.

Mr. Minister, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. JON HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board, and on my left is Denise Gagnon, legislative counsel with the Department of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome, witnesses. Are there any general comments on the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Detail. We are dealing with Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act. Clause 1, Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 3 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 3 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Thank you.

-- Applause

As we agreed, the next bill we will deal with is Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board if he has any opening comments. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, I am proposing through Bill 7 to make an amendment to the Workers' Compensation Act to enable dependant surviving spouses who marry or remarry after the coming into force of section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to retain their compensation benefits under the act.

Currently, section 36 of the act requires workers' compensation benefits paid to surviving spouses be terminated upon remarriage. Since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force in April 1985, all Canadian jurisdictions with the exceptions of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, have eliminated this provision from their respective acts. I think that it should be noted that the WCB developed a comprehensive legislative proposal containing a number of amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act in 1995-96. This package of amendments included the deletion of section 36. The government of the day did not introduce those amendments.

The WCB then proposed a solution which entailed bringing an application to the Supreme Court to decide the issue for all surviving spouses including those who remarried prior to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms equality section coming into force. Because there would be significant legal costs in such a case, the WCB has agreed to pay the surviving spouses' legal costs. The application will be heard May 1st and 2nd. The WCB's role is to provide evidence and explanations to the court on all matters related to surviving spouse pensions. The WCB is not taking a position, either pro or con, on the constitutional issues.

Mr. Chairman, having examined all of the issues closely, I have concluded that a proactive approach would best serve the interests of the surviving spouses. I see no point in putting widows who remarried after April 1985 through further delays and court proceedings before they receive what is rightfully theirs. In this bill, I propose that these surviving spouses be allowed to continue receiving pension benefits after remarriage.

In recognition of this potential liability, the WCB has set aside a contingency reserve of \$5 million. It is estimated that the total cost to the accident fund of reinstating benefits to the 11 surviving spouses, whose pensions were terminated upon remarriage after April 1985, will be approximately \$5 million.

Finally, it should be noted that this bill does not address the pensions of the five surviving spouses who had their pensions terminated prior to April 17, 1985 because of remarriage. To change the Workers' Compensation Act in a way that acknowledges that section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is retroactive to an unspecified time would set a precedent with unknown implications.

The solicitor for the widows has expressed a desire to settle all outstanding claims without the need for litigation. Therefore, it is my intention to have the WCB pursue other ways of resolving the five pre-1985 cases as expediently as possible. If a settlement is reached, I would ask the Assembly to enact legislation to implement it. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening comments. I am pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee responsible for overseeing this department have any comments? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, at its meetings on March 16, 2000 and March 30, 2000. Currently, the Workers' Compensation Act contains provisions which allow for the termination of surviving spouse benefits if they marry or remarry.

This Bill proposes to enable dependant surviving spouses who marry or remarry after the coming into force of the equality sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to retain their compensation benefits under the act. The proposed amendment restores compensation entitlements to those widows who married after April 17, 1985, the date the equality provisions of the Charter came into force.

The committee would like to thank the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board and his officials for presenting the bill and responding to the committee's questions. Members of the committee would also like to thank Mr. Joseph Arvay, legal counsel for a number of spouses who will, in part, be affected by the proposed amendments.

Committee members were encouraged to hear the Minister make a public commitment to also address the entitlements of those not covered by this bill: those surviving spouses who had their pensions terminated before April, 1985 because of remarriage.

We encourage the Minister and counsel for the pre-1985 widows to pursue other ways of resolving the pre-1985 cases as expediently as possible. The committee was encouraged to hear the Minister state that \$2 million has been set aside as a contingency for the potential settlement of the pre-1985 claims. It is the committee's contention that the government must accept its obligation and deal with the remaining pre-1985 widows. The committee looks forward to the Minister implementing such a settlement.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee supports the proposed amendments and awaits discussion during the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill. This concludes the committee's comments on Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in any witnesses?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, I will.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-At-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses in?

Mr. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Gerry Myer, president of the Workers' Compensation Board, Shawn Flynn, legal counsel with the Department of Justice, and on my left, Paul Bachand, legal counsel with the Department of Justice. I brought a lot of witnesses, in case we are voting. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I am sorry, witnesses do not get to vote in this House. Welcome, witnesses. Are there any general comments on the bill?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Detail. We are dealing with Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act. Clause 1. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 4. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 5. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 7 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 7 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Thank you.

-- Applause

As we agreed, the next bill we will deal with is Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation if he has any opening comments. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee, we are here today to consider some small but important amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act.

The first set of amendments has to do with repealing the few exemptions in the act to wearing a seat belt. The Legislative Assembly made the wearing of seat belts mandatory in the Northwest Territories in 1988. Twelve years ago, the requirement for everyone riding in a car or a truck to wear a seatbelt was controversial and these few exemptions were included at the time. The evidence that seat belts prevented injuries and saved lives was compelling in 1988, and it is even more so today. There is no good reason for anyone not to wear a seatbelt when riding in a car or a truck and there is no good reason to keep these exemptions in the act.

The second set of amendments gives municipalities by-law making authority to regulate the use of bicycles, skateboards, sleds, skis, skates and in-line skates on community streets and roads. Rather than try to regulate bicycles and skateboards

uniformly across the Territory under the act, the by-law approach allows communities to regulate them according to local conditions and sensibilities. I think letting communities decide for themselves how to regulate bicycles and skateboards is the best approach.

Mr. Chairman, these two small sets of amendments will make the Motor Vehicles Act a better Act. I hope the Members will agree and give their approval. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Minister Steen. Does the committee responsible for the department have any comments? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development reviewed Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act at its meetings on March 20th and 23rd, 2000.

The committee would like to thank the Minister responsible for Transportation and his officials for presenting the bill and responding to the committee's questions. Members of the committee would also like to thank Mr. Ben McDonald, deputy mayor, and Mr. Doug Gillard from the City of Yellowknife for raising their concerns at the public hearing. The committee would also like to thank Dr. David King from the NWT Medical Association who, while not being present at the hearing, took the opportunity to communicate the association's endorsement of the amendments.

This bill repeals the seat belt exemption sections which were allowed for certain drivers and gives municipalities authority to make by-laws for bicycles, skateboards, sleds, skis, skates and in-line skates. This authority also includes the power to make by-laws which may require the use of personal protective equipment like helmets.

During the public hearing, the committee members heard about other issues relating to perceived shortcomings in the Motor Vehicles Act that were beyond the scope of Bill 5. The presentation by the City of Yellowknife highlighted a perceived weakness that exists in the legislation and is not addressed in the proposed amendments.

Their concern has to do with the lack of statutory authority in respect to the overloading of vehicles with passengers. This overloading results in a lack of proper seating restraints for occupants of the vehicle.

The Minister acknowledged this concern and promised to have his department look into the issue.

The second part of the amendment gives municipalities the power to make by-laws for the regulation of bicycles, skateboards, sleds, skis, skates and in-line skates on community streets and roads. This amendment provoked discussion concerning the definition of 'sled' within municipal boundaries and how such a definition may impact upon the use of sleds for the traditional and cultural pursuits of hauling, hunting, fishing and trapping. The majority of the Members of the committee were satisfied that the amendment will provide communities with enough discretion and flexibility to allow for regulation of these modes of transportation according to local conditions and sensibilities.

The committee notes that the bill comes into force on assent. The committee strongly encourages the department to engage

in an extensive education campaign so that the public can be made aware of the removal of the seat-belt exemptions from the Motor Vehicles Act.

Mr. Chairman, the majority of the standing committee supports these proposed amendments and awaits discussion during the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill. This concludes the committee's comments on Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Does the Minister wish to bring in any witnesses?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes I do, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses in?

Minister Steen, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on my left is Ms. Rebecca Veinott, legislative counsel, Department of Justice. On my right is Richard MacDonald, director of motor vehicles.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Are there any general comments on the bill from Members? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the review of Bill 5, I raised concerns during committee of the whole with the Minister regarding the definition of sleds.

To me, a sled can be anything from a toboggan to a sleigh, or even a piece of board that has a string attached to it. I had some concerns regarding helmets. Giving the communities the ability to enforce by-laws for people to have to use helmets, especially if they are using bikes, skateboards, ice skates, in-line skates and skis. The concern I have, coming from a small community where we do not have much of those types of activities, is that I feel this bill will be very difficult to enforce on individuals who use sleds as their only means for moving their goods and services, as well as for traditional purposes. Plus, the majority of our communities do not have paved streets. Most of the time, it is gravel, so there is no real usage of skateboards.

What I see happening with this act is that it will have an effect on the individuals who depend on the movement of their goods and services by sleigh. A lot of our small communities do not have taxi service, and many people do not have the resources to purchase a snowmobile or other things most people take for granted. Yet, a toboggan and a sleigh plays an active role in the day-to-day lives of individuals for moving goods and services to and from the store or the community out to their bush camps and visa versa.

I agree that there have to be some protections in place, especially for people on bikes and skateboards where there could be harm caused if the individual fell during those activities. Growing up in a small community, a sleigh plays a very active role in daily activities. They should be able to carry out their daily activities without being restricted by someone

putting forth a by-law that would impose restraints on them where they now have to wear a helmet to carry out this activity.

I would like to ask the Minister, has he made an attempt to consider the possibility of the definitions for sleds, and excepting things such as toboggans from the list that is being defined in the agreement and deal with those items you are really after?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the department is prepared to consider the definition of a sled and work with the communities as to what they might want to define as a sled.

The purpose of the legislation is to allow the communities to define whatever they want as a sled. I realize the Member's concern here for people in the small communities who really do not want to have legislation requiring them to wear protective head-gear, especially at certain times of the year when it may be very awkward, maybe even un-realistic.

At the same time, it is not the intent of the department to suggest to the communities what they may wish to define as a sled. However, the department is willing to put forward a suggestion and bring it to the House, possibly in June, as to what we feel would be the reasonable definition of a sled. We would still allow the communities to come up with their own definition.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for that. I believe we have to be flexible when we determine bills and by-laws that are enforced in a lot of our small communities.

We do not realize that we are unique in the Northwest Territories. We have some communities that like to live the traditional way of life, without being legislated and having people control their day-to-day activities by putting by-laws in place.

We do not see the effects when we pass by-laws in this House, but people in the communities are feeling they are being over-regulated. You just cannot do anything these days without some regulation or by-law enforcement officer on your case because you did not do something.

I think we really have to look at how these by-laws are developed and how they are implemented in our communities. We hear many complaints from the people in the communities about how quickly these by-laws can be passed through a council, some as quick as two days, and there is no public consultation process. In order for us to do justice, we have to ensure there is due process. That is the concern I have with this. I have heard a lot of concerns in my riding from harvesters who live on the land and depend on their snowmobiles to get them from point a to point b. And they have to get a license. They have to make sure they do not operate the snowmobile after a certain period of time.

These are tools that are put forth by this government. We are the ones that hand the tools over to the communities to make by-laws within the scope of the legislation. We can tell the

communities they have the ability to make by-laws. Technically, they do. Realistically, we are the ones who are setting the parameters as to how far those by-laws can go. If they are totally exempting by-laws altogether in our community, and they would have the ability to say we are not going to have driver's licenses on our vehicle, or we are not going to license snowmobiles. We are not going to do this because they would be breaking the law.

I think it is time we took a look at how these by-laws and the legislation we put forth reflects reality in the Northwest Territories. We adopt things from southern Canada and we impose it on small, isolated communities. I feel this is unjust.

The question of sleds is one issue in this bill. I, for one, have been involved in negotiating land claim agreements for almost ten years. It was always the intent to protect the traditional pursuits of aboriginal people to ensure they will be able to continue carrying out those pursuits without being regulated to death. That is exactly what I see happening with this by-law.

I would like to thank the Minister for his comments. Before that, I would like the Minister or someone from his department to explain or elaborate on clause 3.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Krutko, Minister Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, to make sure we get the proper legal definition, I am going to ask the legislative counsel to respond to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Veinott.

MS. VEINOTT: Yes, with respect to clause 3, it amends two existing provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act which currently relate to duties of persons riding on play vehicles, and the towing of play vehicles.

Section 247 requires someone using a coaster sled, toboggan, skateboard, ice skates, roller skates or skis to use a sidewalk if there is one adjacent to the roadway that is usable. If there is no sidewalk, that the person rides the device as close as practical to the left hand curb or edge of the roadway.

Section 248 provides that no driver shall knowingly tow bicycles, coaster sleds, etc. In clause 3, it is really a housekeeping amendment to those provisions because the terms coaster sled and toboggan are really inter-changeable terms and it was just felt that the term sled could be used rather than using the three words. That is the affect of clause 3.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: On Clause 3, that is the point and the principle of my concern. A lot of our communities were built at the turn of the century when we had dog teams. The history of a lot of the communities up and down the valley is that hunting and trapping has made these communities what they are today.

If we are restricting people from pulling sleighs behind snowmobiles, that is a day to day activity for most people in the aboriginal communities. That is the only means of moving your goods and services from point a to point b: on a snowmobile. Most people cannot afford vehicles. Most people cannot afford the luxuries that people take for granted in the larger communities. That is the point I am trying to make.

By excluding sleighs from that provision, it will ensure they continue to have the ability to move their goods and services with a snowmobile without breaking the law. If the Minister is willing to consider looking at that and finding ways of working around it, I hope we can come to a suitable solution that takes into account the realities in many of our smaller communities. Will the Minister consider looking at that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. If the Minister can answer briefly, we have to recess soon for the swearing in of the Commissioner. Minister Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the word sled in this specific clause is quite important because we are suggesting that it is going to be regulated by the community if they choose to do so.

Now, by passing the authority on to the community, we have really eliminated our ability as a department to enforce that regulation because it will not be there anymore. We are passing it on to the community. If the word sled is totally removed at our level and at the community level, then nobody will be enforcing the use of sleds. As far as we are concerned, that would cause safety problems. For instance, the ability for children to slide down hills and come on the highways, or cross onto roads...there would be no ability to control them. Nobody would have the ability because sled was removed. It is quite important that the word sled be there.

I am willing and can commit to look at a way to address the Member's concern. We could come up with some suggestions as to what type of legislation wording they may want to use which would allow communities to exempt certain uses of sleds or exempt skidoos, towing sleds or toboggans. The department could work with the communities. Before we do anything with it, we would probably bring it back to the committee and the House to see what possible options everyone could be happy with. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Steen. At this time, I will call a recess for the swearing in of the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I would like to call the committee back to order. General comments on the bill? Detail? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): We will go clause by clause. Bill 5, An Act To Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 4, Mr. Krutko.

Committee Motion 8-14(2): To Amend Subclause 4(1) of Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act (Carried)

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move the following motion:

I MOVE that sub-clause 4(1) of Bill 5 be amended:

- (a) in paragraph (a), by striking out "pedestrians, vehicles, bicycles, sleds, skateboards, ice skates, in-line skates and skis" and by substituting "pedestrians, vehicles, bicycles, skateboards, ice skates, in-line skates and skis"; and
- (b) in paragraph (d), by striking out "a sled, skateboard, ice skates, in-line skates or skis" in proposed paragraph 347(1)(t) and by substituting "a skateboard, ice skates, in-line skates or skis".

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Clause 4 as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 5. Mr. Krutko.

Committee Motion 9-14(2): To Amend Subclause 5(2) of Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act (Carried)

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move the following motion:

I MOVE that sub-clause 5(2) of Bill 5 be amended by striking out "bicycles, sleds, skateboards, ice skates, in-line skates and skis" in proposed paragraph 349(v.1) and by substituting "bicycles, skateboards, ice skates, in-line skates and skis".

MR. CHAIRMAN: The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Clause 5 as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 6?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Does the committee agree that Bill 5 is ready for the third reading as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Bill 5 is now ready for third reading as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

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

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

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act, Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act; Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act; Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act; and Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicle Act, and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. Bills 1, 4, 3 and 7 are ready for third reading, and Bill 5 is ready for the third reading as amended. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: We need a seconder for the motion. The chair recognizes the honourable Member for Hay River South as seconder. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with the third reading of Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister is seeking consent to proceed with Bill 1. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Minister, you may proceed.

Bill 1: An Act to Amend the Education Act

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 1, an Act to Amend the Education Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 1 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 3: An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 3 has

had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 4, an Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister is seeking consent to proceed. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Minister, you may proceed.

Bill 4: An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 4 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with the third reading of Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Minister is seeking consent to proceed. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Minister, you may proceed.

Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 5 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Bill 6: Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 6 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Bill 7: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 7 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Bill 8: Supplementary Appropriation, Act No. 4, 1999-2000

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 1999-2000, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 8 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills.

I understand that His Honour, The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills and prorogate this Session of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Clerk, could you please attend to and escort the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories into the Chamber?

I would like to welcome the Commissioner, Dan Marion, and on behalf of all of the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of the Northwest Territories, I would like to make a presentation to Commissioner Marion.

-- Applause

I would like to call on the Premier to make the presentation.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you. On behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories and Members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to present you with a couple of gifts.

As a keepsake, here is a pen with an inscription on it, which acknowledges that Dan Marion was the first Commissioner of the new Northwest Territories, complete with dates.

-- Applause

On a more informal, personal basis, I wanted to present him with a collection of photos showing some of the functions, events and places he has been. This is something for him to enjoy over the years.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Commissioner, would you please come up and assent to the bills?

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Mr. Dan Marion): Greetings. Please be seated. Mr. Speaker, Before I assent to bills, and as this is one of my last acts as Commissioner of the new Northwest Territories, I would like to convey to all of the honoured Members my gratitude for all the help that was given to me and to this office.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize you and all the Legislative Assembly staff who assisted in my duties. We now

have a new Commissioner, and I would like to recognize Glenna F. Hansen as the 14th Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

With roots in Aklavik, a resident of Inuvik and with her regional experience, she brings a wealth of experience to her new appointment.

I would prefer to emphasize on what I have experienced rather than dwell on what I could have had. Honoured Members, many of us do not realize the dream of achieving what we strive for. The mark of a human being is how he or she overcomes and proceeds with their life - it is called taking the high road. It is a road I plan to take as much as possible.

When I was sworn in, the Great Hall was full of friends and family. I will remember that moment, for it is a milestone in my life, for the rest of my life. It was the first public acknowledgement of myself. In small communities, it is very rare that we celebrate or acknowledge the deeds that we do - it is expected of us.

That is one of the reasons I took a path of finding, encouraging, and recognizing individuals who have bettered their community. I tried to visit every community, but time ran out. With the election happening, I fell short of my goal.

In all my visits, I was well received. I tried to give homage to these communities who were honouring one of their Members with all the regales that this office could fashion. I saw first hand a new government being formed with all the drama that entailed. I have met many wonderful, caring and amazing people of the North. This position has changed me. I see more beauty in the people of the North and I observe more confidence than negativism in the communities.

I received one of the greatest distinctions being appointed Commissioner. I did not have to accept this position. By accepting it, I also accepted the fact that other people of higher authority would decide the future Commissioner position, and this person chosen would be an honoured person in his or her region, as we now see by the appointment that was announced.

I would like this House to recognize the contribution my wife Lena made. This position requires that your spouse voluntarily attends the many functions and receptions of the government. I would also like to recognize my family for the support I received from them. I can honestly say I will be spending more time at home with all of you.

As the Commissioner for the Northwest Territories, I am extremely pleased to assent to the following bills: Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Education Act, Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, Bill 6, Interim Appropriation Act, 2000-2001, Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, Bill 8, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 1999-2000.

Prior to proroguing this Session, I wish to announce that the Third Session of the 14th Legislative Assembly will convene on June 20, 2000, at 1:30 p.m. As the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I hereby prorogue the Second Session of the 14th Assembly. I would like to say thank you and God bless you all.

-- Applause

-- PROROGATION

The House prorogued at 4:15 p.m.