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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Dent, Mr. Delorey, 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 Tony Whitford.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

MR. LAFFERTY: (Translation starts) Lord, help us have a good meeting today. So help us God. Thank you. (Translation ends)

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome. Colleagues, I am pleased to acknowledge today, June 21, 2000, as National Aboriginal Day. This is a day to recognize and celebrate the many positive and unique contributions made by aboriginal people of Canada.

Aboriginal people have always played significant and meaningful roles in the development of our Canadian society. Today, as we celebrate National Aboriginal Day, it is important to reflect on and remember those contributions.

Aboriginal people have contributed and continue to contribute to Canadian art, literature, business, medicine, politics, self-identity and many other aspects that we cherish in our society.

As we reflect on the distinctive past, we can also look forward to a healthy, bright and prosperous future. The Yellowknife National Aboriginal Day Organization Committee has organized activities and cultural displays that are taking place today throughout the city and at Petitot Park.

The festival began this morning and is scheduled to continue on into the evening. I attended this event last year and had a great time. I would like to extend an invitation to everyone to enjoy the festivities and to celebrate this very special day.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 34(6) so that all of the Ministers' statements filed with the Clerk can be delivered today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 34(6). Are there any nays? There are no nays. We shall waive Rule 34(6). Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Premier Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 2-14(3): Building Momentum

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to address you, my colleagues in this Assembly, and the people of the Northwest Territories. As we commence the Third Session of this 14th Assembly this week, we begin the important work needed to review and approve the budget for the 2000-2001 fiscal year, announced

yesterday in this House by the Honourable Joseph Handley, Minister of Finance.

I would like to take a moment at the outset to congratulate Minister Handley and his staff for their hard work. They have brought forward a budget that acknowledges our fiscal challenges and puts forward responsible measures to deal with these challenges while we work towards a new fiscal relationship and to secure additional sources of revenue that will see us into the future.

I would also like to acknowledge that today, June 21st, is National Aboriginal Day, a day to recognize and celebrate aboriginal people and cultures. Later today, the Honourable Jim Antoine, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, will be making a statement in this House regarding National Aboriginal Day.

Mr. Speaker, it was four months ago, on February 22nd to be precise, that I last addressed this Assembly. I outlined for you the aspirations and expectations of our constituents for a society:

- where our children can grow and prosper and where our elders can live in comfort and be respected for their contributions; and
- where individuals and their families will be healthy and living in communities that are rooted in cultures and languages which flourish.

I described our desire for an economic climate in which:

- NWT people and their governments make decisions regarding land use, development, resource management and the protection of the environment;
- our residents benefit from private sector development and where they use revenues raised in the NWT to reduce our dependence on federal transfer payments; and
- important infrastructure, such as the roads connecting our communities, is developed.

In February, my Cabinet colleagues and I recognized that people of the NWT want to be governed by institutions that are:

- bound together by a sense of unity and identity that inspires aboriginal and territorial governments to work in partnership for the good of our people;
- administered by a capable and experienced workforce that is representative of our population; and

- capable of making informed decisions to advance NWT interests at the national and international level.

Mr. Speaker, these long-range goals were identified by this Assembly just four short months ago. We also described some of the preliminary work this Assembly would need to undertake to fulfill our goals.

Today, I want to report how together we have made an energetic and positive start to the challenges before us. I also want to describe to you how and why we are building the momentum that is needed to carry us forward on a number of critical initiatives – initiatives intended to yield positive and lasting benefits for the future of the Northwest Territories.

This momentum is important because it means that within this new Northwest Territories, there is a renewed sense of enthusiasm about the prospects we have for a secure economic future. We need to capture and nurture that sense of enthusiasm.

It is important because it means that we are building a northern territorial identity. As partners in this Legislature and with our constituents, we are defining our shared interests and moving forward together towards our common goals.

It is important because it means that there is a growing awareness and focus on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle for each of our residents and an increased understanding of the need to provide our children with the best possible start in life.

And this momentum is especially important because, as a result of our efforts, people, businesses and institutions outside of the Northwest Territories -- who are in a position to help us realize our dreams -- are sitting up and taking notice of the things we are saying. They are beginning to share our excitement about the prospects for development in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, it is this development -- not only of our non-renewable resources, but of our local businesses, our tourism industry, our people, their skills and abilities -- that will ensure that the NWT is a prosperous and secure place to live and to raise our families in the years to come.

Towards A Better Tomorrow

Mr. Speaker, in order to be able to build momentum, we needed a vision to share, to capture interest and to guide us. On March 31, 2000, the Members of this Assembly collectively released to the public a document entitled *Towards a Better Tomorrow*.

Towards a Better Tomorrow is a statement of the vision and priorities that will guide the 14th Legislative Assembly in the coming years. It is a document that has the full support and endorsement of Cabinet.

Caucus spent considerable time developing the vision, priorities and agenda of the 14th Assembly. It was time well spent. Together, we reviewed the 13th Assembly's Agenda for the New North, and agreed that it should serve as a foundation document upon which the 14th Assembly would build its action plan.

Towards a Better Tomorrow outlines the 14th Assembly's vision for a prosperous future for the people of the Northwest Territories. In it, Caucus identifies the following key priorities:

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

Mr. Speaker, *Towards a Better Tomorrow* has laid the foundation for the actions we have initiated. Cabinet has identified specific strategies that are designed to help us achieve the goals outlined in *Towards a Better Tomorrow*. These are:

- support for the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy;
- support for the Economic Strategy Panel;
- support for a social strategy focusing on early childhood development, personal responsibility and community ownership of wellness; and
- broad support for regional reorganization and capacity-building initiatives designed to ensure that regional administrative structures are responsive to changes brought about by self-government initiatives and that communities can take on expanded responsibilities and manage their own futures.

The key priorities and goals contained in *Towards a Better Tomorrow* and the strategies that flow from them now guide the work of this government.

Building Momentum with the Federal Government

Mr. Speaker, the federal government is a critical partner in assisting us to achieve our goals. We receive approximately 75 percent of our funding from the federal government. Until devolution is finalized, the federal government remains responsible for land and resource ownership and management in the Northwest Territories.

In particular, the Honourable Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, has a unique relationship with and responsibility to the NWT. Because of the extent of his jurisdiction over and responsibility for land and resource management in the NWT, the relationship that Minister Nault shares with us is unique and different from his relationship with provincial jurisdictions.

For this reason, we are building momentum with the federal government and setting the stage for the changes we want to see in the future.

On March 22nd, the Honourable Joe Handley, Minister of Finance and I traveled to Ottawa and met with federal Finance Minister Paul Martin, with Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister Robert Nault, and Minister of State for Youth -- and our MP -- Ethel Blondin-Andrew.

We discussed the very real possibility that the NWT could, within a decade, become a "have" territory -- one that can live on the revenue it generates, rather than a "have not" territory, dependant upon federal transfer payments to make ends meet. We stressed that to become self-sufficient, we will require a share of the revenues generated by non-renewable resource development -- revenues that all currently flow to the federal government.

Minister Nault indicated his support for a results-oriented Intergovernmental Forum for leaders to discuss northern economic development issues including devolution, resource revenue sharing and the construction of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline.

Minister Martin indicated his willingness to consider increased federal investment in the future of the NWT based on a resource development strategy paper outlining our needs in greater detail, including the costs and benefits of increased non-renewable resource development. When we met a second time in April, he confirmed that interest and urged us to get all documentation to him as soon as possible.

In April, I met with our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien and conveyed to him the importance that people of the Northwest Territories place on moving forward on our agenda. His support was requested, and that of his Cabinet, for investing in and with the Northwest Territories to meet our shared objectives.

We discussed the critical role of infrastructure development in accessing our non-renewable resources, in linking our communities and in opening the NWT to southern visitors. We explored the possibility of federal government support for the development of a Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline and the completion of the Mackenzie Valley highway in conjunction with the pipeline.

The Prime Minister understands the goals we are trying to achieve and recognizes the NWT as a place where a necessary federal investment, made today, could yield significant future benefits to the NWT and Canada as a whole.

Recently, my colleague, the Honourable Vince Steen, Minister of Transportation, had a chance to reinforce the importance that we place on opening up access to our resource-rich areas when he attended the Transport Canada Millennium Conference. There, Mr. Steen made arrangements with his federal counterpart, Transport Canada Minister David Collenette, to meet later this week. They will be discussing the critical role that infrastructure development plays in the economic development of the NWT, and Mr. Steen will be working to ensure that our voice is heard in any discussions taking place on the Canada National Highway Infrastructure Program.

Mr. Speaker, in a short period of time, and with the assistance of our Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, we have captured the attention of Ottawa. Canada is interested in us in a way we have not seen in years. The federal government is paying attention to the tremendous interest in NWT non-renewable resource development and the work we have done on the draft Non-Renewable Resource Strategy and is participating in the Intergovernmental Forum. Both of these initiatives are intended to produce prosperity and security over time for all peoples of the NWT.

The Intergovernmental Forum

An important aspect of building momentum has been the new relationship with aboriginal governments that is developing -- a relationship which is long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, the first meeting of the newly established Intergovernmental Forum took place in Hay River on May 5. This forum -- created jointly by Canada, the GNWT and the aboriginal governments of the NWT as the first government-to-government forum in the country -- was an historic gathering.

The forum has brought together the political leaders of the Northwest Territories, representing the federal, territorial and aboriginal governments. Representatives at Hay River included: the Honourable Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development; our Member of Parliament, the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew; Senator Nick Sibbeston; a number of former GNWT Premiers and Cabinet Ministers, together with many of the Members of this 14th Legislative Assembly and Cabinet; as well as the aboriginal leaders from each of the regions.

The breadth of this leadership base and its depth of experience are important because they indicate the interest and support for moving forward on key territorial issues. The very existence of the forum is a step forward in the political evolution of the Northwest Territories and a recognition that we cannot make progress unless we find a way to work together in an atmosphere of trust and respect.

The federal, territorial and aboriginal leaders have agreed to use the forum to build a common vision for the Northwest Territories and to discuss territorial-wide issues such as resource-revenue sharing and building capacity for aboriginal governments.

The Intergovernmental Forum provides an arena for NWT governments to participate as equal partners in discussion and decision-making. In the forum, we expect to focus on matters such as:

- the ways in which intergovernmental relationships will change as land claims, self-government and aboriginal rights negotiations are settled in the NWT;
- how resource revenues will be shared between the federal, aboriginal and territorial governments;
- the devolution to the North of the resource management responsibilities currently exercised by Canada;
- economic development initiatives, including the development of a Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline; and
- capacity building for aboriginal governments.

I want to stress that while the goodwill and spirit of cooperation around the Intergovernmental Forum table is encouraging, the process we are jointly developing is still fragile. It will need nurturing and care in order to flourish. I would ask for support and patience from each of you. Please recognize that we are working hard to overcome the obstacles that have divided us in the past, in order to forge a new and stronger bond. It will take

some time to build the necessary trust and confidence of the parties in the forum process.

The Government of the Northwest Territories looks forward to the next meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum, which we hope will take place in the autumn.

The Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy

Mr. Speaker, building momentum is not just about talk. It must be about action and results and so, at the May 5th meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum, the Honourable Joe Handley, Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, distributed a draft Non-Renewable Resource Strategy for the consideration of our partner governments.

Preparation of this document responds to the commitment made to federal Finance Minister Martin to put our preliminary thoughts on paper and begin a draft that identifies the investment dollars needed to prepare for the non-renewable resource development challenges already upon us.

The strategy remains in draft and represents the initial thinking of the Government of the Northwest Territories to this point. It is a work-in-progress that, out of respect for the relationship we are developing through the Intergovernmental Forum process, has been formally shared with our partner governments for their consideration and input.

The draft strategy was also provided to Members of this House for their input and was transmitted under cover letter to all federal Cabinet Ministers and their deputies. As well, the draft strategy was presented to federal officials representing 12 departments and agencies at a meeting in Ottawa on May 18, 2000. This presentation included an explanation of the need for and value of such a strategy at this time.

It should be noted that Mr. Pierre Alvarez, president, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and Mr. Richard Nerysoo, co-chair of the Economic Strategy Panel, also gave presentations at that meeting in support of the strategy.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was our early review and discussions with respect to the work of the Economic Strategy Panel that provided one of the bases for the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy. As a result, our draft document, which focuses solely on one economic sector, fits nicely within the overall umbrella strategy being prepared by the panel. While we await the release of their report, titled Common Ground, it would appear that the work of the government to date in moving this initiative forward is consistent with the thrust of the Economic Strategy Panel's thinking.

In keeping with our commitment to open and transparent government, we have made early drafts of the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy available upon request to the media and to the public.

I should mention, Mr. Speaker, that while we recognize that a final strategy must be built on partnership, other events dictate that time is of the essence in moving this initiative forward. Development in the non-renewable resource sector is already booming in the NWT. Canadian diamonds are already being sold in international markets -- something that was hard to imagine just a few short years ago. In less than a year, three new pipelines have been completed in the Northwest Territories.

With every day that passes, we find new opportunities to benefit from this development. As a proactive government, we cannot afford to wait. Our provincial partners are not waiting. For example, British Columbia just announced an investment of \$103 million to pave the Liard highway from Fort Nelson to the BC - NWT border.

Therefore, we are asking the federal government to respond quickly and decisively to the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy and invest with us in preparation for the major developments on our doorstep. At the end of the day, the success of the strategy will be measured by the extent to which it yields additional federal investment in the Northwest Territories and how quickly and decisively the federal government responds.

Building Momentum with Aboriginal Governments

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the valuable work being done at the Intergovernmental Forum, we are continuing to build momentum with aboriginal governments through the settlement of land claims and self-government agreements.

As indicated by Minister Handley in his Budget Address yesterday, building strong partnerships with aboriginal governments is fundamental for the GNWT. Minister Handley noted that, along with the Government of Canada, the GNWT has entered into a political accord in the Beaufort Delta region with the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. This accord sets out how we will cooperate to address territorial issues of mutual concern.

Just last week the Honourable Jim Antoine, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, represented the GNWT at the signing of a political accord with the Akaitcho Dene First Nations in Lutselk'e. This bilateral accord acknowledges that our two governments have important issues of mutual concern to address and it solidifies a working relationship that will allow us to work together to resolve these issues.

On June 13th, on the occasion of the signing of the political accord, negotiators for Canada, the Akaitcho Dene First Nations and the GNWT initialed the Akaitcho Framework Agreement. It is hoped that later this summer, the Framework Agreement can be signed in conjunction with the 100th Centenary Celebrations for Treaty 8 at Deninu Ku'e.

On May 6th, the Smith's Landing First Nation held a ceremony in Fort Fitzgerald, Alberta, on the occasion of the signing of their Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement. Coming more than a century after the signing of Treaty 8 in Fort Fitzgerald, this final agreement represents over 30 years of effort by the people of the Smith's Landing First Nation to secure their land rights. I was pleased to take part in this ceremony, and I want to take this opportunity to again publicly congratulate the Smith's Landing First Nation, their chief, Gerry Paulette and their chief negotiator, Francois Paulette, on their achievement.

Mr. Speaker, the settlement of all outstanding land claims and self-government agreements with the aboriginal peoples of the Northwest Territories within the next ten years is a long-standing goal of this government. As I have said many times, this will provide certainty to investors with respect to land use and regulatory processes. This in turn can only contribute positively to the economic development climate in the Northwest Territories.

More importantly, however, achieving this goal represents a tangible confirmation of the rights of aboriginal people to self-government and to secure tenure over lands that they have occupied for centuries. I am pleased to be able to report that we are continuing to make progress in this important area.

Building Momentum with Provincial and Territorial Governments

I am also pleased to report on the significant progress the Government of the Northwest Territories has made in building momentum with our provincial and territorial counterparts. This momentum is expressed in a clearer understanding of our mutual interests and in agreement on how we will pursue these joint interests through a coordinated approach.

The annual Western Premier's Conference was held from May 23rd through the 25th this year in Brandon, Manitoba. It involved the leaders of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. While in Brandon, I met with my counterparts, Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik and Yukon Premier Pat Duncan, in what we are calling the Northern Premiers' Forum. We talked about how we can help each other deal more effectively with the federal government in areas of mutual interest such as economic development and the devolution of federal powers to the territorial governments.

As northern Premiers, we confirmed the renewed support of the western Premiers for the devolution of federal jurisdiction over land and resources to the territorial governments. The support we received at the Western Premiers Conference will strengthen the message we are taking to the federal government; namely that it is time to talk seriously about implementing federally funded economic development and diversification programs in the North.

Mr. Speaker, coming on the heels of the WPC, I had the pleasure of joining Premier Ujjal Dossanjh for the signing of a formal five-year Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Development with the Government of British Columbia at a ceremony held in Victoria, British Columbia, on June 6th. This MOU is a general agreement to develop cooperative measures related to developing the communities, services and infrastructure of northern British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

This agreement follows the recent commitment by the Government of British Columbia to pave part of the Liard Highway, mentioned earlier. The paving of this section of the highway is one of several initiatives which will serve to develop our communities, services and infrastructure. A joint steering committee will oversee the implementation of the MOU and further specific initiatives will be identified for implementation.

The agreement with British Columbia complements a similar one made with the Government of Alberta in October, 1998, to improve the coordination of programs, opportunities and initiatives related to economic and human resource development. We also have similar memoranda of understanding with Manitoba and the Yukon.

We will continue to pursue such partnerships within the Canadian Confederation because they promote our respective and joint efforts to deliver programs and services to our respective jurisdictions in a more effective and coordinated way. GNWT officials are presently engaged in preliminary

discussions that might lead to similar arrangements with one or more of the Atlantic Provinces.

Building Momentum with Community Governments

Mr. Speaker, we are also paying increasing attention to the important role played by community governments in the Northwest Territories. The annual general meeting of the Northwest Territories Association of Municipalities was held in Fort Simpson on May 24th. This meeting was attended by a delegation from the Government of the Northwest Territories, led by the Honourable Jim Antoine, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. The delegation included Ministers Ootes, Handley, Steen and I.

At that meeting, the Government of the Northwest Territories acknowledged that the member governments represented by the Association of Municipalities are the front line providers of programs, services and support to all residents of the 33 communities of the NWT. We acknowledged the essential role that community governments play in delivering programs and services to NWT residents.

Because of the importance Cabinet places on building strong relationships with communities, I have agreed to meet with the executive of the NWT Association of Municipalities to hear firsthand the Association's concerns and to engage in dialogue with them at their next executive meeting.

As well, the Honourable Roger Allen, Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, has traveled to at least ten communities to discuss general housing concerns. By working in partnership with community leaders to address housing issues we are supporting the development of local solutions to housing problems. Minister Allen is also working on the development of a Seniors Housing Strategy, the initial stages of a subsidized Singles Housing Initiative, and he is exploring cost-shared social housing initiatives with aboriginal organizations.

As promised in Towards a Better Tomorrow, this government is committed to working in partnership with all governments of the Northwest Territories as we work together towards improving the lives of all residents of the Northwest Territories. Today, I want to reconfirm our commitment to partnerships with community governments and to ensuring that their concerns will continue to be considered and addressed by this government as we move forward with our agenda.

Building Momentum with Key Stakeholders

Mr. Speaker, a number of steps have been taken to strengthen existing relationships and to build new partnerships with key stakeholders.

As the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, the Honourable Joe Handley worked decisively to resolve the Teacher's Collective Agreement. Ensuring a positive working environment for our teachers will increase job satisfaction and staff retention, which translates into a more enriching educational experience for our children.

The Honourable Jake Ootes also made a significant contribution to this effort through his work to build partnerships and facilitate frank and open discussion on issues of common concern through a series of meetings with district education councils and authorities.

Minister Ootes should also be recognized for his department's work with the Calgary Board of Education. Together, they have signed a memorandum of understanding that will enable NWT students to access more than 30 Internet courses through a program called Web Curriculum Tools. By increasing the options available to students, this partnership will greatly enhance the quality of education in the NWT.

Building Momentum on the Social Agenda

Mr. Speaker, a great deal of progress is being made with the federal government in our work on the social agenda aimed at improving the social well-being of our residents. The efforts of our Cabinet Ministers ensure that the federal government remains constantly mindful of the needs and perspectives of NWT residents.

On June 8th and 9th in Toronto, the Honourable Jane Groenewegen, Minister of Health and Social Services, and the Honourable Jake Ootes, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, attended a meeting of federal, provincial and territorial social services Ministers. Ministers Groenewegen and Ootes were there to ensure that the NWT's interests were represented in discussions on the National Child Benefit Program, the development of the National Children's Agenda and disability issues.

Through her participation in the federal-provincial-territorial councils on social policy renewal, the Honourable Jane Groenewegen, Minister of Health and Social Services, has been working to ensure the consideration of aboriginal involvement in national social policy initiatives.

Working jointly, the Departments of Education Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services are developing an action plan and Financial Management Board submission to pilot specific early childhood development projects. Although only very limited federal funding is available for such initiatives, we are hopeful that outcomes from the Canada Health and Social Transfer negotiations will allow us to expand our efforts in this important area.

The GNWT, working in conjunction with all provinces and territories, has called for the full and immediate restoration of CHST funding to 1994-95 levels. In addition, all provinces and territories have requested that Ottawa include an appropriate escalator in this funding to reflect growing costs.

The Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Jane Groenewegen, has been working over the past few months with her counterparts towards this goal. Although the details have yet to be finalized, I am confident that the outcome of these negotiations will be positive.

Building Momentum with Business and Industry

Mr. Speaker, in the 16 short weeks since we first met as an Assembly, the government has invested considerable effort in building momentum with business and industry.

On March 29th, for example, I addressed the National Roundtable on the Environment and Economy Task Force on Aboriginal Communities and Non-Renewable Resource Development -- an important gathering of industry experts and key government officials held in Yellowknife. It provided an opportunity to discuss the vast development potential of the NWT's natural resources. There we reviewed the importance of

development to achieving a secure economic future for our residents and the need to balance the extraction of resources with protection of the environment, so that development is sustainable and our renewable resources are protected over the long term.

In April and May, I spoke to both the Calgary and Edmonton Chambers of Commerce about the significant benefits that can be expected by Alberta businesses if they commit to greater investment in and trade with the NWT. Alberta is our largest trading partner, and with the potential for oil and gas development and expansion of our diamond industry, there is no question that economic development in the Northwest Territories will be mutually beneficial to the residents of both jurisdictions.

At these meetings, the members of these Alberta Chambers of Commerce were encouraged to consider partnerships with their counterparts in the North, and to consider the NWT as a tourism destination in their personal and business planning.

On May 10th, a similar message was given to the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association when, at their invitation, I gave the keynote address at their annual conference in Calgary. The membership of this CEPA is made up of executives from the major players in the oil and gas sector -- people who may play an instrumental role in the development of a Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline and in the ongoing development of the Liard and Mackenzie Valleys.

The key players in the oil and gas industry are now aware that the NWT has come a long way since the days of the Berger Inquiry. We are a territory that is open for business in the non-renewable resource sector. Our only prerequisites are that oil and gas development brings jobs and benefits for the people of the NWT; that developments are carried out responsibly with care and concern for the environment; and that northern aboriginal people have the opportunity for equity participation in and management of the gas pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, our message was reinforced June 11th through the 14th, when the GNWT participated in the World Petroleum Congress in Calgary, Alberta. This premiere event for the oil and gas industry was attended by a delegation of Ministers and Members, headed by Deputy Premier Jane Groenewegen and Mr. Floyd Roland, chair of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development.

The united presence of Ministers and Members at this international event helped to reinforce the message that this government takes current and future oil and gas development very seriously.

With respect to continued momentum in the development of a northern diamond industry, the Honourable Jake Ootes, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and Mr. Steve Nitah, representing the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, represented this government at the Second Annual International Rough Diamond Conference in Israel in late March.

At this event, which brought together 90 percent of the world's rough diamond producers, Minister Ootes gave a presentation on our secondary diamond industry and participated in a panel discussion. Representation at this conference laid the groundwork for future partnerships between NWT businesses and world-class diamond producers.

On June 5th in Yellowknife, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Minister Joseph Handley and Education, Culture and Employment Minister Jake Ootes met with President Charles Bornstein and representatives of the Diamond High Council (HRD) of Antwerp, Belgium. The Diamond High Council has proven to be an excellent partner which supported our vision for secondary diamond industries in the North when few others did. Together, we are working to establish a polished diamond grading facility in the NWT.

On June 6th, Minister Ootes and Commissioner Glenna Hansen traveled to Fort Liard to represent the GNWT and join the community, Acho Dene Koe Holdings and Chevron Canada Resources and take part in their "First Gas" celebrations. The linking of the K29 pipe to the Pointed Mountain Pipeline will bring lasting benefits to the people of Fort Liard. It exemplifies the achievement that can be reached when northern communities demonstrate initiative and determination in pursuing maximum benefits from the development of their natural resources, and when industry demonstrates a willingness to partner with northern businesses. I am very proud of the achievements of Chief Harry Deneron and the people of Fort Liard and hope that they inspire other Northerners to dream big and reach high.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT participated in the tourism industry's Rendezvous Canada, held from May 6th through the 11th in Calgary, Alberta, which gave us the opportunity to highlight the reasons why the NWT is beginning to become a destination of choice for visitors from all over the world.

At a time when the Canadian dollar struggles to compete in world markets, Canada has become a popular vacation option for Canadians, and a bargain for the international traveller. The time has never been better to let the world know that the NWT continues to offer tourists a unique and memorable travel experience.

We are committed to promoting the export of tourism products and services to enhance the diversification of the NWT economy and to support our local business community. As we move further into our term, we will continue to work with all of you on additional opportunities to market our tourism potential.

Building Momentum in the National and International Spotlight

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as we work to realize our vision, the steps we are taking are gaining attention in the national and international spotlight. In this way, we are working to secure a more meaningful and better understood place for ourselves on the national agenda.

On March 29, the Honourable Roger Allen, Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, announced the sale to Stebbins, Alaska of a seniors' complex that was developed using NWT expertise.

This \$1 million complex is being built as a pilot project between the NWT Housing Corporation, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. Under the terms of the deal, NWT contractors are building the complex using local labour, NWT suppliers and manufacturers are providing the materials, and Aurora College is conducting pre-employment training for Alaskans who will work on the project.

Minister Allen also attended the 2000 North American Fur Fashion Exposition held in Montreal from May 3rd through the 6th. The Mackenzie Valley Fur Collection, which was developed to increase awareness of wild fur from the NWT, was a sell-out at this international event. Minister Allen participated in a panel discussion on the fur industry and lifestyles where he discussed the importance of the trapping industry to the livelihoods and traditional lifestyles of many northern people. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development continues to work within the Fur Marketing Strategy to increase economic opportunities for territorial residents active in the fur industry.

As part of the NWT trade delegation, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Jim Antoine, traveled to Alaska to represent the GNWT. The pilot project is a continuation of NWTHC efforts to market NWT goods and services to other parts of the circumpolar world. This type of undertaking not only highlights internationally that the NWT has world-class expertise to offer, it helps to build the partnerships that will ensure a diversified economy for the Northwest Territories in the years to come.

I should also mention that the GNWT, represented by Minister Ootes, has engaged in partnership with diamond industry representatives from Belgium, Germany, the United States and South Africa. This partnership has resulted in the first international standards for diamond polishers in the world. Again, the NWT has demonstrated it has the skills to be leaders in cutting-edge initiatives.

On April 4th, the business council on national issues, CEO Summit 2000, was held in Toronto, at which I represented the GNWT. These business council events, attended by key players in industry and business, the shapers of public opinion, allow us to educate others about the challenges involved in improving the well-being of Northerners, the opportunities we provide, the progress we have made and the assistance we need to reach our goals.

The NWT is gaining attention in the national press. In this way, we will be able to further inform the wider public and develop the identity of the Northwest Territories throughout Canada and abroad. Perhaps with the activity we are generating, we will come to be seen as an attractive place of business and industry, with an energetic, entrepreneurial population striving for unity and prosperity -- a "have" territory that is a contributor to the nation.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, sometimes success can be measured in small steps -- in the incremental measures of progress that move us toward achievement of our goals and fulfillment of our vision. When I last addressed this Assembly, I made a commitment to this House to put in place a way to measure our results in the next four years. I intend to stand up one day and report to this Assembly how the foundation of partnerships and solid, respectful working relationships that we have established are paying concrete, measurable results.

We are still in the early days. Before we can be measured by our results, we have to build relationships and earn trust. Today, I have shown this House how we are doing this preliminary work, how we are setting the stage and laying the foundation for achieving our goals. We are generating energy and enthusiasm. We are developing support for shared goals

and initiatives and we are forging new bonds. This is the basis upon which we have started to build the momentum that will move us forward towards a better tomorrow. Mahsi.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Premier Kakfwi. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 3-14(3): National Aboriginal Day

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation starts) Mr. Speaker, for many years, the aboriginal people of Canada have struggled for recognition. In the North, since first contact, aboriginal people have helped the early settlers in the North to survive and to learn how to live off the land. National Aboriginal Day recognizes the immense contribution the Dene, the Inuvialuit and the Metis have made, and continue to make, to the North and to Canada.

Mr. Speaker, four years ago, the former Governor General Romeo Leblanc declared June 21st as National Aboriginal Day to recognize and celebrate the contributions made by the aboriginal peoples to the development of Canada. This day provides us with a special opportunity to celebrate our heritage and to teach Canadians about our culture. Through cultural games, dances, displays, and traditional foods, we are giving Canadians a glimpse and appreciation of our rich and diverse heritage.

Last year, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs provided funding to the 20 communities who requested assistance for public celebrations on National Aboriginal Day. The Ministry is providing similar funding support to NWT communities this year.

Earlier today I had the honour and pleasure of attending the Aboriginal Day Celebration in Petitot Park in Yellowknife. On behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I wish great success to each community of the North as they celebrate National Aboriginal Day. Mahsi cho. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Youth, Mr. Allen.

Minister's Statement 4-14(3): Recognition of Air and Army Cadets of the Northwest Territories

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the cadets we see here in the Legislative Assembly this week are representative of air and army cadets of the Northwest Territories. Some of the cadet units in the NWT have been in existence for over 35 years. Today, there are nine army cadet corps and one air cadet squadron in the Northwest Territories, where the cadets' program continues to enrich the lives of hundreds of our youth.

Therefore, today in the House, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the NWT cadet movement in the Northwest Territories.

The primary focus of the cadet organization is citizenship. It aims to develop in our youth the foundations of good citizenship so that they will become valued and contributing

members of society. We need not look further for examples than the fine young pages that are here today in the House.

We have also seen the cadet displays outside put on by the Rae-Edzo Cadet Corps and by the two Yellowknife cadet units. This afternoon, at the break, we look forward to the reception and the demonstrations.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has also recognized the contributions that the cadet movement can make to the education of our youth. Through designated cadet courses taken at summer camps, cadets can receive high school credits.

The cadet movement depends upon a large number of volunteers. Volunteers lead the cadet corps and squadrons. Volunteers are active on parent or sponsoring committees and sit on league executives. I would like to pay tribute to those volunteers and thank them for their generous donation of time and effort. Their valued abilities and dedication are truly appreciated.

We would not have cadets without the Canadian Forces, therefore, I would also like to thank them and their northern based personnel for the tremendous work they do for cadets. It is truly appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, I know that we all wish air and army cadets, their leaders and their civilian sponsors all the best in the future, secure in the knowledge that they have captured our interest and that they have our support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Allen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Minister's Statement 5-14(3): Minister Absent From the House

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Vince Steen will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to meet with the federal Minister of Transportation in Toronto, Ontario.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Deh Cho Proposal

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as this is National Aboriginal Day, I would like to make some comments on an issue that has been facing the Dene and Metis of the Deh Cho for many years. My statement today is on the Deh Cho proposal.

Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho proposal is not a land claim in the accepted sense of the word. Instead, it proposes that government institutions be based on Dene laws and values for the benefit of all of the residents of the Deh Cho region, including the non-aboriginal people of the Deh Cho.

The establishment of such governing institutions will fulfill the legitimate aspirations and rights of both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people of the Deh Cho. It is proposed that these community-driven institutions will have extensive powers, which

will include, but not be limited to, those more commonly associated with traditional land claim agreements.

Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho process needs active support and promotion by the Government of the Northwest Territories. It is essential that the Government of the Northwest Territories keep an open mind and adopt a flexible, creative approach to the Deh Cho process as it unfolds.

Mr. Speaker, it is also very important that the Government of the Northwest Territories concentrates less on its own potential loss of powers and more on the legitimate interest of the Deh Cho people under consideration of the Deh Cho proposal.

The Government of the Northwest Territories shall not take a rigid approach. On the contrary, it should be as flexible and as accommodating as possible. Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that in separate negotiations between Canada and the Akaitcho, Canada and the Dogrib, and between Canada and the Deh Cho, it is the Government of the Northwest Territories that comes to be seen as the stumbling block to a speedy settlement of outstanding issues.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories should be playing a more supportive role in these negotiations or none at all. With regard to the Deh Cho, it is important that the federal government and the Deh Cho be given as much breathing room as possible in negotiations. It is important that this clear message comes from the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho sees mixed messages coming from the Government of the Northwest Territories. Indeed, it would appear that the GNWT has difficulty in defining its own interests. To add to the confusion, the bureaucrats are not saying the same things as the politicians.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Cabinet and the honourable Minister of Aboriginal Affairs to immediately adopt a more flexible and creative approach to the Deh Cho proposal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on National Aboriginal Day

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate National Aboriginal Day, I would like to briefly reflect on Fort Smith as a possible model for what National Aboriginal Day is all about.

Mr. Speaker, Fort Smith, as you well know, is a multi-cultural community. About a third of the people are Dene, a third Metis and a third are people from many other places from across the world.

This is a community that has a tremendously long history of living together, of ties of blood and commerce and time together. Over the past five years, Mr. Speaker, there has been a clear recognition that there are three main groups in the community when it comes to decision making.

There is the community public government, the band and the Metis. Major issues are now discussed by the community leadership. We attempt to move ahead together. There have been agreements reached on how the DEA should be structured, with guaranteed seats and appointments for the band, town and Metis in equal portions. It is the same with the health board, as well as the housing board.

There has been a common approach in terms of developing the community plan and our strategy in trying to resolve the seniors' housing issue in Fort Smith. I think we are demonstrating by these actions that there is a great role to be played by the aboriginal governments at all levels, and we can work and live together.

We recognize and respect the roles we all have to play. We also greatly respect and admire many of the aboriginal models we have, role models in our community. To name a few, and not to exclude anyone, but some who just come to mind: Mary Hearn; Jane Dragon; and Maggie Kurszewski, fine elders in our community. Some athletes like Jonathan Kurszewski; Don True; and Joe Dragon, all of whom have demonstrated very well that they can compete at any level with anybody in the land or world.

In our community, we are tremendously proud to see the progress we are achieving in terms of self-government and land claims. Smith's Landing First Nation has recently signed a land claims agreement. This is going to be a tremendous benefit not only to the members, but to the community as well.

The Salt River First Nation is pursuing treaty land entitlement as well, as are the South Slave Metis with their negotiations for a settlement. When these are resolved, Mr. Speaker, in our neck of the woods, we will be able to get on with the other issues of the day, such as economic development, dealing with social issues and moving ahead as a community.

National Aboriginal Day is an opportunity to recognize all the good work that has been done by the aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories. I am proud to stand here today to say that our community is doing a fine job. The aboriginal governments and the aboriginal people, along with the non-aboriginal people, are demonstrating that we do have a strong future together in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Treaty 8 Centenary

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation starts) My friends and family, today is a very special day for me. You all remember Elijah Harper out in Hull, Quebec, who has united all the First Nations people in this Territory and across Canada.

Today is a very special day for the Dene and the Metis. This is a very special day for all aboriginal people. June 21st is a very special day. We here in the Northwest Territories live our own traditional lifestyle the way people live, the Dene people, the Inuit, the Metis...we must recognize all of these people today.

Next month, we will all gather in Fort Resolution to celebrate a very special event. It is 100 years since Treaty 8 was signed.

We will have canoe races. We will dance and celebrate. We will do everything. We will jig and have a very tremendous time.

Therefore, I am welcoming you all to join us in our festivities in Fort Resolution. We hope to have approximately 3,000 people there. Paul Boucher in Fort Resolution is in charge of the festivities and we are still looking for funding and assistance. Anyone who would like to assist us in any funding, we will welcome your funding.

Today is National Aboriginal Day. This is a special day for us who are native to the country and everyone within Canada as well. Everyone is probably thinking why do we have this special day?

Look at me. I am wearing a special shirt. This is ...(translation ends)

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

Member's Statement on Accomplishments of Aboriginal People

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, as we have heard from a number of my colleagues, marks a very special day in Canada. Here in the Northwest Territories, I think we can look to our people and the accomplishments they have shown throughout the Northwest Territories.

I myself, being an Inuvialuit and having the recent signing of the Concession Agreement in Inuvik that open lands, from an aboriginal perspective, shows that we, as a people of the Northwest Territories, are no longer the bearers of water and the cutters of wood. In fact, we are now the leaders in our own communities.

I think we should all look at ourselves and the accomplishments we have made today. The future only shows that there is room for improvement.

We have come a great distance since government first came to the Northwest Territories. I think we must be proud of that. To see that people are working together...I think today all residents of the Northwest Territories can celebrate with one another as to the richness we share in our cultures. Not only aboriginal people, but people of the Northwest Territories as a whole should celebrate together and not show fear of one another or mistrust, but instead a common understanding that we are a people of the Northwest Territories, sharing in our work and our responsibilities and being good examples for all residents.

It is positive to take a stand and show who you are and be proud of who you are. As well, it is even better to be humble in admitting we all have a long way to go, and there is a long road to travel.

With that, I would like to wish all of the residents of the Northwest Territories who are holding their celebrations the best of luck. Be proud of who you are and share your richness and culture. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on National Aboriginal Day

MR. LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (Translation starts) Today is a special day for everyone, elders and young people alike, of all nationalities, especially old people. Every day, we lose elders. The elders communicate through the leaders. They are like professionals, like doctors. We have to look up to elders. We have to listen to them. We have to respect them and look after them.

A long time ago, when the elders lived, elders did not go to the store and did not buy food. They only ate when they went and checked the fish net. During that time, there was no car, no airplane, no skidoo. Only when there was a dog-team did they visit the trapline.

We have to respect elders. We have to love them and care for them. We have to respect them and listen to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

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

Member's Statement on National Aboriginal Day

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago in 1993, when I was a member of the North's esteemed press corps.

-- Interjection

-- Laughter

Did I say something? I covered the signing of the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle in Iqaluit. I recall a remarkable atmosphere of pride and accomplishment shared by young and old, Inuit and Kabloona in the Iqaluit high school that day.

On May 6th of this year, Mr. Speaker, I attended the signing of the Smith's Landing First Nation Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement, in which, after 101 years, the Crown fulfilled the promises made in 1899 with Treaty 8.

As in Iqaluit, the same sense of pride and accomplishment swelled the walls of the small community centre at Fort Fitzgerald, as officials from the federal, territorial and provincial governments saluted the determination, leadership and integrity of the Fort Fitzgerald leaders, especially negotiator Francois Paulette and his brother, Chief Gerry Paulette, in achieving their goal. This is yet one more indication of the progress being made among northern people.

Not long ago, Mr. Speaker, support for First Nations claims was seen by many as a hindrance to the process of modernizing the North. However, today I believe that attitude has changed and continues to evolve. It goes beyond entrenching the rights of aboriginal people in the Canadian constitution. It is a process that I believe, over time, requires changing our own individual values to see the future, not relive the past.

The legacy we owe our children, Mr. Speaker, is to continue to negotiate the differences, values and priorities we have across the cultures of the North and create a foundation our children can use to build their own vision of a healthy, prosperous and united Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci beaucoup, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement on National Aboriginal Day

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge National Aboriginal Day. I reflect back some 30 years ago when I first came to the North.

I had the opportunity to work in Hay River and Fort Resolution. We worked under the assumption that we had to have 80 percent local employees. I can remember the frustration we felt in trying to get workers and retain them for any length of time at the workplace.

I remember feeling the frustration and sensing the people had no sense of direction and not much self-worth. I am happy to say I have seen a great turn in that area over the last 30 years. The people are taking more control of their lives now. There are more and more people getting involved in industry, politics and in all walks of life.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Pat Martel, in his affirmation for another two years as chief of the Hay River Dene Band. I was very pleased to see there were nine people running for four positions on council. I think it shows a great indication that people want to get involved and take control of their lives.

I want to wish them all good luck. I think it is very important for young people to have role models when they are growing up. I would like to acknowledge one role model that I got to know while working in Fort Resolution by the name of Jim Bourque. He was very well-known for his involvement and support in the areas of renewable resource management and subsistence activities.

I am happy to see a Jim Bourque scholarship fund has been established to help aboriginal students pursue post-secondary education. I recently had a chance to visit the Head Start program with the Honourable Jake Ootes. I am sure the incredible success that program has will go a long way towards bettering the people.

In Hay River this week, through the Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre and the Metis Nation Recreation Committee, there are all kinds of activities. I would like to wish them success in their activities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on National Aboriginal Day

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would also like to talk about National Aboriginal Day, and of the people I represent: the Inuvialuit; the Gwich'in; and the Metis people of the Mackenzie Delta.

As we know, they have a unique history. These First Nations people have been a group who have lived with hardship, living above the Arctic Circle in harsh conditions. Yet they have been able to survive with the elements around them.

The Gwich'in and Inuvialuit people have lived in the Mackenzie Delta-Beaufort Sea area for some 20,000 years. They have managed to survive with the understanding that they have to live in harmony with the wildlife, the environment and the elements around them.

They were able to survive by moving with the seasons to harvest caribou, fish, and whale. They were also able to sustain themselves with a unique style of government. They had a government in place long before this Legislature came about. They had headmen. They had elders' committees. They had people who were able to harvest for the elders, bringing back meat, fish, and caribou so they could sustain the family.

To us, family means your immediate family. To aboriginal people, it is a collective group of people. They take care of the whole family, the elders, children, grandparents, the widows. We have to realize the uniqueness of how these people lived, where they were battling with the effects of unemployment, welfare, and of being uneducated.

They had a system in place. The Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in have seen a lot of change. They have seen the impacts on the whaling industry, the gold rush, the fur trade, the residential schools, the imposition of government put on them regarding Indian Affairs and now the NWT Act establishing this government.

Through those changes, they were able to strive and meet these challenges. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. The Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in were able to strive and meet the challenges in front of them. Yes, they received hardships and lost certain things along the way, such as their culture, language and some of their abilities, especially to harvest, with the generations to come.

A lot of people like myself do not feel proud that we are not able to speak our aboriginal language. We are seeing that more and more with the generations that are here and the generations to come. They have made progress in other areas, such as the Inuvialuit concluding their land claim settlement in 1984, then the Gwich'in following in 1992. There is still a lot of work to be done to ensure those agreements are lived up to and implemented as they were understood and signed by governments and the aboriginal people.

With that side, we have seen some accomplishments, especially with the Inuvialuit, on the economic side of businesses and also on the environmental management regimes that have been established for the screening and revealing of land-use permit plans.

The Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in have taken the next step to improve the well-being, health, education and social conditions of their people in the Mackenzie Delta. They continue to work along with the people to conclude the self-government negotiations, to establish a regional government in the Mackenzie Delta-Beaufort Sea area, so they can have a say in how programs and services are going to be delivered and improve the lives of the people they represent.

For me, self-government has always been there. It is nothing new. The First Nations people have been practicing this from time immemorial, long before the contact with the Europeans.

I wish all aboriginal First Nations across the country and within the Northwest Territories to continue to strive for success, and to show you are a governing government on your own. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement on Recognition of John and Elizabeth Sperry

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize two people who are here in the audience who are celebrating 50 years of living and working in the North. They are very good examples of community leaders of this type. Two people who have made a great contribution to the North, Bishop John Sperry and his wife, Elizabeth.

Reverend Sperry is the former Anglican bishop of the Arctic Diocese, which covers all of what is now the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Northern Quebec. He was elected to this position in 1974 and held it until 1990 when he retired.

Bishop Sperry came from England to serve with the Anglican Mission in Coppermine, now known as Kugluktuk, in 1950. He and Elizabeth married in 1952 and raised their two children, Angela and John, in Kugluktuk, where they lived and served for 19 years. They were later posted to Fort Smith for four years.

Aside from ministering to the parishioners, John Sperry also translated the Anglican Prayer Book, the hymn book, the New Testament, Gospels and Acts into Inuinnaqtun, the language of the Kitikmeot Inuit.

He and Elizabeth also served with many volunteer organizations and provided medical help in the early days when the Inuit were devastated by epidemics like influenza and tuberculosis, to which they had no immunity at the time. There were no medical facilities in the North to treat them.

When doctors did come to see the people, John, who became fluent in Inuinnaqtun, often acted as their interpreter.

I feel privileged to join you today in expressing my heartfelt appreciation for all that they have done. People of such

integrity, dedication and devotion do not appear every day. We are all very fortunate that the Sperrys have chosen to serve our jurisdiction. It is well known that we are lucky here in the Northwest Territories, because we are blessed with such fine community leaders, people who devote their lives to helping others.

I would like to acknowledge their presence in the gallery today, along with their daughter Angela and son-in-law Doug Friesen, and their granddaughter, Katherine. Welcome. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Opposition to Hotel Tax

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to change the topic a little bit to the issue of the budget. In what was otherwise a predictable budget yesterday, I was very surprised to see a proposal for a hotel tax of five percent being introduced. I want to take this opportunity to just say no to a hotel tax.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

-- Applause

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that it may very well be that this is merely a trial balloon that the Minister is floating up in the air to see how it will pan out. If that is so, I am here to tell the Minister that this statement, and my press release this morning, should serve as the pin that would pop the balloon and make it fall out of the sky.

Mr. Speaker, my concerns for this tax initiative are many. First of all, it will send out a totally wrong message to the tourism industry, penalize tourists and hotel operators, and add a whole new tax regime in the Territory.

At noon today on the news, it was reported that a tourism operator in Toronto will not send tourism buses to Inuvik because the hotel costs are just too high in the Northwest Territories. They have not even heard about the new tax yet.

Let us look at the facts, Mr. Speaker. Two of the largest groups using hotels in the Northwest Territories are government employees and Japanese tourists. The latter group has been steadily increasing and it is expected to grow again this year to about 10,000 visitors from Japan.

In most communities, government employees make up the bulk of the hotel users. In effect, the government would be taxing itself, and at the same time extending a very chilly welcome to tourists. That really does not send out a positive, welcoming message.

Another problem I have with this is that hotel operators will be forced into becoming tax collectors for the government. Mr. Speaker, after years of no action, we have been seeing lately new constructions of hotels and motels around the city, and this government is responding to it by turning them into tax collectors. That is not the proper way to say thank you to those business people who invest in our economy.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for Members' statements has expired, Ms. Lee.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

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

MR. SPEAKER: You do not have the House's consent to continue. Your time has expired.

-- Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, may I please have the unanimous consent of my colleagues to conclude my statement.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues. I was saying, I do not think the hotel operators will be happy to be tax collectors.

Mr. Speaker, this tax initiative would create yet another regime within the government to manage more tax collection. I do not mind more jobs being created in Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, not at all. What I do mind is that this is such an inefficient way of raising revenues.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, by the time this government takes into account the staff they have to pay, and subtract the money it taxes on itself, how much net gain would it really have made from the proposed revenue of \$1 million from taxation. I would guess maybe \$500,000, and I would say if the Minister tried really hard, he could find it within the Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development budget of almost \$75 million that he is asking for this year. That is, I will submit, less than one percent of the total budget.

The simple fact is that we have such a small tax base of hotel operators and hotel rooms. It is always expensive to set up a new tax system. For these reasons, I would submit that the net amount that will be collected by the government will be thoroughly outstripped by the burden it will create on the hotel users and operators. So once again, Mr. Speaker, I want to just say no to the hotel tax.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, I strongly object to this tax for the wrong thing this government is going to do for the tourism industry. This sector has been long ignored and paid lip service at best. In the recent past, this sector has looked to the government for leadership to develop a comprehensive tourism strategy, increase product development and expand marketing and research. Instead, Mr. Speaker, this government is making it even more difficult for them to compete.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, I am deeply disappointed that the first initiative of this government in the tourism industry was to introduce a new tax. I intend to oppose it vigorously in the coming days and months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Recognition of Aklavik Residents

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to go back to the theme of National Aboriginal Day. In recognition of National Aboriginal Day, Mr. Speaker, and with the concurrence of my fellow Member for Mackenzie Delta, I would like to speak of some very important aboriginal people from the community of Aklavik.

Mr. Speaker, quite often a community of this size experiences a lot of grief. In the past year, Aklavik has gone through such an experience. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to personally acknowledge a few people who worked hard to assist the community to overcome such grief. These people, Mr. Speaker, are the Reverend and Mrs. Chamberline Jones, the pastor of the All Saints Aklavik Church, who officiated at many of these funeral services.

Others who should be recognized for contributions to the community are Moses Qutek and Wilson Malagatee, who assisted in digging the graves many times. Two important people in Aklavik as well are Barb and Norm Larchy, who work very closely with the grieving families and dedicate much of their time volunteering during the funeral services.

There are also those who worked very hard to prepare the food. There are two specific ladies I would like to acknowledge, who I feel need special attention, Louise Akalnak and Florence Furlong.

Mr. Speaker, there are many others who should be acknowledged as well. I hope I did not miss anyone. I want to say that it is you people who make the community a healthy community and lessen much of the sadness.

I want to also make special mention of the Aklavik Singing Group, who often performed and lightened the community's spirit during times of sadness. I would like to close by saying I hope they keep up the excellent work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Accomplishments of Aboriginal People in Constituency

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe today is a day to celebrate. In recognition of National Aboriginal Day, I wish to offer my congratulations to all aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories, especially to the Yellowknives Dene, the Dene people of my riding who live in the communities of Dettah and N'dilo, on the progress they have made in key areas over the past several years.

To highlight some of these: first as members of Northwest Territories Treaty 8, the signing of a framework agreement on June 14th in Lutsel'e, laying out the foundation for the negotiations to fulfill outstanding treaty obligations made 100 years ago at the signing of Treaty 8 in 1900.

Next, the Deton'cho Corporation, for establishing the world's first aboriginal owned and operated diamond cutting, polishing

and marketing facility. Just last week, they created 12 new jobs for the people in Dettah and N'dilo.

-- Applause

Also, congratulations on the contracts that Deton'cho has been undertaking for mine reclamation in this area. I think they are doing very important work, not just in employing people, but also in cleaning up our environment here.

To Ekati Services, another company they have, which provides camp construction and catering services to various resource developers operating in the North, including Diavik Mines.

To the Yellowknives Dene Housing Division who, in partnership with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, have constructed over \$6.5 million in community infrastructure and quality, affordable housing for First Nation members in Dettah and N'dilo. They will also be constructing two seniors facilities, one in each of the communities, in the near future.

To Bouwa Whee Catering, who have secured the contract for catering services in the Legislative Assembly.

I take today to say congratulations and best wishes to all aboriginal people, especially the Yellowknives, who are working hard to make their communities and all of the North better places for all of us to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Senior Citizens' Week 2000

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize that this week, our government has declared the week Senior Citizens' Week 2000.

On June 11th, I was fortunate enough to be invited to a Yellowknife Seniors' Society barbeque. It hosted the third annual volunteer appreciation barbeque for volunteers of Meals on Wheels and Lunch with a Bunch. This barbeque recognized the efforts of people who work in our community with seniors.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, it was fortunate that I was there to hold up the side for the Assembly. Ms. Lee was in attendance flipping burgers, and managed to flip quite a few of them into the coals. I have never seen anybody burn burgers like Mr. Dent. It was fortunate that I was there.

Mr. Speaker, we all recognize the importance of seniors, but I think we have to become increasingly aware of the number of people who will be over the age of 65 in the coming years.

In 1999, in the Northwest Territories, there were 1690 people aged 65 plus. Our projections are that in 2019, that will explode to about 4400 people over the age of 65.

One trend, Mr. Speaker, that I think is reversing, is the trend of long-term Northerners retiring to the south. I know in my family, my parents used to spend summer vacations looking for property in the south. In recent years, I have noticed they are coming around and there is no way you can get them to retire out of Yellowknife or the Northwest Territories right now.

I think the government has recognized the importance of seniors, and I applaud them for appointing Mr. Steen as Minister responsible for Seniors. I would like to see them now take the initiative to expand the scope of this portfolio and look at seniors' housing, health care needs, palliative care. I think we are the only jurisdiction in Canada without our own palliative care legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to urge the government to continue in this direction. I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing the impact seniors have on all of our lives. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Indeed, we do recognize the seniors. I myself am working very hard to become one.

-- Laughter

Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think most of us who have children are usually proud of them. Sometimes they do things that make us burst with pride. I would like to acknowledge my daughter Carmen, who came home the other day with a very special haircut from the Cops for Cancer effort, along with some colleagues of hers from Sir John Franklin School. I think they raised over \$1400. My daughter, Carmen.

-- Applause

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Susan Murray who is in the gallery. She is a constituent of mine who is a spectacular aboriginal businesswoman, an artist, a tradesperson, and an exemplary citizen in my community, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize several constituents. I hope I catch them all. Mr. David Colpitts, a former employee of the GNWT, one of my constituents, Mr. Ben MacDonald, and of course I would like to again recognize Bishop John Sperry and his wife Elizabeth, daughter Angela and son-in-law Doug Friesen, and their daughter, Katherine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to take the time to recognize Mr. John Bekale. John works for BHP and has played quite a hand in recruiting aboriginal

people throughout the Northwest Territories. With it being National Aboriginal Day, I would like to recognize Mr. John Bekale. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize one of my constituents, a lady who is well known to many of us through her work in the North, in particular with the CBC, Marie Wilson, and her mother Ellen Wilson. Thank you. Ellen is a regular visitor.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to recognize at this time in the visitors' gallery Lieutenant Colonel Kilburn, chief of staff, Canadian Forces; Lieutenant Commander Kirby, regional cadet officer; John Carter, director of northern training, Air Cadet League; David Colpitts, president of the Army Cadet League; Captain Steve Daniels, commanding officer, 825 Air Cadet Squadron; Captain Conrad Schubert, commanding officer, 2837 Cadet Corp; and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you my aide-de-camp for the day, Flight Sergeant Eddie Peart.

-- Applause

Colleagues, I have toured the cadet display this morning and tried my hand at target shooting. I hope you will all take the time today to try to beat my impressive score. With that, we will now take a break so MLAs can take part in some of the cadet displays and the tug-of-war that will take place.

-- Break

MR. SPEAKER: We are still awaiting the results of the tug-of-war. So, until then, item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 5-14(3): New Fire Centre in Fort Smith

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and it is in regard to the department considering relocating the fire centre, forest management division, out of the federal building where they spend roughly \$350,000, each year in lease payments to the federal government. I believe they are looking at building a built-in-the-north facility, which of course would be in Fort Smith, and keeping that significant amount of money in the North, rather than sending it to the federal government through lease payments. Could the Minister update us as to when this would go to Cabinet and if there are any unforeseen circumstances that may hinder this proceeding? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 5-14(3): New Fire Centre in Fort Smith

HON. JOE HANDLEY: There are no unforeseen circumstances standing in the way of this one. I want to assure the Member of that. We are in the process now of just finishing up the feasibility review on it, I expect over the next month or two we should have that together. We should be able to look forward to a decision shortly after that. I might add that we are very supportive of the proposal for the reasons that the Member just mentioned.

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

Supplementary to Question 5-14(3): New Fire Centre in Fort Smith

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that response. Just for clarification, Mr. Speaker, in previous correspondence, the Minister indicated that he anticipated that this would be taken to Cabinet in June, if my memory serves me correctly. Am I to understand him now to say that in fact it may take some more time, possibly not until July or August? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 5-14(3): New Fire Centre in Fort Smith

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes. I cannot confirm right now that it will be available in time for the review by Cabinet and the Financial Management Board Secretariat in June, but we are moving it as quickly as we can. If it is not by the end of June, it will be certainly shortly after that. It is a matter of scheduling meetings to take it forward for a decision. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 5-14(3): New Fire Centre in Fort Smith

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the two main proponents for this, supported by the community, of course, are the band and the Metis council from Fort Smith. They have been in correspondence with the Minister. I would like to ask the Minister if these two key players are being kept apprised of the progress. I have been approached and there is significant interest and concern. In terms of planning and scheduling, everything hinges on what decision the government makes. Could the Minister indicate whether they have been kept apprised of what is happening? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Minister Handley.

Further Return to Question 5-14(3): New Fire Centre in Fort Smith

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe they have, but I will check that. If they have not been, then I will make sure we get a message to them. Thank you.

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

Question 6-14(3): Preservation of Aboriginal Languages

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of today being National Aboriginal Day, one of the areas that need more of a priority is the cultural aspect of aboriginal people, especially language.

Without the language, you lose the culture. It is important that this government does more to preserve and protect these aboriginal languages. It is slowly coming to a point where we have to do something crucially and critically to ensure they sustain those languages, and that these languages are carried on for future generations.

In our education system, we use English as the only language in government on the program delivery side. Yet very little effort is made by this government to enhance aboriginal languages.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for languages and culture, who is also the Minister of Education, if there is a possibility of establishing a separate regime to deal with languages in the context of it being an emergency situation.

We have to do something within the term of this government. We have bounced this idea around. We have cut departments and done other things, but I would like to ask the Minister if he has a strategy to preserve aboriginal languages?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 6-14(3): Preservation of Aboriginal Languages

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government does have an aboriginal language strategy. In combination with funding from federal sources, through the Canada-Northwest Territories language transfer payments, we provide \$1.9 million a year to various aboriginal language groups throughout the Territories.

In addition, the territorial government has funding that it provides to schools, and there is also the approach of language emphasis and culture emphasis within the school itself. There is an opportunity for schools to provide for aboriginal first languages that requires course teachers to be fluent in the aboriginal language.

I believe that there is a tremendous concern out there in regard to the loss of languages. Dealing with the aboriginal language communities, we are working on a strategy on what needs to be done. Initially, some funding to each of the aboriginal groups has been provided throughout the Territories, and that has to be funneled into a coordinated and cohesive approach. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 6-14(3): Preservation of Aboriginal Languages

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We should realize we have a distinct number of aboriginal languages. We have aboriginal communities that are staying with those languages. In most cases in the 32 communities in the Northwest Territories, the money does not really meet the needs to serve all of those communities and all of those different language groups.

We can look at the French languages, where they receive truckloads of money poured into that. However, when it comes to aboriginal languages, they are scraping and clawing for funding. We are dealing with a crisis situation. We should treat it as one.

This government should come forward with legislation that ensures there is a separate system or regime to impose this legislation, so it has the teeth and the dollars to make it go. Will the Minister come forth with legislation to find ways to ensure the dollars we have and the dollars we need are made available for this emergency?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 6-14(3): Preservation of Aboriginal Languages

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot make that commitment here today without doing a lot more work on this, and reviewing this situation with the language communities that are out there.

I can assure the Member that more and more in the schools, we are concentrating on ensuring that there is an aboriginal component which includes language. For instance, the Dene Kede program, which has been developed, has been presented from kindergarten to grade 7, and now is being expanded to grades 7 and 10. Inuuqatigiit is the Inuit equivalent.

As well, we are concentrating on ensuring that we get as many teachers entering the teacher education program through Aurora College. That is hopefully going to have some success for us down the road. There is certainly some concentration on ensuring that we revive these languages. In the case of the Deh Cho, I know they are bringing forth a proposal. They have just finished a study there and they are bringing forth a proposal. Until we get the aboriginal language community representatives back together, I cannot make the commitment that the Member is asking for at this particular time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 6-14(3): Preservation of Aboriginal Languages

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for education, and I believe that is where his role should be. We hear from the people in the Deh Cho that they want to prepare and present programs which are strictly in their aboriginal language. We have seen it with the Dogribs in the

Sahtu, such as Deline, where they have been able to do that with their curriculum. This government is responsible for developing that curriculum and ensuring the money that is put forth is being used in that particular area. It should not be moved around from one area for someone else to say that language is not important to me because I think you should learn French.

MR. SPEAKER: Pardon me, Mr. Krutko, could you ask the question?

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me what he is doing to ensure the money that is put in the education system is being used for aboriginal language?

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

Further Return to Question 6-14(3): Preservation of Aboriginal Languages

HON. JAKE OOTES: The funding that we receive is specifically identified for the programs that it is allocated to, Mr. Speaker. There are a variety of methods by which we are tackling the language program, as we said. The funding that we have available is through the transfer payment from the federal government, and in addition, we allocate money for use in schools and language communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 6-14(3): Preservation of Aboriginal Languages

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me how much money was lapsed last year in regard to the language program in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment?

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

Further Return to Question 6-14(3): Preservation of Aboriginal Languages

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have the exact figure here of the amount that was lapsed last year. I am just looking for the figures. The under-expenditure...I am not sure. I would have to take that as notice and get back to the Member on that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The supplementary has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 7-14(3): Addictions Facilities in the North Slave

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Mrs. Groenewegen. When the Minister was elected in Cabinet on January 19, she made the following commitment, "Please be patient with me as I learn the fine art of answering the questions. In exchange for that I promise not to embark on the effort to learn the fine art of saying absolutely nothing." Minister

Groenewegen, I feel that I have upheld my end of the bargain. I have patiently sent several letters and waited for responses for over two months from you. Will you please respond now, in the House, about what addiction facilities your department will provide to my constituents in the North Slave? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 7-14(3): Addictions Facilities in the North Slave

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Dogrib Addiction Strategy, For the Sake of Our Children, was a useful tool at identifying some of the needs amongst the Dogrib people. The Department of Health and Social Services did respond favourably to the strategy and committed to working with the Dogrib Community Services Board to find innovative solutions.

One of the interesting things that has transpired is that during the Treaty 11 regional meeting, \$578,000 funding was committed to establish and implement the Dogrib Addiction Strategy. Also, the Department of Health and Social Services had sent a women's mobile treatment project as a pilot project for a three-week period, to Rae-Edzo under the Alternative Programming Initiative of our department. Mr. Speaker, this would provide valuable information on the success of this program, which the department could then use as we determine whether or not this was an effective way of dealing with particular gender specific addictions problems. There has been activity going on in the Member's riding with respect to addictions and we look forward to continuing to work with the Member on the addiction front. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 7-14(3): Addictions Facilities in the North Slave

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the mobile addictions services that have been provided in the region, when these types of services were decided upon, did communities have input in this, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 7-14(3): Addictions Facilities in the North Slave

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Gender Specific Mobile Addictions Treatment Program was an initiative under the alternative programming, and yes, a member of the Dogrib Community Services Board was involved in the planning for that activity. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 7-14(3): Addictions Facilities in the North Slave

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Am I to believe that a single person in the community was consulted with and a decision upon that was the result of having a mobile addictions program in the region?

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

Further Return to Question 7-14(3): Addictions Facilities in the North Slave

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: I am not certain I understood the question, Mr. Speaker. I think what the Member is asking is if the presence of that one person on that stakeholders committee was the only consultation that takes place with the community. No, it is one source of consultation and input, which we take as representative of the community, but certainly there are other communications and other sources of direction that we would seek and we would listen to from the Dogrib region. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 7-14(3): Addictions Facilities in the North Slave

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In January, when I put the petition forward, an addictions services facility was asked for by my region. When I asked the main question, she answered part of my question, but she sort of went around it and started talking about other services. My main question was for the facilities and if she was planning to establish one in the North Slave region. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The question is whether you are planning to put a facility in the region.

Further Return to Question 7-14(3): Addictions Facilities in the North Slave

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time, there is no plan in place to build a residential treatment facility, a drug and alcohol addictions treatment facility, in the Dogrib region. There are numerous different ways and approaches to treating addictions at the community level. I want to be clear. I do apologize for the misunderstanding. When I spoke about resources and initiatives in the Member's riding, I was not speaking about infrastructure in terms of a building. Thank you.

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

Question 8-14(3): Medical Travel Assistance

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services. Recently, I had a round of constituent meetings in my riding and the concern arose from the meeting in Kakisa regarding medical travel. I was informed that there is no form of compensation for medical travel when any patient travels through the communities of Yellowknife or Hay River for medical attention. The only time there is compensation is when there is a referral. Mr. Speaker, there are no physicians,

doctors, or nurses in the community of Kakisa and if you have to see a dentist, doctor, or a nurse, you have to travel to a larger centre. Most of the community members in Kakisa are seniors and most do not have vehicles. So, they have to rely on family members or taxis from outside the community to travel. There seems to be no form of reimbursement or any financial compensation for their travel. It can be very costly.

I would like to ask the Minister if there are any services or programs available to the people in the smaller communities to assist with medical travel costs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 8-14(3): Medical Travel Assistance

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Kakisa is a unique community. In fact, the Member is right. There are no resident health care providers in the community of Kakisa. Kakisa, though, is a satellite community to Fort Providence. However, the only service there is through the nursing station. So for treatment services, it is necessary for Kakisa residents to find their way to Hay River or Yellowknife. Since there are no health care practitioners in Kakisa, it is not possible to adhere to the medical travel requirement to obtain prior approval to travel. Although this is a normal requirement in order to be reimbursed for medical travel, Kakisa residents are reimbursed as long as they have their claim signed by a clinic or hospital indicating that they had been there. This rule would also apply to other communities who do not have any resident health care practitioners in the community. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 8-14(3): Medical Travel Assistance

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. I would like to thank the Minister for that. I would like to know if the Minister would commit to providing a staff person to travel into the community of Kakisa and explain the process. There seems to be little information on it. It might be in order to have a person travel to all the small communities and explain the system that is in place. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 8-14(3): Medical Travel Assistance

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member makes a very good suggestion and it is understandable why people might not be aware of this exception which is made to poor communities which are in this unusual circumstance. Yes, we could have someone work through the Deh Cho Board in a support role, to provide that information directly to the community. Thank you.

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

Question 9-14(3): GNWT Tax Initiatives

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister responsible for Finance. It is about tax initiatives that he laid out in yesterday's budget speech. He mentioned that he was considering a possible hotel tax of five percent. I think that this would be ill-advised. I think there are several reasons for this. But certainly we have heard Ms. Lee talk on this. The Government of the Northwest Territories' spending probably makes up the bulk of hotel room spending. I think we would simply be taxing ourselves. I heard the Minister state publicly that he feels it would cost about \$100,000 a year to administer and collect this tax. I would suggest that, quite possibly, estimates might even go higher, up to \$200,000 or \$250,000.

I also think the idea here was to initiate a tax that would then be put back into tourism. In future years, we have no guarantees that Assemblies will continue to do so. Once a tax is initiated, it is hard to change where that would go in the future. I am wondering if he has looked at any other tax initiatives. We have heard talk that possibly in future years we might see a payroll tax increase that would tax people who choose to work here and then fly out and not put money back into the northern economy. I am wondering if he has considered that in the past. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 9-14(3): GNWT Tax Initiatives

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, certainly we have to look at all our options for generating revenue for the Northwest Territories. If we are going to spend money, we have to have money coming in. We never want to have ourselves just subject to a grant from the federal government or grants from anyone else. We need to be responsible. We need to work in partnership with other people, including the private sector, to figure out how we can best balance expenditures and revenues.

I am looking at all possibilities. I have to say that we are not, at this point, as I mentioned yesterday, looking at any other tax at this time. We will continue to review all of our taxes, whether it is fuel, cigarettes, whatever. However, there is no intention to make any changes.

With regard to payroll tax, it is something that we have to look at the implications of. We cannot implement a tax that would just affect southern employees. If we put any kind of payroll tax in place or change it from the current one percent, then it has to apply to everyone. That has an impact on all northern residents. It is a complicated one. I did talk to the standing committee and tell you that we were looking at it. We are continuing to. At this point, as I mentioned yesterday, the only tax we are looking at right now is the hotel tax for this fiscal year. Thank you. A lot of what happens in the future is going to depend on . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. You have answered the question. Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 9-14(3): GNWT Tax Initiatives

MR. BELL: Thank you. I am wondering if the Minister can tell me whether he sees any problems with getting into this

concept of direct taxation. For instance, a hotel tax which would then be funnelled back into tourism marketing. Does this set a dangerous precedent? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 9-14(3): GNWT Tax Initiatives

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we could debate for a long time the pros and cons of taxes that are dedicated to specific purposes. I think there are good sides to the argument and there are also negative sides. I hope we have that argument some day. I would not link this directly except to say we are going to put that amount of money, the amount of money that we raise on this tax, we are going to spend that same amount of money in tourism. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 9-14(3): GNWT Tax Initiatives

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if the Minister can give us assurances that if he did look at some form of direct taxation in the future, whether it be hotel tax or some other type of tax, would he build in some sort of sunset provisions after a year or two to ensure it was achieving what it set out to achieve?

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

Further Return to Question 9-14(3): GNWT Tax Initiatives

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whenever we introduce a new tax, and especially when we link it to achievements and growth in a particular area, then we probably do not know for sure whether it will work. In the case of the hotel tax, if the revenue that it generates is not showing any substantial difference in the tourism industry, the number of tourists who come here, the amount that is spent on tourism, then certainly we would want to look at it. I can assure the Member that any new tax we introduce would be subject to that kind of review and scrutiny. Thank you.

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

Question 10-14(3): Partnerships in Governance

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today being Aboriginal Day, I would like to stick to that theme and pose a question to the Government House Leader. Language is a problem. Education is a problem. This government is working in partnerships, or attempting to work in partnership with the federal government, territorial government, and aboriginal governments. I think we need to express our sincerity in that. However, I see two flags in this House, one represents the Northwest Territories and one represents Canada. Would the House Leader and Cabinet consider placing the flags of the different aboriginal groups that we currently are dealing with in the House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. I have to rule your question out of order. The affairs that occur in the Chamber are

a matter of the House and not the prerogative of the government. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 11-14(3): Projected Hotel Tax Revenues

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question goes to the Minister Responsible for Finance and it is with respect to the hotel tax. In the budget document, Mr. Speaker, the projected revenue for this hotel tax is \$1 million. I wonder if the Minister could tell us on what basis he has arrived at that calculation. What room spaces are we talking about in the Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 11-14(3): Projected Hotel Tax Revenues

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have looked at all of the hotels, bed and breakfasts, motels, with four or more rooms. The calculation here does not include lodges, although it is our intention that this would apply also to lodges. We also have said it would not apply to institutions where we have just a standard basic fee. For example, in a construction camp, they might only charge a basic amount of ten dollars or twenty dollars. This would not apply. We then took our average occupancy rate over the year and did a base calculation based on that. The occupancy rate we used was 60 percent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 11-14(3): Projected Hotel Tax Revenues

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By asking these questions today, I do not want to show in any way that I am legitimizing this tax because I do believe it is just a proposal thus far. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister could tell us how much he is projecting to be paying in terms of staff and additional resources that he will need to collect this tax if this tax becomes a reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 11-14(3): Projected Hotel Tax Revenues

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the estimate we are working on, based on experiences elsewhere, is that we will not need more than the equivalent of one position to administer this tax. It is fairly simple to administer. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 11-14(3): Projected Hotel Tax Revenues

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister have information on how much it will cost the industry to collect the taxes on his behalf? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. That is a question that might be hypothetical. But if the Minister wishes to answer it, he may do so.

Further Return to Question 11-14(3): Projected Hotel Tax Revenues

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is hypothetical. I really have no idea. Thank you.

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

Question 12-14(3): Statutory Recognition of National Aboriginal Day

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with today being National Aboriginal Day, I think it is important that we take the time to realize the importance aboriginal people and the cultures of the aboriginal groups in the North have played in our history. We also must realize the importance of preserving and protecting those cultures.

From the Beaufort Sea all the way to the Alberta border, aboriginal people make up a large portion of our population. The majority of the communities we represent are aboriginal communities.

In order to recognize the work aboriginal people have done in the North and across Canada, I feel that we should do more than just recognize a day such as today as National Aboriginal Day. We have people within the workforce who cannot take today off because it is not a civic holiday.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier if he is willing to bring forth legislation to declare June 21st a statutory holiday, so people in the North could take the time to enjoy the cultural activities that are happening today in recognition of First Nations people in the North.

I would recommend to this House that we also consider shutting the House down for the day, to show respect to the First Nations people of the Northwest Territories and across Canada.

Can the Premier tell me if he is willing to consider bringing forth such legislation?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 12-14(3): Statutory Recognition of National Aboriginal Day

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been recognition across Canada over the last number of years, in that Canadians, the federal, provincial and territorial governments have, perhaps begrudgingly in a very benign way, grown to accept that aboriginal people have a special place of rights in this country.

So we have designated June 21st as National Aboriginal Day. We have no indication at this time that the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu, the Deh Cho, Treaty 11, Treaty 8, and Metis Tribal Council, and any of the aboriginal organizations would, in some capacity, suggest that this government take an

initiative such as one proposed by Mr. Krutko. If such a suggestion was made collectively, I think it would warrant serious consideration. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 12-14(3): Statutory Recognition of National Aboriginal Day

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought the Premier would be more positive on this matter, realizing that we are unique. We are not like anywhere else in Canada. The majority of people in the North are aboriginal. I think this government has to stand up and show its colours and really recognize aboriginal people. By declaring today a statutory holiday, I think people within the North will have the ability to take the time off work without having to take their own days off like other government employees or aboriginal people in this government. They cannot take the day off to enjoy the events that are happening around Yellowknife and other places in our communities. Does the Premier support First Nations in regard to recognizing this day and considering that this should be a statutory holiday?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 12-14(3): Statutory Recognition of National Aboriginal Day

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government is willing to do whatever is necessary to show the respect and dignity that aboriginal people are due. June 21st, as a designated day, should be treated appropriately by this government.

As far as I know, none of the aboriginal governments, none of the chiefs in councils, Metis organizations, land claim organizations, have initiated any particular action at this time. All I am suggesting is if the aboriginal leaders across the Territories wish to make such a suggestion, we would be more than willing to receive it. It is just that we need to know that any action we take is going to gain the support of the aboriginal people on whose behalf we would do that. If there is expressed interest for an action such as the Member suggests, then of course we would act appropriately. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 12-14(3): Statutory Recognition of National Aboriginal Day

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has the ability to pass legislation to establish statutory holidays. I am going to ask the Premier again. Will the Premier consider bringing forth legislation to look at establishing today as a statutory holiday, knowing that he does have the ability to do it?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 12-14(3): Statutory Recognition of National Aboriginal Day

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government is willing to consider a suggestion such as the Member is making if it is demonstrated that there is substantial support for it in the aboriginal communities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 12-14(3): Statutory Recognition of National Aboriginal Day

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier bring this legislation forth to this House during this sitting? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 12-14(3): Statutory Recognition of National Aboriginal Day

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it is clear and categorical that the designated aboriginal representatives from the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, the Deh Cho, the Sahtu, the Dogrib, the North Slave, the Yellowknives, the South Slave Metis collectively and substantively indicate support for such a designation, this government would be prepared to consider drafting legislation for such a move and bringing it to this House for consideration. Thank you.

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

Question 13-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question on the proposed hotel tax, Mr. Speaker. In the Minister's calculation of potential revenue of \$1 million, how many hotel operators in the Northwest Territories is the Minister planning on collecting that from?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, that is a difficult question to answer straight away, but I will give you the option.

Return to Question 13-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take that question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The Honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 14-14(3): Consultation on Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also for the Minister of Finance and also in regard to the hotel tax. I understand that this is just something that is being floated out there to get a response. Can the Minister tell us if he at least consulted with the Northwest Territories Tourism Association and other hotel operators and stakeholders before floating something like this out there which could be quite shocking to people?

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

Return to Question 14-14(3): Consultation on Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did float the idea with a number of people before bringing it here. I want to say this is not just an idea that is being floated. I have said in my Budget Address yesterday that it is my intention to introduce legislation respecting this later in the Session. I would not want to characterize it as just being an idea floated out there. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 14-14(3): Consultation on Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell us who he consulted? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 14-14(3): Consultation on Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have talked to a number of people about it. I am not sure that they want me to name them in here so I will not say exactly who I talked to. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 14-14(3): Consultation on Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. BELL: Thank you. Can the Minister tell us if he made any formal presentations on the hotel tax to the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce, Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce or the Northwest Territories Tourism Associations?

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

Further Return to Question 14-14(3): Consultation on Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I did not make any formal presentations to any of the associations. I did make a presentation to the standing committee. That is the only one that I would call even a formal presentation. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 14-14(3): Consultation on Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell us if the standing committee is the only group that he made a presentation to, and whether or not he would characterize the reception he got as ecstatic, lukewarm, or somewhere in the middle? Can he let us know?

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

Further Return to Question 14-14(3): Consultation on Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I may have been in my optimistic mood that day, but I thought it was ecstatic.

-- Laughter

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I think it was less than ecstatic. I think there was a fair bit of interest in it, and on that basis, we have continued to work on this tax. Thank you.

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

Question 15-14(3): Community Funding Reductions

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Budget Address yesterday quite closely. I was interested in one comment that was made by the Finance Minister, and I would like to read a short paragraph out of it, if I could.

"Given our fiscal position, the fact that we are able to maintain the service levels we currently enjoy is an achievement worth noting. We are maintaining the levels of services provided to Northerners, and investing where we can to get maximum returns on the future for both our people and our economy."

Can I assume from that, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Finance is clarifying that there will be no tax cuts to tax-based communities, or no block funding cuts to tax-based communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 15-14(3): Community Funding Reductions

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the only tax cut that is being made to municipalities is the one that has already been announced. I think we dealt with that in the interim appropriations. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 15-14(3): Community Funding Reductions

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that during the interim appropriation we had managed to hold that cut to block funding, to reverse the decision on that. I am assuming that the Minister is saying that those block funding cuts will still be in place. What is the Minister's interpretation of those cuts, as to how it affects maintaining the levels of services to our people and our economy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 15-14(3): Community Funding Reductions

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the cut that was made to the block grants was 4.7 percent. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 15-14(3): Community Funding Reductions

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell me what guarantees are in place that there will be no further cuts to tax-based communities where tax-based communities are providing services for this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 15-14(3): Community Funding Reductions

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the only assurance that I can provide is the commitments that are being made in the budget that we will be reviewing and voting on this year. I cannot make any commitments in regards to future years. I am optimistic that our investments will pay off, but there is no way at this point to make any commitments beyond this fiscal year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 15-14(3): Community Funding Reductions

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to point out that I am wondering if the government can make a statement such as this, that they are maintaining service levels to provide it to the northern people, and still maintain cuts to tax-based communities. How can they justify a statement such as this? Maybe the Minister could clarify that when they are cutting funds to tax-based communities, they can blame the tax-based communities for lowering their services rather than blaming the government for it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey, I have to rule that question out of order. It was not actually a question. Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 16-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the Minister of Finance because my constituents represent some hotels, and they have some questions regarding this hotel tax. Can the Minister indicate to the House the proportion of money spent by the government itself in terms of actually supporting the hotel trade by the travel of various government officials across the land?

The assumption is, Mr. Speaker, it is a significant portion, possibly more than 50 percent. If that is the case, then what does that mean that the Minister indicated would be the net revenue? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 16-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax Projections

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Again, Mr. Speaker, that is a very specific question. I will have to take it as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 17-14(3): Levels of Government Service

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I saved my energy for the budget itself in committee, but my colleague from Hay River North has brought up a very important area, and the Minister of Finance commented that, in fact, a 4.7 percent reduction is going to proceed. It is very clear in the press release that they did state that they are maintaining service levels. In fact, that is not what is happening. We know from the tax-based municipalities there is a reduction. So to get the question going here, is this government in fact maintaining service at current levels? Is there a reduction? Is his press release an accurate press release? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. I heard three questions there. Mr. Handley, I think the main one was about service.

Return to Question 17-14(3): Levels of Government Service

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, this statement indicates that we as a government are maintaining the levels of service that people in the Northwest Territories have enjoyed over the past year or so. When we say that though, we are not saying that we do everything exactly the same as it was last year. There are some changes. They will probably find changes in every department, so I do not think we can take this statement out of the budget address to mean that we are doing everything exactly the same way.

In saying that, the service levels that our government and programs that we provide are essentially the same. Now there are some things we have reduced. Our capital program, for example, has been reduced by \$10 million. So we have made those kinds of adjustments as we go along. There are other areas where we have made increases. I can say that in principle, we have maintained the same level of services and programs as people have enjoyed in the past, but not exactly the same. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 17-14(3): Levels of Government Service

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact, to be clear, the Minister is stating that this government is maintaining levels of service, but are you stating that municipalities, tax-based in this case, are going to change the level of service or increase taxes to tax-paying residents? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 17-14(3): Levels of Government Service

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the money that we provide to municipalities as a government is a block fund. How municipalities choose to deliver services within that block funding is up to them. I cannot say how they will account for the decrease of 4.7 percent, but we have the same problem with capital. We have reduced our capital. We cannot say that we are going to build everything that all of the departments had asked for, or maybe even have had in their capital plans. We have made some changes. We are confident that, in general, our levels of programs and services are of the same quality as we had before, but there are changes. Decreases in some areas, increases in some areas. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 17-14(3): Levels of Government Service

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicates that there are some increases. An increase in taxes is the way it sounds. Is that the fact? Is the only area of increases in the area of taxes? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 17-14(3): Levels of Government Service

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to go through all of the areas in which we have increases, but there are certainly increases in some areas, and one that jumps to mind immediately is in education, with the efforts we have taken and the commitments we have made to lower pupil-teacher ratio; the money that we have agreed to put into student support services. We can go on with a long list, but we will be getting into the specifics of each department's estimates. Thank you.

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

Question 18-14(3): Cost of Proposed Hotel Tax

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance with regard to the hotel tax. Listening to the answers that he is giving to other Members' questions in this House, and with what went on in the standing committee, I wonder if we should change the name of the shoes he was wearing to sneakers instead of runners. I am beginning to think that he is not giving us...my question, Mr. Speaker, is has he done a real calculation on what it will cost to collect this tax? In that calculation, did he calculate how much it will cost to enforce this taxation? Do you know how much it is going to cost the government to collect this tax? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Sounded like two questions, but we will lump it into one, collection costs. Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 18-14(3): Cost of Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our estimate, the Department of Finance's estimate is \$100,000.

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

Supplementary to Question 18-14(3): Cost of Proposed Hotel Tax

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to do some consultation on this issue? It is obviously a huge step and there are a lot of people who should be consulted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 18-14(3): Cost of Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my Budget Address yesterday, I am bringing legislation forward. That in itself will create the opportunity for consultation. Beyond that, I intend to discuss this personally with anyone who wants to discuss it with me. The Department of Finance and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, tourism division, will also be doing some consultation. To answer the question, yes, I am prepared to do much consultation on this over the next year. The tax is not scheduled to come into place until April 1, 2001. Thank you.

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

Question 19-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From a strategic point of view, and beyond the issue of whether the hotel tax should be levied, I want to ask the Minister of Finance, where does he see the strategic importance of the tourism industry to the Northwest Territories? How does he expect to get approval of this tax in the absence of an overall strategic plan for how this will help advance this industry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 19-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, tourism division, is working on a tourism strategy plan. I have also been given a copy of a draft of one that is being prepared or being considered by the Northwest Territories Tourism Association. We will bring those plans together. The intention of the revenue to be generated from this new tax will be, as I said in the address, to build regional capacity and to promote and to advertise the Northwest Territories as a destination. I expect the additional money to be generated to be focused on those two areas within the broad strategic plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 19-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The interests and the concerns of the tourism industry are very diverse. I would still press the question, Mr. Speaker, which comes first, the strategic plan or the hotel tax? Which comes first?

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

Further Return to Question 19-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly we need to have a framework and an outline of what it is we want to achieve, so that piece of the strategic plan certainly comes first. But before we work out details on the strategic plan and the action items within it, some guidelines for allocation of money and so on, we have to have some recognition of whether or not we are going to have the additional revenue. Otherwise we are just going through a long academic exercise. My intention is that this money goes into those two areas, that will be built into our strategic plan. Thank you.

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

Question 20-14(3): Funding for Aboriginal Languages

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, my colleague addressed an issue that is of great concern for me as well. The aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories are dying a slow death, some might say a very fast death compared to other societies in the world. We also know of the funding arrangements between this government and the government of Canada. I think I have spoken on this issue in the House before.

Under that funding arrangement, a thousand is allocated for Francophones compared to one dollar allocated for aboriginals towards language preservation, development and enhancement. Is the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment going to be negotiating with the federal government to try to increase the aboriginal portion of these financial arrangements? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Before I ask the Minister, the time for question period has expired. I shall allow Mr. Nitah to conclude his questioning. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 20-14(3): Funding for Aboriginal Languages

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The funding is part of the Canada-Northwest Territories language program. It is done through an agreement that is signed on a three to five year basis. To the best of my recollection, I believe that agreement was signed in early January and therefore has affect for the next several years.

There is no doubt that there is concern about the amount of funding that we can put into aboriginal languages here in the Territories. It is of great concern. A study was done in the Deh Cho area and aboriginal language committee representatives are working on their programs and other areas.

In the Deh Cho, for example, it has been found that most people have lost their language. That is a critical issue. I am certainly interested in ensuring that we address the issue of funding on an ongoing basis. At the moment, I am tied with the agreement that is in place. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 20-14(3): Funding for Aboriginal Languages

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Throughout the Northwest Territories, different aboriginal groups have taken it upon themselves to organize themselves and work on ways of protecting, preserving and enhancing their languages. Any initiatives such as this require resources, financial resources, human resources, et cetera.

My understanding from the Minister's answer is that the agreement between the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories is three to five years for renegotiations.

Will this department work with the aboriginal groups who are working together preserving the language, in developing a plan that will determine exactly what maximum resources are going to be required throughout the Northwest Territories for aboriginal language preservation based on that information, and negotiate the amount necessary? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 20-14(3): Funding for Aboriginal Languages

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department has entered into arrangements with the aboriginal language communities for them to prepare language plans. Those plans are being formulated into a strategy that we can look at to see what can be developed for the future. The funding that is available through the Canada-Northwest Territories language program is transferred to a great degree to the aboriginal language communities, to allow them to help develop plans for the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ootes. Question period has ended. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to Item 6.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to Item 6 oral questions. Are there any nays? Thank you. We shall reset the clock. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

REVERT TO ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**Question 21-14(3): Appeal of the Federal Firearms Supreme Court Decision**

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. As we all know, the Supreme Court of Canada was hearing questions about the gun control legislation that has passed through federal parliament. Because the government had intervened there, we lost that case. We are now hearing a lot of concern from aboriginal First Nations across the country that this legislation will drastically affect their treaty rights.

For the First Nations people in Canada and the Northwest Territories, you pretty well have to be a lawyer to figure the application process. Is the Minister willing to consider funding in regard to a case that does come forth from First Nations people, either from Nunavut or across Canada, so aboriginal First Nations in the Northwest Territories can also intervene and express their case, especially when it comes to aboriginal rights?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Minister Antoine.

Return to Question 21-14(3): Appeal of the Federal Firearms Supreme Court Decision

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Supreme Court of Canada came out with the ruling in regard to a reference on the Firearms Act. We intervened as the Government of the Northwest Territories in this court action by the province of Alberta.

The Supreme Court dismissed the province of Alberta's application to have the federal firearms declared unconstitutional. The court case did not deal with treaty or aboriginal rights at all and it did not deal with the unique northern or rural conditions of Canadians. So there is a door that is open there for different groups and organizations to intervene on those basis.

I heard through the media this morning that the NTI from Nunavut is taking a challenge based on Inuit aboriginal rights based on their land claims agreement.

So this is what we know. We as a government have been reviewing it and we have not made any decisions as Cabinet or as a government yet. Hopefully, we will do it very soon. We have some decision and option papers that we will be looking at very soon.

At this point in time, we are not participating in the administration of the Firearms Act in the Northwest Territories. There is a chief firearms officer who is an employee of the federal Department of Justice that is administering the licensing and the registration provisions of this Act. So this is where it is at right now with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 21-14(3): Appeal of the Federal Firearms Supreme Court Decision

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if he has been in consultation with the First Nations organizations, the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in, people in the Sahtu, the other claimant groups and also the Dene Nation or the Metis Association on this matter? Because it does have a major effect on First Nations' hunting rights.

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

Further Return to Question 21-14(3): Appeal of the Federal Firearms Supreme Court Decision

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. I have met and talked briefly on the telephone with some of the leaders. I have not consulted with all of them yet. I met with Bill Erasmus, the national chief of the Dene Nation, on this particular case. There is no information that I gather from these brief initial contacts that any of these groups are looking at taking any intervention action at this point in time. This court decision is very recent. Perhaps something will evolve in the next little while. One of the options that we have to consider is whether we support any intervention action by any of the groups that may come forward.

Like I said earlier, we are reviewing this decision and we will be coming out with a decision very soon. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 21-14(3): Appeal of the Federal Firearms Supreme Court Decision

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that time is critical. The legislation states you must have a license by January 1st in order to acquire ammunition. It is important that we do not start seeing our citizens being branded as criminals because they do not understand something or they have not had enough time to fill out the applications. If you look at the application, it is complicated and you pretty well have to be a lawyer to understand it. How soon can the Minister get back to the House to inform us on what progress is being made in this area?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Minister responsible for Justice, Minister Antoine.

Further Return to Question 21-14(3): Appeal of the Federal Firearms Supreme Court Decision

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. As a government, we are going to be reviewing this. We understand that while this is a federal legislation, some of the other jurisdictions we have checked with are not going to be administering this legislation.

I think we are going to leave it up to the federal government at this point in time. I understand that it is turning out to be a very costly venture. It is a law now, so our people in the North have to comply by it. There are some really tight timeframes we are looking at. From the information that I have, the chief firearms officer from the Northwest Territories is in the process of hiring some people who will travel throughout the Northwest Territories over the next few months to help people understand the law and to fill out the forms correctly. These registrations

are needed to be done on a timely basis. We would like to encourage that.

In discussion with the national chief of the Dene Nation, maybe one way of doing it is if different chiefs and band councils, different Metis locals get involved at this level. So that the people who do not understand English, who do not know how to read or write, who use rifles as a tool to put food on the table, will be taken care of as soon as possible through the local organizations. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 21-14(3): Appeal of the Federal Firearms Supreme Court Decision

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since these rights flow from treaties and modern treaties and also in regards to treaty obligations, where ammunition shells and what not are given on an annual basis, have you looked at the aboriginal aspect of this legislation to see how it could interfere with those rights and how you can try to find ways of using that if we do go forward to a court case? Are you looking at that also?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Minister of Justice, Minister Antoine.

Further Return to Question 21-14(3): Appeal of the Federal Firearms Supreme Court Decision

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding of this legislation is that anybody who has a rifle has to register. As of January 1st, you can no longer buy ammunition for rifles unless you have a registration number. I think time is of the essence to try and get these registrations in place.

Furthermore, according to the treaties, Treaty 8 and Treaty 11 in the Northwest Territories, part of the original treaty is that there are certain provisions that are given out every year as part of the treaty agreement of nets and shells. This new legislation is certainly going to be in contravention of the original treaty.

As I said earlier, the decision of the Supreme Court did not venture into the area of deciding whether treaty and aboriginal rights questions were dealt with. I am certain that there are going to be other interventions, other than the NTI. We will be making a decision on how we are going to get involved at this level. Certainly we are still reviewing the decision to see what kind of implication it has in regards to treaty agreements, of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11. Thank you.

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

Question 22-14(3): Tourism Strategy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. I was concerned about his response to Mr. Braden's question. I think our constituents who are going to be upset with this possible hotel tax would possibly be even more reassured if they thought this was part of a larger master plan. If there was a strategy in place, and from this strategy a hotel tax had come down. However, we hear that the tax is coming first and not the other way around.

I did not hear Mr. Handley roll out a non-renewable resource tax before rolling out his strategy. I am wondering if he can explain again why he feels a tax is important, before we decide what we are going to do with the money. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 22-14(3): Tourism Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The two have to go together, as I mentioned earlier, the strategy and the source of revenue go together if we want to have any action plan put in place. The tax is not scheduled to go into effect until April 1st. In the meantime, we will be completing the strategy. I assure you that we will have a strategy in place.

In the meantime, we will also do consultation. We will prepare legislation later in this Session in the fall. I think there is a lot of time. This is not something that is being put on people immediately. There is a lot of time for us to work it all together.

I assure you that the two, the strategy and tax, the source of revenue, have to go together. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 22-14(3): Tourism Strategy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering about the money that we currently spend on tourism, meagre as it might be. Is there some sort of strategy for the money we are currently spending and how we spend it? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 22-14(3): Tourism Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, that is laid out in our business plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 22-14(3): Tourism Strategy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell us what the budget for tourism and marketing is this year?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 22-14(3): Tourism Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to tell you exactly what the budget is for marketing. We do not break the tourism dollars up that way. The biggest chunk, or piece, of the tourism dollars is given as a grant to the Northwest Territories Tourism Association. To a large extent, they determine how much they are going to spend on the advertising.

We also spend some money within the department on advertising, but I cannot tell the Member how much that totals exactly. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 22-14(3): Tourism Strategy

MR. BELL: I am wondering if the Minister could get that information for the House? Can he tell us what the grant is and come back to us and sort of summarize the amount of money that is currently spent on tourism? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 22-14(3): Tourism Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to do that. Again, I have to say that I am not sure that the Northwest Territories Tourism Association breaks out their budget that way. I may be able to give you an estimate, but exactly what you would consider as advertising, what you would not include in that category, I am not sure they are definitely the same as Mr. Bell's might be. Thank you.

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

Question 23-14(3): Tourism Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question goes to Minister of Finance on the issue of the hotel tax. He mentioned in his responses to the Member for Yellowknife South that he has a lot of time to work out all the kinks. However, I will say that given the answers that he has been providing us with today, he is really not working with a lot of information at all.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could confirm to us that there is no transportation strategy at the moment with the department?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I think Ms. Lee mentioned a transportation strategy? I do not know. I assume there is.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. I was not sure that I understood that. Ms. Lee, would you clarify please?

MS. LEE: My apologies Mr. Speaker, I must be thinking about two things at the same time. I wonder if the Minister could confirm whether or not his department has a tourism strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley, a tourism strategy.

Return to Question 23-14(3): Tourism Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there currently is a tourism business plan. I do not know if it is specifically called a strategy, but there certainly is a tourism plan. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is working on a comprehensive tourism strategy. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 23-14(3): Tourism Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The strategy that he is talking about, has he taken that out to the general public for consultation, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I think you said a plan, not a strategy, but the Minister responsible for Finance may answer.

Further Return to Question 23-14(3): Tourism Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has been working closely with the tourism industry and with the Northwest Territories Tourism Association. Has the particular document that I have seen in draft gone out for consultation? I do not know. Keep in mind though that we are doing one in the department and the Northwest Territories Tourism Association is also doing one. We have to have a matching of those two in order to have a comprehensive tourism strategy for the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 23-14(3): Tourism Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My point of this question is when the Minister appeared before the standing committee, he showed us something that looked like a strategy, but it really was not. It was an internal document that was prepared by the department. It really has not gone out to a wider consultation.

I have talked to the industry people who feel that in order for us to really have an effective tourism strategy, it should be done by a third party. What I am saying is, we do not even have an effective tourism strategy, and now the Minister is proposing a hotel tax. It is not making any sense at all, Mr. Speaker.

My question is, and I am saying that it is really unreasonable for him. I mean, look at our schedule here.

-- Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Pardon me, Ms. Lee. You are on a supplementary. Could you ask a question? You have had a lot of preamble.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it not totally unreasonable for him to think that in the next few months, he is going to accomplish a strategy, work out all the kinks on this hotel tax and have everything in place by April 1st?

-- Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The question?

MS. LEE: Is it not unreasonable, yes or no?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 23-14(3): Tourism Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, no, I do not think it is completely unreasonable. Thank you.

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

Question 24-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if the Minister of Finance can tell us whether or not, before jacking hotel prices through the roof, he would look at other jurisdictions to see exactly how high our hotel prices are already? Also, can he tell us whether or not this would dissuade further tourism? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 24-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think there are publications that list the hotel rates. I would be happy to look at it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 24-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the fragile nature of our tourism industry, especially here with the new addition of Japanese tourists, has the Minister looked at this previously? Or would this be something he would endeavour to do in the future? Has the Minister taken a look at our hotel prices to see how we compare to other regions?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 24-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have not done a comparison. I would compare quality of room, size of room, price of room and so on. I would expect that, just from my own experience, our hotels and rates in some cases are less expensive than others. Vancouver probably compares very poorly with us. They have very high rates, as do some of the very large cities. Other places might be quite a bit less.

We have, and we always do as a government, watch what the hotel rates are. I could tell you that our hotels are probably higher than you would find on average across Alberta or Saskatchewan, or somewhere else. I do not understand the point of the question, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 24-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the Minister can just answer this one, yes or no. If I think I hear what he is saying, he is saying we are going to implement a five percent hotel tax, then we are going to do a strategy, and then we are going to look around and see where we compare as far as with hotel prices in the rest of the country. I am wondering if that is what I heard today? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 24-14(3): Proposed Hotel Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, if the Member is doing things in that order, the answer is no, that is not what I said.

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

Question 25-14(3): Aboriginal Student Graduation Rates

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education. It is in regard to the graduation statistics that we are getting, comparing aboriginal communities with large urban centres. There is real lack of numbers when it comes to students graduating in the aboriginal communities.

One of the concerns I have is we see these economic potentials coming. For the aboriginal people to get ahead socially and economically, they have to have an education. I would like to ask the Minister, knowing there are problems within the system, has he considered looking at doing a study to see where these problem areas are in the aboriginal communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 25-14(3): Aboriginal Student Graduation Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the concerns has always been graduation rates in communities. With the extension of up to grade 12 in the communities, it offers an opportunity for students to stay in their home communities to take education. That is starting to increase enrolments within the school system. We are noticing that, and yet there is not a drop in enrolments in the larger centres, which seems to indicate that students are either coming back into school or certainly remaining in school.

Having community-based grade 10 to 12 does offer more opportunities for individuals to graduate and proceed through the school system. I think it is one of the keys to ensuring that we do get more people from the communities to graduate out of our system. There is always the question of how successful are we in the communities. I think that is always an area of concern and needs attention on an ongoing basis. The stability of teachers within the community is always an area of concern. Teacher turnover has an effect on that, although our teacher turnover seems to have stabilized a bit, other than certain pockets throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 25-14(3): Aboriginal Student Graduation Rates

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad there is high school being delivered in the small communities. The point I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that I believe there is a real problem in our high schools in our communities because of the lack of a curriculum, the lack of materials, and the lack of the resources needed to ensure those programs are there. The question is not directed to the Premier, Mr. Speaker, it is directed to the Minister of Education.

-- Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please, order. The Member has the right to ask a question, and he is asking question, but would you cut the preamble a bit, Mr. Krutko? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me what they are doing to ensure we have adequate resources in our high schools in the small communities? What are they doing to ensure we have a curriculum, the materials and the resources to ensure the students receive the same type of programs and services in our small communities as they do in the larger centres?

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

Further Return to Question 25-14(3): Aboriginal Student Graduation Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the areas that we have been working on is distance education. It was piloted this past half year and it was deemed to be very successful. It was on northern studies and it was delivered out of Norman Wells. Students in various locations took this distance education course. I believe Aklavik was one, but I cannot recall for sure. It was well received and very enthusiastically embraced. It is an opportunity to provide more programming.

I signed a memorandum of agreement with the Calgary School Board to deliver and have access to 30 more programs that can be delivered by distance education. That will be possible this fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 25-14(3): Aboriginal Student Graduation Rates

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds all well and good, but the problem is that we are not seeing the statistics with the graduation rates in the communities. In Aklavik, I have not seen a graduate for a number years. That is the problem I am trying to get at.

Is the Minister willing to go out to do a feasibility study to find out where these problem areas lie, and why there is such a lack of people graduating in our schools? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment Minister Ootes.

Further Return to Question 25-14(3): Aboriginal Student Graduation Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is always concern about the quality of education. That is no doubt a question that we always address. I met with the chairs of the DEC's and with the directors of the DEC's several months ago for two days. The subject of discussion was the results out of our school system. Whatever levels we are at, we are going to have to address those kinds of questions. So it is of concern. We are addressing it in the best way by working through the

DEC to see where problem areas may lie and then addressing them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 25-14(3): Aboriginal Student Graduation Rates

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if his department has talked to students that have left their communities? I will use Aklavik again as an example. The only students that have been able to graduate had to go to school in Whitehorse.

I introduced a young lady here yesterday in the House. She has to go to school in Yellowknife. Have you done a study to see how many students have left the communities to get their high school diplomas in the larger centres? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 25-14(3): Aboriginal Student Graduation Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my time in this position, the answer is no.

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

Question 26-14(3): Fort Resolution Dental Services

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen. In my line of questioning, I may be plugging some of the issues that some of my colleagues have been working on for awhile, specifically Ms. Lee on Highway No. 3.

I was driving back from Hay River Sunday evening and on the ferry, I ran into a constituent of mine coming to Yellowknife from Fort Resolution. She had all her kids in the van, five of them. I asked her what she was doing. She said she was travelling from Fort Resolution to Yellowknife to visit the dentist.

I will ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, is it acceptable for her and her department to have a young woman with her five young children travelling 1350 kilometres to visit a dentist? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 26-14(3): Fort Resolution Dental Services

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not know the details of why someone would travel from Fort Resolution to Yellowknife for dental services. I do know that the Hay River dental clinic has stopped providing dental services in Fort Resolution as of the end of 1999. However, patients can still travel from Fort Resolution to Hay River for dental services, which is about 100 miles. We do have

dentists that still provide service through their practice in Hay River.

Unless it was some specialized service that they could not get in Hay River, I would not be able to venture a guess as to why a patient would have to go all the way to Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 26-14(3): Fort Resolution Dental Services

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Fort Resolution, the average income is half of that of Yellowknife. I would guess that by that income alone, that half the population do not have vehicles. Is it okay for the Minister and her department that people may have to walk 100 miles as she puts it, although I am sure that it is a little longer, to see a dentist? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 26-14(3): Fort Resolution Dental Services

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I would not suggest that people in Fort Resolution should walk to Hay River for dental services. I do know that a lot of people travel from Fort Resolution to Hay River for many reasons, including medical and dental reasons.

It is important that we find solutions to providing these services, even if it is on an interim basis, to the small communities. I do not think that any time soon some of the smaller communities in the Northwest Territories will have resident physicians or dentists. I do think that it is important that we find ways to contract with professionals for these services and that they come to where the people are as opposed to the people having to go to another centre to receive them.

The Deninoo Community Health and Social Services Board has sent out a tender for dentist services in the community and has received one response from a dentist in Calgary. Like physicians, dentists are also in short supply in the Northwest Territories. I want to assure the Member the health board is seriously working on finding a dentist who will pay regular visits to his community. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 26-14(3): Fort Resolution Dental Services

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those are fine words. That should identify the resources to alleviate some of the problems that are experienced by my constituents in Fort Resolution. Mr. Speaker, when? When, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The Minister Responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen,

Further Return to Question 26-14(3): Fort Resolution Dental Services

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I cannot say exactly when a contract might be in place for a dentist to come to Fort Resolution. In the meantime, I hope that people can find dentist services, perhaps even with someone they have seen on a regular basis in Hay River. I will commit that it is a priority and that we will have services available in the community on a scheduled basis as soon as possible, but I cannot tell you exactly when. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 26-14(3): Fort Resolution Dental Services

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can get quite a bit of suggestions from my esteemed colleagues on this side over here for a line of questioning. The time that my constituency has to wait, however long that is, would there be any financial compensation for those individuals that have to drive all the way to Yellowknife, 1350 kilometres on rough roads, or those who have to walk a hundred miles from Fort Resolution? Is the Minister of Finance planning to introduce a dental usage tax or something? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Interjection

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear! Dental tax!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 26-14(3): Fort Resolution Dental Services

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot remember what the question is now. What is the question? Sorry, I was so taken with the final part of that question, I could not remember the first part.

I am not sure whether travel expenses are available for dental work, but I could find out. If it is an allowable cost under our medical travel policy -- I am being informed that they are not. The experts on the other side of the House are telling me that medical travel is not available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Laughter

We will continue to work closely with the Deninoo Community Health and Social Services Board to ensure the people of Fort Resolution receive dental services in a timely manner. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**Written Question 1-14(3): Loan Guarantees, GNWT Debt and Northern Residents Deductions**

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my written question is for the Minister responsible for Finance. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister:

1. Please provide a list of all current loan guarantees provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories;
2. Please provide a chart showing the minimum and maximum amount of short-term debt owed by the Government of the Northwest Territories, month by month, for the fiscal year 1999-2000; and
3. Please provide the amount remitted, in total, to taxpayers as a northern residents deduction in the last two tax years for which figures are available.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, replies to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**Tabled Document 1-14(3): Special Report on Privatization and Language Services**

Colleagues, I wish to table in English and French the Special Report on Privatization and Language Services, dated March 31, 2000, submitted by the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories to the Legislative Assembly. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

Tabled Document 2-14(3): Candidates Election Returns and Declaration of Election Contributions and Expenses

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, please turn to section 183(94) of the Elections Act. I wish to table a Candidates' Elections Returns and Declaration of Election Contributions and Expenses for the following candidates for the electoral district of Deh Cho: Samuel Gargan and Michael McLeod.

For the electoral district of Frame Lake: Charles Dent; Bill Schram; and David Wind.

For the electoral district of Great Slave: Bill Braden; Marie Coe; Roy Desjarlais; Bill Enge; and Suzette Montreuil.

For the electoral district of Hay River North: Joanne Barnaby; Ron Courtoreille; Paul Delorey; Julian Lefebvre; Jerry Morin; Ken Thomas; and Rodney Tordoff.

For the electoral district of Hay River South: Jane Groenewegen.

For the electoral district of Inuvik Boot Lake: Floyd Roland.

For the electoral district of Inuvik Twin Lakes: Roger T. Allen; Glenna Hansen; and George Roach.

For the electoral district of Kam Lake: Beaton Mackenzie; Steve Petersen; and Tony Whitford.

For the electoral district of Mackenzie Delta: Grace Blake and David Krutko.

For the electoral district of Nahendeh: Jim Antoine; Paul Gammon; and Paul Lafferty.

For the electoral district of North Slave: Georgina Franki; Leon Lafferty; George Mackenzie; Alfonz Nitsiza; James Rabesca; James Wah-Shee; Henry Zoe; and Isidore Zoe.

For the electoral district of Nunakput: Vince Steen and Vince Teddy.

For the electoral district of Range Lake: Alex Debogorski; Everett Kasteel; Sandy Lee; Dave Ramsay; and Roger Russell.

For the electoral district of Sahtu: Stephen Kakfwi and Winter Lennie.

For the electoral district of Thebacha: Jeanne Marie Jewel; J. Michael Miltenberger; and Marilyn Napier.

For the electoral district of Tu Nedhe: Sabet Biscaye; Steve Nitah; and Noeline Villebrun.

For the electoral district of Weledeh: Joe Handley; Mark Heyck; and Blake Rasmussen.

For the electoral district of Yellowknife Centre: Bernie Hughes and Jake Ootes.

For the electoral district of Yellowknife South: Brendan Bell, Mary Beth Levan and Pat McMahan.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION**Motion 1-14(3): Appointment of Languages Commissioner**

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, June 23, 2000, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that pursuant to Section 18 of the Official Languages Act, that Fibbie Tatti be appointed as Languages Commissioner.

And further that the appointment be effective July 10, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Motion 2-14(3): Appointment of Conflict of Interest Commissioner

MR. BELL: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, June 23, 2000, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that pursuant to Section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, that Carol Roberts be appointed as Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

And further, that the appointment be effective July 1, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time today, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Motion 3-14(4): Appointment of Information and Privacy Commissioner

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, June 23, 2000, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that pursuant to Section 61 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, that Elaine Keenan-Bengts be appointed as Information and Privacy Commissioner. And further that the appointment be effective July 1, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 15, notices of motion. The Honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Motion 4-14(4): Setting of Sitting Hours by Speaker

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, June 23, 2000, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Speaker be authorized to set sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 17: MOTIONS

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with Motion 1-14(1), Appointment of Languages Commissioner, today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may continue, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Motion 1-14(3): Appointment of Languages Commissioner (Carried)

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

WHEREAS section 18(1) of the Official Languages Act permits the appointment of a Languages Commissioner by the

Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, after the approval of the appointment by resolution of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly considers the appointment of a Languages Commissioner essential for ensuring recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the official languages and compliance with the spirit and intent of the Official Languages Act;

AND WHEREAS the term of the Languages Commissioner has expired;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is of the opinion that the appointment of a Languages Commissioner should now be made;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that pursuant to Section 18 of the Official Languages Act, that Fbbie Tatti be appointed as Languages Commissioner;

AND FURTHER that the appointment be effective July 10, 2000.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. We have a motion. The motion is in order. To the motion. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: I am requesting a recorded vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. A recorded vote has been requested. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Please stand. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Handley, Mr. Allen, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Roland, Mr. Dent, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Bell, Mr. Nitah, and Mr. Braden.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed? All those abstaining? Thank you. The results of the recorded vote. In favour, 17; against, zero; abstentions, zero. The motion is carried unanimously.

-- Applause

Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I made mention of earlier today regarding the appointment of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the matter today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Bell.

Motion 2-14(3): Appointment of Conflict of Interest Commissioner (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act permits the appointment of a Conflict of Interest Commissioner by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories after the approval of the appointment by resolution of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly considers the appointment of a Conflict of Interest Commissioner essential to exercise the powers and perform the duties under the Act;

AND WHEREAS the office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner is vacant;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is of the opinion that the appointment of a Conflict of Interest Commissioner should now be made;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that pursuant to Section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, that Carol Roberts be appointed as Conflict of Interest Commissioner;

AND FURTHER that the appointment be effective July 1, 2000.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. We have a motion. 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 unanimously.

Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with Motion 3-14(3), Appointment of Information and Privacy Commissioner today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Member for Hay River South is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may continue, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Motion 3-14(4): Appointment of Information and Privacy Commissioner (Carried)

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS section 61 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act permits the appointment of an Information and Privacy Commissioner by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, after the approval of the appointment by resolution of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly considers the appointment of an Information and Privacy Commissioner essential to exercise its powers and perform the duties under the Act;

AND WHEREAS the term of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has expired;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is of the opinion that the appointment of an Information and Privacy Commissioner should now be made;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that pursuant to Section 61 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, that

Elaine Keenan-Bengts be appointed as Information and Privacy Commissioner.

AND FURTHER that the appointment be effective July 1, 2000.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried unanimously.

-- Applause

Before I proceed to the next matter, I would like to point out to the Members of the House that the Languages Commissioner appointee, Ms. Tatti, is in the gallery.

-- Applause

Also, the Information and Privacy Commissioner appointee, Ms. Keenan-Bengts, is in the gallery as well.

-- Applause

Welcome and congratulations.

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 1, Appropriations Act, 2000-2001. Committee Report 1-14(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Review of 2000-2003 Business Plan and 2000-2001 Main Estimates. Committee Report 2-14(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plan and 2000-2001 Main Estimates. Committee Report 3-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plan and 2000-2001 Main Estimates, with Mr. Krutko in the Chair.

ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee to order. We are dealing with Bill 1, Committee Report 1-14(3), Committee Report 2-14(3) and Committee Report 3-14(3). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps we could look at Bill 1, Appropriations Act today, or at least get started on it with general comments. I know the committee has some motions to consider that would come up under general comments.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Would the Minister like to make his opening comments?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to proceed with my opening remarks.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to discuss the main estimates for the Department of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me, Mr. Handley. Point of order, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I believe the Minister was embarking on the Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development budget. I think our intention is to have general comments on the budget itself first, then get into the departmental reviews after we have gone through the general comments.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I do not have any opening comments on the budget in total. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The direction of the Committee is that we deal with Bill 1, Appropriations Act, 2000-2001, with general comments regarding the bill. Mr. Dent, general comments.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I will not embark on general comments right now but in committee reports yesterday, we presented the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report for the 2000-2003 business plan and the 2000-2001 main estimates. In that report, we had a number of recommendations.

What I propose to do now, Mr. Chairman, is to present those recommendations in the form of motions for the committee to consider, since they are on government-wide issues and not just on departmental issues. This is something we should get into before we get into the departments.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that each department review its goals, strategies, outcomes and outcome measures for presentation of the 2001-2004 business plans to ensure that there are substantive benchmarks and measurable outcomes included. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. We do not have a copy of the motion, so we will have to take five minutes to make copies. We will take a short break and come back with the motion.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee back to order. We are dealing with a motion. Mr. Dent, I believe that we all have copies now. Could you read the motion for the record?

Committee Motion 1-14(3): Recommendation to Review Departmental Goals, Strategies and Outcomes (Carried)

MR. DENT: I move that this committee recommends that each department review its goals, strategies, outcomes, and outcome measures for presentation in the 2001-2004 business plans to ensure that there are substantive benchmarks and measurable outcomes included.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize the clock is running down, so I will keep these comments brief. What this motion says is that the benchmarks, measurable goals and outcomes in this budget are inadequate and unacceptable for almost every department without exception.

I think there is no way to clearly measure how this government intends to spend eight hundred and some million dollars, and

when they come back next year we will be in the same situation of how well did things go. If we did not have any clear goals and measurable outcomes, you will just have to take our word for it and we will get on with it.

Mr. Speaker, this is my fifth budget. And this has been an issue in almost every budget that I can recollect. I hope we do not have to be sitting here again in a year with the same concern.

Mr. Speaker, in the social program side, we have almost 60 percent of the budget under the social programs envelope, and they plan to do a lot of good work. They have many good intentions, but we are talking about spending government money and being able to measure the outcome of programs, and to measure the decisions and plans that the departments have brought forward.

Mr. Chairman, this is a motion with some substance, because while we are talking about business plans for 2001-2004, the message is, and it is reflected in every committee report in every department, that the goals and outcomes in there are inadequate.

It is somewhat of a puzzlement for me. The fifth time around we are still beating on this particular issue. Money is increasingly tight. We will have to be able to justify, and determine if we are spending money the right way. If we are not, then why not? How do we change it?

You can only do that if you measure it. You cannot get by on anecdotal information or gut feelings, perceptions, or what you heard at the coffee shop. You have to be able to demonstrate as a corporation what decisions are being made and which decisions did not in fact hold water.

If this was a business plan going to the banks and you had to justify for more money the next year, I would suggest, as it has been mentioned already, that the business plans and the budget be returned because they lack detail. I also suggest that the government and the departments would reject business plans put forward by non-government organizations and agencies if they said they would spend the money they receive in the same vague way that the government outlines how they are going to spend their money.

I am in support of this motion. It is a very important one. It is a fundamental one. It cuts across all government departments and agencies, and one that, for me, I look for all the time. It has been recognized by the AOC as a significant issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be even shorter than my colleague, and that is very difficult. Open and accountable government requires a clear statement of what a department is trying to achieve. It requires a clear definition of how we will mark its progress towards those goals. Too often we do not see that when we are reviewing the business plans and budgets for departments. This has been something that has been noted in this Legislature, the 12th Legislature, the 13th Legislature, as far as I am aware.

I agree with Mr. Miltenberger that it is time we finally dealt with this issue. I think not only would banks reject the approach we have seen from some of the departments, but this government itself expects more from a non-government organization when they apply for funding in terms of a clear definition of what the

goals are for that organization and what the measures for success will be.

I would say that we need to demonstrate the same level of responsibility that we expect from those that we fund. Mr. Chairman, I think that it is indeed time that we move towards a clear statement of goals and a clear statement of how we will measure progress towards those goals. I hope that the government will respond positively to this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion? Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Mr. Roland.

Committee Motion 2-14(3): Recommendation to Provide More Detailed Categories of "Other Expenses"

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have another committee motion. I move that this committee recommends that this government develop more detailed categories for other expenses to justify the request for funds, and further that these categories be consistent across government, and furthermore that one of the categories should cover items on the controllable asset inventory list that are now under the new tangible asset accounting system considered as an operations expense.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Often times when departments would present their business plans or budgets to us, we would often see the category "other expenses", and there would often be significant amounts of funds in there. Only under questioning would we be advised as to what those amounts represented and what the purpose of the funds was.

It was surprising to us the number of different items that could get lumped together under "other expenses". We would hope that in terms ensuring open and transparent government, we could have a much easier time of understanding what the government is spending its money on. We think it is absolutely essential that there be a better definition of what can be included in other expenses, and that it becomes much easier for everybody to understand what it is we are asked to approve. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Mr. Dent made reference to the "other expenses" category, if we look under Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, other expenses totals \$35 million. It does provide a breakdown, but it always leaves a large amount, and that is one of the questions that came up routinely. Hopefully the government as a whole will review this and provide clearer detail. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Recognizing the clock and that time has expired, we will rise to report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 21, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2000-2001, and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Is there a seconder? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. Orders of the day for Thursday, June 22, 2000:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 2, Write-Off of Debts Act, 2000-2001
 - Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001
 - Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2
 - Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act

19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2000-2001
 - Committee Report 1-14(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plans and 2000-2001 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 2-14(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plans and 2000-2001 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 3-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plans and 2000-2001 Main Estimates
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned to Thursday, June 22nd, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

