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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2000****MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Oh God, may your spirit and guidance be in us as we work for the benefit of all our people, for peace and justice in our land and for constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve. Amen.

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Good afternoon, colleagues. I would like to make a little statement about Seniors Week. As a "senior" Member, or at least the eldest MLA present in the House, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge Senior Citizens Week. June 18 to 24, 2000, has been proclaimed Senior Citizens Week by the Honourable Vince Steen, Minister responsible for Seniors.

It is a time to recognize and honour seniors in the Northwest Territories and all over. I would like the contributions of seniors and elders to be acknowledged and to promote positive attitudes towards seniors and elders.

Activities for Seniors Week will be held throughout the Northwest Territories this week. I encourage everyone to get involved in Seniors Week events in their community. Elders are one of our most valuable resources. Let us celebrate them.

-- Applause

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement on The Need for a Public Service Commission**

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the chair for the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. Mr. Speaker, members of the committee are concerned about how human resources functions are being undertaken in our government. We will concentrate on this issue today during Members' statements and question period.

Mr. Speaker, we need a representative workforce where our employees are treated fairly and have the opportunity for advancement. The break-up of the Department of Personnel was sold in 1992-93 as a cost-saving measure. However, indications are that we are probably spending more today on personnel functions than we were then.

There has apparently been a 21 percent increase in human resource positions, from 114 in 1991 to 138 in March of 2000. At the same time, there has been a 43 percent decrease in the number of GNWT employees. Our employees have gone down from 6,133 to 3,481 over that same period of time. This means that the Government of the Northwest Territories is spending more money providing services to staff. To do that, we have to

be taking money out of programs and services, where it could otherwise be spent.

Mr. Speaker, we are concerned the departments are not following staffing policies and guidelines in the recruitment process, and that there is no monitoring of the process by the government.

We believe that an independent agency may be the only way to ensure hiring practices are fair throughout the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, we are concerned with the lack of commitment and progress in affirmative action hiring. Mr. Speaker, aboriginal representation in the GNWT has not increased in the last five years. Aboriginal representation in management has increased only marginally. There is obviously a need for better coordination of public service career training funding with the government departments. A clear indication of this is that this government has lapsed almost \$1 million over the past three years in public service career training, money that could have been used to train and promote affirmative action candidates in the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, to deal with all of these concerns, we need a Public Service Commission. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Delivery of GNWT Human Resource Services

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past decade, there have been tremendous changes in the government's approach to the delivery of human resource services.

In the early 1990s, all personnel were centralized in one department. A few departments had individuals who assisted with human resource planning, but not many. This was a time when the government was involved in the equal-pay study, before the pay equity court case, and the GHRS, the predecessor to PeopleSoft, was developed in-house.

In 1993, the government began to dismantle Personnel, moving functions like benefits, labour relations and job evaluation to the Financial Management Board Secretariat. In early 1996, staffing and benefits were transferred to departments, along with the staff to do the work. Regional offices were dissolved. Over the next two years, many responsibilities were also transferred to deputy ministers and departments in areas like labour relations.

In 1998, the new Hay system for evaluating jobs was implemented, along with giving responsibilities for evaluation to departments. In 1998, work began on the much vaunted PeopleSoft system, which was implemented in 1999.

In 1998, a new unit in the Executive was created, corporate human resource services, which has central human resource responsibilities along with the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Mr. Speaker, given all the change, it makes sense that the government would want to do an objective evaluation to determine what is working and what is not.

We have to look at the big picture and all the parts. Are there enough checks and balances in place to ensure departments are following government human resource policy? After 11 years, what needs to be done to change the Affirmative Action Policy, a policy which has seen only a two percent, a paltry, meagre two percent increase in aboriginal participation in the GNWT.

With PeopleSoft now up and running, and significantly over-budget, I might add, is an evaluation of the start-up in order? How is it working? Is the current delivery system working as well outside of Yellowknife as the old system of regional personnel officers used to? Who is responsible for tracking and recording our human resource practices? Who is coordinating important human resource practices like performance appraisals, which, government-wide, is a very dismal figure?

Performance appraisal completion rates, exit interviews...has decentralization worked for everything? Are there areas where central expertise and advice would be better served? Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why does the government keep leaving the health and social services and education boards out of human resource reporting when they represent two of our largest groups of employees? Why does it take more human resource staff now, including more managers, to deliver the same programs to fewer people than it did ten years ago?

I hope the government will give serious consideration to a review of its human resource delivery system and practices, and come out with a comprehensive, government-wide human resource strategy. Saying people are too busy is not an excuse. Perhaps a review would find areas where time and money could be better spent. If people, Mr. Speaker, are truly our most important resource, then they should be worth the time to make sure we are supporting them in the best possible way.

There are two things that we need: a comprehensive human resource strategy and an independent agency to oversee the government's human resource strategy. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on GNWT Job Descriptions

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a territorial government, we often say buy North as a way of encouraging the development of our economy. However, by not hiring northern locals and aboriginals, we are sending a different message.

One of the barriers that limits the hiring of Northerners is how job descriptions are prepared. Many times, the posted qualifications are not in line with the actual job requirements. I have heard of cases where people who have left a particular job, working at it for many years, were not considered for re-employment at the same job. The job description had changed while the actual job had not.

At the appropriate time, I will have questions concerning how government job descriptions are written. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Support for GNWT Public Servants

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Towards a Better Tomorrow, the vision document of this Assembly, acknowledges the key role and the value of human resources in the Northwest Territories in the development of this new Territory as we seek to realize the potential of our great land.

For the Government of the Northwest Territories, our direct instrument in carrying out our policies and projects, implementing laws and regulations, is the public service of the Northwest Territories.

There are some 3,000 government positions representing more than seven percent of the population of public policy for our government. In reviewing Towards a Better Tomorrow, I believe a higher profile, greater credibility and recognition should be attached to the role of the public service.

As a result of the division of the Territories, the government's position of severe financial restraint in the past few years, decentralization and increased expectations of the public and politicians, has resulted in dramatic and often unsettling impacts on the public service.

The Auditor General of Canada has recently observed on the negative impact of the loss of senior, long-term public servants in the federal government. Closer to home, the Northwest Territories public service has suffered similar losses of senior, long-term management employees, eroding our corporate memory and contributing to further instability and decreased productivity. The ever-present uncertainty of job cuts as a result of the need to find additional budget reductions by departments is causing a further decline in morale and productivity.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Northwest Territories offers exciting new employment opportunities in the private and aboriginal organization sectors. This further adds to the difficulty for our public service to attract qualified and experienced employees. The southern employment situation with expanding economies will see further difficulty for us in attracting much-needed health

care and other qualified professionals to our Territory. There are a number of aspects of the public service which are of concern to me. Principally, I lend my support to the concept of a Public Service Commission or labour relations board.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge the tremendous support and dedication, Mr. Speaker, of the public service of this government to the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci beaucoup, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement on Affirmative Action Policy

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement today concerns affirmative action. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories identifies three groups of people for preference in employment, training and promotion under the Affirmative Action Policy. Aboriginal persons are priority one.

Mr. Speaker, the current Affirmative Action Policy was implemented in 1989 when it replaced the Northern Hiring Policy. Yet today, 11 years later, the aboriginal people occupy only 15 percent of the management positions and overall 31 percent. Since 1991, there has been only a two percent increase in aboriginal representation within the Government of the Northwest Territories' workforce.

When the decision was made to dissolve the Department of Personnel, the onus was placed on each department to achieve results. This did not seem to work as we have only seen minimal results to-date.

Mr. Speaker, as a Member representing a riding of mostly aboriginal people, this is of great concern to me. It seems this government would like us to believe that there are few qualified aboriginals out there and there is stiff competition from diamond and oil companies. I also hear that there are very few Northerners with proper credentials. I cannot accept those arguments. I personally know of many people here in Yellowknife and in the communities with degrees and college diplomas who cannot get jobs in the GNWT.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the results of the Affirmative Action Policy, we all have to agree that it has not done what it was supposed to. Is it because the program is not being implemented properly? Is it because there is no one department overseeing this program? Mr. Speaker, there are probably many reasons why this program is not working. However, I do not believe that the policy in itself is the problem.

This government has to take a serious look at the barriers to allowing this program to work. We also have to look at ways to complement this program. In other jurisdictions, they have actively gone out and selected individuals for management positions. By targeting individuals to take job training and instruction, they have helped them move into management positions. These may be possible solutions.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, improvement in the area of increasing the representation of target groups in the public

service is something that cannot come soon enough. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Affirmative Action Hiring Results

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is time the Government of the Northwest Territories had a close-up look at itself. This government expects industry to maintain a workforce with a high percentage of Northerners and aboriginal people through their socio-economic agreements. Yet the Northwest Territories government itself is lagging far behind the private sector in this regard.

When BHP Diamonds signed its socio-economic agreement, this government required it maintain a target of 62 percent Northerners during its operations phase. BHP has exceeded this and it is at 79 percent. Of those Northerners, 32 percent are aboriginal people.

Aurora College similarly has had many aboriginal graduates of management studies in the past years. This year alone they had 20 graduates in the diploma program at three campuses. Eleven of those were aboriginal, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder if any of these graduates are unemployed or working for the territorial government?

I find it hypocritical that the government can force other organizations to hire northern and aboriginal, yet the government is not even doing the same thing.

It seems to me the government does not make it a priority for itself, Mr. Speaker. Nor does it invest the time to train northern aboriginal people already working for the government so that they can advance to higher positions.

What you have, Mr. Speaker, is a situation where many qualified northern aboriginal people are either under-utilized or not utilized at all. I will be asking the Minister responsible several questions related to this issue during question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Affirmative Action Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take the opportunity to speak about one of the most controversial issues of the day, that being the Affirmative Action Policy, not the hotel tax.

Right off the bat, Mr. Speaker, I can advise you that this is one of the most frequently raised issues an MLA like myself has to address on a daily basis. And we have all heard the arguments on both sides, Mr. Speaker. There are some who truly believe that such a policy is merely an instrument of reverse discrimination, favouring one group over another. I appreciate where they may be coming from.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I personally know of many people, in and out of my constituency, who even though they are amply qualified, continue to be discriminated against in their pursuit of employment with the GNWT. Many of them, I might add, Mr. Speaker, are aboriginal people.

The immutable fact is that all forms of discrimination are based on factors no one can change, whether it be gender, ancestry, race, age, disability, et cetera. The list goes on.

My response to this is always that the purpose of the Affirmative Action Policy is to simply ensure that a public body like the GNWT reflects the true picture of the people it serves. I might also add, Mr. Speaker, that this is absolutely in mind with the basic Canadian principle entrenched in the Charter of Rights, under section 15(2).

I have to believe that if we go deep into it, the problem most people have with an Affirmative Action Policy is certainly not with its underlying principles of equality and fairness, but how well the policy is applied in practice. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, if the government is truly committed to this policy and these basic principles, it is crucial that it takes a lead role in being ever so vigilant about all aspects of this policy. At minimum, there must be an effective mechanism in place for independent and fair hearing to all of those who feel they have been unfairly treated under the policy.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I give notice to the responsible Minister that I will be pursuing this further with questions. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Training Funds for Aboriginal Senior Management Candidates

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, regarding the comments of my colleagues, I feel it is important that this government take these points seriously, especially in the area of affirmative action, ensuring we meet those goals.

One of the big arguments we hear from the government is that people do not have the training to take on the area of management. Yet, Mr. Speaker, in the 1999-2000 fiscal year budget, there was \$619,000 identified for public service training to allow aboriginal people within government to take training so they can get the senior management jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I find it appalling that in relation to the \$619,000 that was identified \$403,000 of that money was lapsed. That is uncalled for, especially when the argument we are hearing from government is that people are under-trained and they do not have the expertise. I find it hard to sit here and say we are not making an effort to meet those goals we have set, which is a policy of this government, and has been here for several years. This issue has been around for as long as I can remember. I believe that something has to be done. We cannot allow dollars such as this to be lapsed, which could be better spent ensuring aboriginal people in government receive training and have the ability to move up the ladder so they can take on positions in senior management in the upper branch of government.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking questions to the appropriate Minister on this matter. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on The Need for a Public Service Commission

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, management of human resources has been a thorn in the side of this government and of governments before. An example is the Affirmative Action Policy. Is it working across government departments? I would say no, Mr. Speaker.

An example is the appeals that are handled by this government. I am aware that 28 percent of the appeals that have been filed have been successful. To me, that shows a sign that in fact, our system is not working.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a positive change. This government has stated that it will do things differently. It has an opportunity now to walk the talk. Mr. Speaker, if there was a Public Service Commission put in place by this government, I think initially we would see an increase in the appeals, because employees would have more trust in that system. On top of that, I think in the long run it would improve the morale of our employees in the government. This government has made points of the fact that we have to improve on the treatment of our employees. I believe this is an opportunity to walk the talk, as we say, to make good with our employees.

We will not have many opportunities. The time is short, Mr. Speaker, to be able to move forward and make positive changes in the short time span that we have in the 14th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I will be following up with questions in the area of appeals. Hopefully, the government will take action and institute a Public Service Commission that employees can feel it is for them and it is at arms length from this government. It will start showing where this government can improve on dealing with its employees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on The Need a Public Service Commission

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to talk today about what I perceive is a need for a Public Service Commission in the GNWT. I recently had a constituent come into my office and talk to me about a situation in which she felt she was not treated fairly in a competition. She was a P1. She had numerous years of management experience with this government. She had been out of the workforce for a year. She sought out a competition just like a job she had done in the past. She did not even make the short list.

She was very upset about this and asked my advice as to what I felt she should do. In clear conscience, I could not suggest that she grieve the situation. I think this was the way she felt as well. She was very worried about the possibility of being blacklisted by the department. The avenue for grievance seemed to be to go back to the very same people who did not include her in the short list. Clearly, this was not a workable situation, Mr. Speaker.

I think other Members in this House have all had similar situations. I think we know it is a real problem. As I was going door to door during the campaign, one of the issues that was raised and one of the suggestions that was made to me by some constituents was to set up a Public Service Commission reporting to the Legislative Assembly, not to the government. It would create a needed distance between politicians and public servants, reinforce hiring on the basis of merit, yet still allow for the diversity that we need here in the North. It would also ensure that government follows its own employment and hiring policy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we are the only jurisdiction in Canada, except for Nunavut, that does not have a Public Service Commission. The federal government has one. The provinces have one as well. Every time we see a situation like this where we seem to be the only jurisdiction without something, we have to ask ourselves if we are breaking trail or if we are a jurisdiction that does not need to protect its public service. I think the answer is no, Mr. Speaker.

The Public Service Commission for the federal government has a quasi-judicial authority to hear and investigate staffing appeals and is accountable to Parliament, not a Minister. The independence of the PSC from political interference was the driving force for the creation of the PSC. The commission administers the provisions of the Public Service Employment Act, governing the political rights of public servants without fear or reprisal, Mr. Speaker.

At the appropriate time today, I will have questions for the Minister on a Public Service Commission. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Staffing Practices of Hay River Young Offenders' Facility

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise an issue in this House today that is affecting a number of my constituents. The issue, Mr. Speaker, concerns the young offenders' facility in Hay River and how it is being staffed.

This government-run facility is recognized as needing a certain number of full-time jobs. However, half of these positions are being filled with part-time employees. For a number of years, the administration has elected to fill these positions with casual employees. I assume, Mr. Speaker, that this is happening under the direction of this government.

This situation does nothing as far as giving employees job security and affecting their ability to advance in their chosen field, to say nothing of workplace morale.

Mr. Speaker, this situation has been compounded by recent staffing changes that have taken place. Employees who have been working as full-time casual have had their job classification changed and have been replaced with students who have very little training.

I feel this creates an unsafe practice. Indeed, it sets up the possibility of instances that could have very serious consequences. Mr. Speaker, if this government can hire negotiators for indefinite periods of time, even when it is unknown whether they will be needed more than two or three times a year, surely we can give employees job security by filling full-time positions with full-time employees. At the appropriate time, I will be asking the Minister some questions in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Recognition of Northwest Territories Seniors

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the context of your opening statement, and in recognition of this being Seniors Week across the Northwest Territories, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our seniors a happy and spirited week, including our guests in the gallery this afternoon.

Today, Mr. Speaker, there are four seniors who I want to say a special hello to, three of whom are currently in Stanton Regional Hospital. One is a dear friend of mine, Mr. Pete Fraser, former Member of this Legislative Assembly. I had a chance to meet with Pete last evening, where we shared a few laughs and discussed some of the happenings in our Legislature.

The second senior who I would like to speak about and who I have just met is Ms. Elizabeth Giroux, mother of Edith Mack, the secretary to our honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Thirdly is a lady who is currently in the Saint Therese Hospital in Fort Vermilion, Alberta, but takes an avid interest in our daily proceedings. On behalf of the residents of the Mackenzie Delta I want to wish Lena Malegana all of the best and a happy recovery.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to say another special hello to my aunt, Dolly McLeod who is also resting and recovering in Stanton Regional Hospital. She informed me last night that she watches us with interest during our daily deliberations here in the House. As you know, Mrs. McLeod spends the majority of her life maintaining our traditional bush lifestyle approximately 40 miles southwest of Aklavik.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish all of the seniors who are watching all the best in health and happiness. I cannot go without saying hello to a very special friend; my most sincere wishes to Cece McCauley, who is a great supporter of mine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Mr. Lloyd Brunet, who is the president of the Hay River Seniors Society. I had a very productive meeting with the Northwest Territories seniors this morning and welcome them all to Yellowknife.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen, and welcome to the Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand today and recognize some of the members of the Northwest Territories Seniors Society. My colleague, Mr. Bell, will as well recognize some of them with the agreement of the Chair. I would like to recognize, to start with, a constituent and friend, Mrs. Beatrice Campbell, who is the president; Laura Lennie from Tulita who is the first vice-president; Lloyd Brunet from Hay River, second vice-president; Bob Spence from Yellowknife, who is the treasurer; Dusty Miller from Yellowknife, who is the secretary; and Esther Braden, from Yellowknife, who is the past-president. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize Bill Lafferty from Fort Simpson, a director and former MLA; Ellen Smith from Inuvik, a director; Helen Gruben from Tuktoyuktuk, a director; Don Hunter from Yellowknife, also a director; and Barb Hood, the executive director.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize someone from Fort McPherson, Mrs. Ellen Smith. Welcome.

-- Applause

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to officially welcome Bill Lafferty, a former Member of this House. Welcome.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take the privilege and the honour of recognizing Mrs. Helen Gruben, who is the former chair of the Mackenzie Delta- Beaufort Regional Conference back in the mid-80s to the 90s. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome all visitors. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you. I would like to welcome a Tulita elder, Mrs. Laura Lennie from Tulita. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Andre Legare, consilliere principale de Matie des politiques.

-- Applause

Mr. Legare helps me translate English to French sometimes. Thank you. Welcome everyone, particularly the seniors, to this Assembly. Welcome, Mr. Lafferty. It is like coming home, isn't it?

-- Laughter

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 27-14(3): GNWT Human Resource Function Delivery

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today relates to human resource functions in the Government of the Northwest Territories and is addressed to Premier Kakfwi.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the number of people in various departments, boards and agencies now responsible for human resources, and how they can possibly bring a cohesive approach to the job. I understand that in 1991-92 there were 114 positions that had a human resource function. These positions included those working for departments, boards and agencies, and covered the whole Territory, pre-division.

We are now told that as of March this year, there were 138 people involved in the delivery of human resource functions. While this growth has taken place, our Territory has shrunk in physical size and so has the civil service. In fact, the civil service has shrunk by 43 percent.

Mr. Speaker, this growth has had no coordination so there is no government-wide accountability for human resource functions. With each department or agency now responsible for human resources, who in government has the overall responsibility for monitoring personnel and hiring practices?

Mr. Speaker, my first question, is the Premier aware of the inefficiency that has been created since the breakup of the Department of Personnel with more people now involved in providing human resource functions than we had for a bigger government nine years ago?

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

Return to Question 27-14(3): GNWT Human Resource Function Delivery

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware that since I first became involved in government in 1987 there was general dissatisfaction with the apparent inability of government to meet targets set at the political level and the level of resources required in order to try to meet the targets.

In response to the Member's question, there seems to be a need to get a collective agreement on how to meet the targets and the goals set at the political level so there is a concerted effort made to proceed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 27-14(3): GNWT Human Resource Function Delivery

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure if the Minister agreed, or even if he was aware of the inefficiency, but I will move on to another question. With the deputy ministers now responsible for monitoring and enforcing human resource policy in their departments, who is responsible for ensuring that practices are fair and consistent government-wide?

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

Further Return to Question 27-14(3): GNWT Human Resource Function Delivery

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it is the Cabinet that is ultimately responsible for the management and overall coordination for the departments and the hiring policies of this government. Ultimately, it is the Ministers collectively that bear that responsibility. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Mr. Dent, supplementary.

Supplementary to Question 27-14(3): GNWT Human Resource Function Delivery

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to assume that if it is the Ministers collectively, then that flows up to the Premier, who would then, I hope, be ultimately responsible.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997, the Government Operations Committee recommended that the GNWT develop clear accountability measures across departments. That means government-wide. What measures has the government taken since then to implement standardized accountability measures that would hold Ministers and deputy ministers accountable in the area of human resource management?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Premier Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 27-14(3): GNWT Human Resource Function Delivery

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware of exactly what has been done. I do know that as the Premier I am concerned that there should be some overall

coordination of how we hire staff and how we work to meet targets set.

For instance, if there is an agreement that there should be a certain percentage within management at the headquarters level of aboriginal people and women, at a senior management level, then we need some discussion with the Members of the Legislature and perhaps a committee to decide how to set targets and meet them. That is, a discussion on how measurable targets can be set.

I know we have sent some suggestions to the senior management over the years and asked that more aboriginal and more women be hired to senior management across the departments as a whole. However, there is no clear measurable way by which to make this government, Ministers and deputy ministers accountable for not meeting those targets. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 27-14(3): GNWT Human Resource Function Delivery

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has advised us that Ministers collectively have responsibility, and he has just told us that there does not seem to be a means to hold the Ministers accountable. I would just like to confirm that. Can the Premier advise me, using the present human resource accountability scenario, where Ministers are collectively responsible for their departments in human resources, are there any repercussions for a Minister or deputy minister who is found to be derelict in their responsibility for human resources within their department?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Premier.

Further Return to Question 27-14(3): GNWT Human Resource Function Delivery

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have confidence in all of our deputy ministers and senior management within the government. Generally, we have set out for them to carry on the job of managing their respective departments within the policies and guidelines set out by this government. I think that the point that should be made is we have, I think, a need to find some way to be proactive in promoting the hiring of Northerners, aboriginal people and particularly women within the Government of the Northwest Territories.

I believe that there needs to be a review of how we will try to do that, to obtain a collective agreement with Members of this Legislature on how we can best proceed. The Members are suggesting, at least some individuals have, that a Public Service Commission is the way to proceed. I note that this has been discussed for a great number of years now, and for whatever reason, previous Executives, previous Legislatures, have decided not to proceed with that.

We will need to review that. Whatever needs to be done should be collectively agreed to, I think, by Members of this Legislature and this Cabinet so we can proceed collectively in finding the best way, the fairest way, the most efficient way of getting on with hiring, developing and retaining a civil service that is truly reflective of the people we serve. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier Kakfwi. Item 6, oral questions. Before we continue, I would just like to remind Members that supplementaries should not carry any preamble. The rule says it should not require it. These are your rules. I just want to remind you of that. The answers should also be as brief as possible.

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

Question 28-14(3): Review of GNWT Hiring Policies

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question as well is addressed to the Premier, who, if my memory serves me correctly, was also the Minister responsible when the Affirmative Action Policy kicked in, in 1989. Mr. Speaker, there are two issues that I raised in my Member's statement. One is the need for an independent agency, a Public Service Commission, which will be thoroughly addressed by my colleagues. The other is the need for a human resource strategy.

As I indicated in the last six or seven years, there has been a tremendous amount of change, piecemeal, and a lot of it uncoordinated in human resource services. There is a need to take a look at what has been done and come up with a comprehensive strategy. Can the Premier indicate if the government is going to take a comprehensive look at how they provide these critical services? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 28- 14(3): Review of GNWT Hiring Policies

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have had a very intense initial few months since taking office. It is my view as the Premier that we will take time in the very near future to review the Affirmative Action Policy and to review the way in which this government deals with hiring, retaining, developing, and attracting people to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Attracting people from amongst the aboriginal population, the women and the northern residents to work within the Government of the Northwest Territories. To find a way that is acceptable to Members of the Legislature, and to suggest a process that we can use collectively. We can discuss and debate the best way to achieve the goals that we have set out in our vision statement, and to agree on a course of action so that together we can come up with a way to achieve measurable results and to set ways we can achieve them together. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 28-14(3): Review of GNWT Hiring Policies

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is not a new problem. This has been going on for years. In the last Assembly, the Government Operations Committee did reports. The government itself gave a response, where they made a tremendous number of commitments, the majority of which have not been followed up on.

Can the Premier indicate some timeframes, and I am hoping that we are not going to be reinventing the wheel here, of how we are going to make some progress and evolve. This is not a new issue, Mr. Speaker. We have had an Economic Development Strategy and they whipped up a Non-Renewable Resource Strategy. Surely this is equally critical. If they put their minds to it, they can start to address this. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 28-14(3): Review of GNWT Hiring Policies

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not possible for me to set any dates by which we can offer initiatives. I have tried to, since the beginning of this Legislature, involve Caucus in any initiatives that we propose to undertake. I believe that Members of the Legislature are open to convening another Caucus, perhaps in the fall, in the beginning of September.

That would be a time in which we could prepare a paper for consideration of Caucus that would give us the basis for discussion, to launch some preliminary work in this area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 28-14(3): Review of GNWT Hiring Policies

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped that we were far beyond preliminary work in this critical area. Political involvement is all well and good, but as a corporation, as a business, as a government, the Cabinet and deputies have an ongoing, daily responsibility to have good corporate practices.

Can the Premier indicate, while we wait for this political discussion, will the bureaucracy and Cabinet Ministers, as their role was pointed out by the Premier, look at coming up with some corporate work on this particular issue and not just wait for the political discussion? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 28-14(3): Review of GNWT Hiring Policies

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members know, we have started the preliminary work to develop the business plans for the next fiscal year. June is the month where we start the initial work to draft the business plans for the fiscal year 2001-2002. We will use that process to ask departments and senior managers to begin initial discussions on what information we can use and glean from them in preparing for the discussion we will have with Caucus in September. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 28-14(3): Review of GNWT Hiring Policies

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as part of this work and review, given the fact that the Premier has indicated to my honourable colleague, Mr. Dent, that there is no way at present to hold deputy ministers accountable for targets, or any kind of measurable goals in the area of human resource development, will they look at this critical area of clear accountability frameworks that cut across government, a commitment that was made back in 1997 and has yet to be honoured? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 28-14(3): Review of GNWT Hiring Policies

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the Member is correct in quoting me as having said that so I cannot answer the question when I do not agree with the basis on which he is making the question.

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

Question 29-14(3): Job Description Development Process

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, the Honourable Joe Handley. Can the Minister tell me how government job descriptions are prepared? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 29-14(3): Job Description Development Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, job descriptions are prepared by each individual department. Generally, they do follow the same format which outlines the purpose of the job, some primary responsibilities, and some specific task assignments. The preparation of job descriptions rests with each department. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 29-14(3): Job Description Development Process

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A complaint that is sometimes made about government job descriptions is that they are written or tailored to specific candidates. What procedures are in place to ensure that job descriptions are written to reflect the actual demands of the job?

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

Further Return to Question 29-14(3): Job Description Development Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is a responsibility that rests with the deputy minister of each of the departments to ensure that the job descriptions accurately reflect what work is required. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 29-14(3): Job Description Development Process

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have seen clerk positions that require post-secondary education. Would the Minister commit to reviewing entry level positions to ensure that job descriptions and educational requirements are in line with these jobs?

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

Further Return to Question 29-14(3): Job Description Development Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we can do that. I think there are probably occasions where because departments want the best possible employees, they do over rate the jobs and ask for qualifications that may be greater than what is really required. We can look into that. Thank you.

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

Question 30-14(3): Definition of a Northerner

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. It refers to affirmative action. Mr. Speaker, the policy that the government has now targets specific groups that are under-represented within the public service.

In view of the fact that this government negotiates socio-economic agreements with various private sector resource developers to increase aboriginal and northern employment, would the Minister please advise whether the Government of the Northwest Territories has a standard definition of what constitutes a northern resident or an affirmative action employee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. That appears to be a policy question, and may not be directed to the Ministers, but more to the government leader, the Premier, who sets the overall government direction. Do you wish to direct it to the Premier?

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the clarification. I would like to redirect that question to the Minister responsible for Financial Management Board Secretariat.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. I shall direct the question to the Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 30-14(3): Definition of a Northerner

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member points out an area where there is some clarity and consistency required. There is no definitive definition of who is a Northerner. That has been apparent for some time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 30-14(3): Definition of a Northerner

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary is in regard to the wishes of every employer in the North, to have a workforce with a strong representation of the people in the North. Would the Premier consider consulting with other employers to standardize a definition of aboriginal, northern and other categories of workers? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 30-14(3): Definition of a Northerner

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 31-14(3): Affirmative Action Management Training

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I pointed out that aboriginal people occupy less than 15 percent of the management positions in the Government of the Northwest Territories. Other than preferential hiring, I would like to ask the Premier if there are any programs that specifically target aboriginal people and a methodical plan to move them into managerial positions?

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

Return to Question 31-14(3): Affirmative Action Management Training

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no specific program such as what the Member is referring to. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 31-14(3): Affirmative Action Management Training

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When Nunavut was planning its workforce for the new Territory, it actively went out and selected individuals to train for senior management positions within the government. These individuals underwent on-the-job training and instruction to help them move into managerial positions. Why has the government not implemented such a program for aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories?

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

Further Return to Question 31-14(3): Affirmative Action Management Training

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for taking time to get up to answer the question. I was just consulting with my colleagues. I am not clear on what has been in place in the past, but previous governments had to take a very strong role in recruiting community leaders and managers, business managers, and sending them off to university for further training, with very strong support from this government. This was a way of investing in people who we know are going to be involved in the political and economic future of the Northwest Territories.

That was discontinued a number of years ago. As well, there were individual initiatives by departments in the past to put management trainees in place. At this time, there are no specific initiatives undertaken by this government.

What we would like to do is take suggestions such as the Member is making and put them together in a clear plan or strategy, so that we can take ideas like the Member is making today and put it in place in the overall context that can produce some results for us in the next year or two. Thank you.

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

Question 32-14(3): Increasing the Number of Aboriginal Managers

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think this line of questioning may be starting to sound like we are beating on a dead dog...

-- Interjection

-- Laughter

...but this is a very important issue to my constituents, who are mostly aboriginal people.

Mr. Speaker, the government has increased aboriginal participation in management from eight percent to a meagre 14 percent over the last nine years. However, I suggest to my colleagues that the majority have more to do with the downsizing of the public service rather than any positive action or policy on the part of previous governments.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the past five years, the actual number of aboriginal people in management has increased by eight people as of December 1999. My question is for the Premier. Can the Premier inform this Assembly what steps this government will take to increase the numbers of aboriginal people in management positions? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 32-14(3): Increasing the Number of Aboriginal Managers

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do is engage the Members of the Legislature, specifically the Members in Caucus, in the fall, so

when the House reconvenes in November, we can look at ways in which we can make commitments to targets that we can achieve. We will need the Members of the Legislature on side to develop a strategy and plan that we can clearly implement with achievable results in the very near future. We need sufficient time to get senior managers and departments on side so they buy into a plan and approach that they are also comfortable with and will be supporting.

That is the approach I would like to take. I am afraid I could make targets myself today with no assurance that I can achieve them. I would sooner approach it in an organized way and get the Members of the Legislature to buy into a plan, as well as the senior management of this government, and proceed with a plan and strategy that we can discuss here in the November Session. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 32-14(3): Increasing the Number of Aboriginal Managers

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware of programs, like the one at the corrections division that Justice has, that are used to develop aboriginal managers. They are using mentoring programs and such. It has proven successful.

However, Mr. Speaker, I can think of few other examples of the same skill or magnitude. In light of what our Premier has just suggested, that we take up to the fall to really have a good look at it, and when I see a total of nearly \$1 million has lapsed in the last three years under public service career training...I would like to ask the Premier if he can tell this Assembly whether this government intends to ensure that the available funding, the lapsed funding, that is, is used in the interim to develop aboriginal people in management? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 32-14(3): Increasing the Number of Aboriginal Managers

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 33-14(3): Women in GNWT Management Positions

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I daily remind the Members on this side of the House, I am the only woman on the AOC.

I feel very compelled to ask this question with respect to women in management in the government. Mr. Speaker, during the budget review in the standing committees, I was very surprised to learn things, even though I was not looking for them. One of them had to do with a very low level of women in management in this government.

My first question to the Premier is whether or not, since his appointment as Premier, he has addressed his mind to the

issue of the lack of representation of women in management? Has he given any direction to the government with respect to that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 33-14(3): Women in GNWT Management Positions

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a priority given by myself as the Premier to look for senior managers who are competent, qualified and credible, particularly in the area of women.

As Members know, the deputy minister of the Executive and the deputy minister to Cabinet is Liz Snider. The chief of staff position that has been created and newly appointed is Lynda Sorenson. We have moved people like April Taylor into director positions. We have done some initial work to make sure that, where possible, we seek out and attract and retain women in senior management positions. I would like to continue on this initiative. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 33-14(3): Women in GNWT Management Positions

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Minister's answer. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether or not the Premier is aware of some of the statistics of women in management in other government departments, such as the case of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, where the stats are less than one percent. I wonder if the Premier is aware of that fact. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Interjection

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

Further Return to Question 33-14(3): Women in GNWT Management Positions

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the source of her statistics. I cannot respond to that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 33-14(3): Women in GNWT Management Positions

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not only women in management, but women as a whole, I wonder if the Premier can tell me whether or not he is aware of the policy in government called the Equality of Men and Women in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 33-14(3): Women in GNWT Management Positions

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my job to be aware of the policies that govern the work of this government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 33-14(3): Women in GNWT Management Positions

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to tell the Premier and the Ministers on the other side of the table that there is a policy, and it has not been rejected by this government. I believe that it is in effect. It is called the Equality of Men and Women. May I have the Ministers make a commitment to read the policy and ensure all of their programs follow the principles outlined in this policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 33-14(3): Women in GNWT Management Positions

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the comments made by the Member are accepted and will be considered. Thank you.

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

Question 34-14(3): Public Service Career Training

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and it is regarding my Member's statement earlier, about the number of complaints we have heard on the lack of training resources for people to get into the management field. There needs to be more effort put into training before affirmative action target groups can be promoted.

Within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment there is money identified for public service career training in 1999-2000 fiscal year. There was \$619,000 identified for public service training. Mr. Speaker, my question relates to the involvement of other government agencies and departments about how this fund is being allocated.

What coordination and consultation occurs between the different departments regarding the use and access of the public service career training funds? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 34-14(3): Public Service Career Training

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this particular program is administered by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for the whole government.

It is responsible for setting the guidelines. The money in the budget is divided between various career centres.

The career centres put out a call letter to individual departments, asking them to notify the department if they want to access these particular funds. The departments then respond by developing a training plan for particular positions, working with the career centres.

It is correct that the amount is \$619,000, which was in the budget for 1999-2000, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 34-14(3): Public Service Career Training

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have just finished the business plan process and review. There is usually a three year preparation for planning. With the public service career training dollars, I would like to know if there are any long-term plans in place as to how this money is going to be spent, especially when it comes to public career training? Is there a plan in place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 34-14(3): Public Service Career Training

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through this particular program, the department provides training, counselling, monitoring and administrative support for the development and delivery of training programs for up to three years duration. Programs include a combination of on-the-job training provided by an employee of the applying department or agency, self-directed learning activities and specialized courses.

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

Supplementary to Question 34-14(3): Public Service Career Training

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my statement, I made reference to the number of dollars that were lapsed within this government. In the existing budget, there is some \$250,000 that is identified for Staff Retention Policy. Yet, Mr. Speaker, in the previous fiscal year, there was some \$403,000 lapsed in public service career training. Realistically, this is \$153,000 less than the previous year.

I would like to ask the Minister, with these resources he has identified, are those significant enough to meet the requirements we need for training, realizing it is an area where we have a lot of problems with trying to get people moving up in the ranks.

What has been done in that area to ensure that money is being spent usefully? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 34-14(3): Public Service Career Training

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to state that I am not aware of the reasons for the lapses of the funding. I feel this is an important area. It is one we have to ensure there is enough promotion of. Obviously, funding did lapse previously. I have not checked those figures, but the Member has the figures.

I think it is important for us to address this issue to ensure that we do the appropriate promotion and contact with departments and career centres to ensure funding is taken up by the various organizations and departments to address the particular concern that is out there, to ensure people are developed career-wise and are promoted within our government as a result. Also, that they receive the appropriate education to be able to proceed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 34-14(3): Public Service Career Training

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister be willing to involve the departments in the development of a particular plan for individuals of targeted affirmative action groups in the different departments, so they can show us how the candidates are accessing the public service career dollars? Can they come forth with a proposal so we can see in the House exactly how many people in the government are affirmative action candidates, and are making use of this money? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 34-14(3): Public Service Career Training

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think there is merit to what the Member has recommended. We need to do an analysis of this particular program to address what the barriers may have been to access this particular funding, to ensure the money is taken up by the various departments so we improve the usage of this funding. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Before we continue on with oral questions, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Members of the House to recognize in our gallery, the mayor of Edmonton, Mr. Bill Smith. Accompanying him is Jim Edwards, the president and CEO of Economic Development Edmonton; John Friesen, Edmonton Airports Authority; Keith Persand, Edmonton Chamber Of Commerce; Lynn Daina, Edmonton Journal; Lindsay Daniller, Economic Development Edmonton; Jim Andrais, from the mayor's office; Dale Monaghan, Economic Development Edmonton; and Ellie Sasseville, the executive director of the Yellowknife Chamber Of Commerce. Please give them a warm, legislative welcome.

-- Applause

Welcome to the final minutes of the question period here in the Legislative Assembly. Members will note that we did stop the clock.

--Interjection

A good Speaker. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 35-14(3): GNWT Staffing Appeals

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from information provided, since the demise of the Department of Personnel in 1996, there have been 191 appeals on government job competitions. Of those, 54 have been successful. This translates into 28 percent of the appeals being upheld.

Mr. Speaker, this suggest to me the departments are having ongoing difficulties in applying the GNWT's Affirmative Action Policy correctly. Mr. Speaker, my question goes to the Premier. Can the Premier inform this House whether a 28 percent success rate on appeals is acceptable to this government? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 35-14(3): GNWT Staffing Appeals

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to find ways to do things better, to improve the way in which we conduct ourselves as a government in every way, wherever there is a possibility for improvement. It is always our commitment, to try to find ways to run government in a more efficient, accountable way. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 35-14(3): GNWT Staffing Appeals

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear that they are looking to do something in a more proactive and positive manner. One of the concerns that comes up with the actual number of appeals is that if there were a non-partisan agency to review these, there might be an actual increase.

As a matter of interest, what recourse do residents have if their initial appeal on job competition is denied? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 35-14(3): GNWT Staffing Appeals

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a bit of detail I am not comfortable responding to. I will take it as notice. Thank you.

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

Question 36-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Premier. I have concerns with the present state of human resource management of the Government of the Northwest Territories. I note that human resources functions are scattered throughout government. I also notice, Mr. Speaker, that monitoring is not assigned to any of the government entities. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, this is why the government is losing close to one third of the staffing appeals that come before them. If there is no one monitoring human resources management in the GNWT, the only avenue for the public and staff is to appeal.

The Premier mentioned that past governments have looked into Public Service Commissions. Clearly, this is a government like none other before. Has the Minister and his staff looked at the option and done some concrete research into the establishment of a Public Service Commission for the GNWT?

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

Return to Question 36-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, we have not. What I have tried to indicate is that we need good ideas on what we can do to be a better government. What I am offering today is to begin to do the ground work so we can engage Caucus fully in the development of a plan and strategy, and perhaps revisions to policies that can help us move ahead together to meet the targets we set. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 36-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for that commitment. I would just like to ask if, before we get together in the fall in Inuvik to meet as a Caucus, will he instruct his government to research Public Service Commissions and present a proposal at that time for us to look at? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 36-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in keeping with previous practice, Cabinet will not be making specific recommendations. What we will probably do is develop an information package to do some initial research on some different options that could be available to Members regarding the current policies. Options like setting up a Public Service Commission, perhaps a centralized human resources function with more measurable targets. There is a whole range of different initiatives we can take. We will try to summarize

them as best as we can in a clear, articulate manner, and engage the Members of the Legislature in a good, comprehensive discussion. Then Cabinet can go away with some idea as to how to proceed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 36-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would like to thank the Premier for that. It sounds like he is going to stray from past practices of the past government, which was to ignore this issue. I would like to note that a motion was made in this House over ten years ago to establish a Public Service Commission. I think the Premier also indicated that today, but nothing has been done to make this a reality. I am assuming that a motion in this House directing government to establish a commission does not really hold that much water. I am wondering what the Members of the House have to do to make the government take the proposal of a Public Service Commission seriously and act on this? The Minister has indicated that he will come forward with some proposals, but will he take this request seriously? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 36-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take it there are a number of Members of the Legislature who seem to like the idea of a Public Service Commission. So I will be taking the suggestion made today very seriously and we will make it part of the discussion that we will engage in with the Members in September. Thank you.

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

Question 37-14(3): Staffing Procedures at the Hay River Young Offenders Facility

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine. As I stated in my Member's statement, there is a considerable amount of uneasiness among employees at the young offenders' facility in Hay River. Full-time positions are being filled with casual employees. Casuals are being replaced with students. Supervisory positions are being filled with casuals when needed on a minute's notice.

Does the Minister have first-hand knowledge on the staffing policy at the centre in Hay River?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 37-14(3): Staffing Procedures at the Hay River Young Offenders Facility

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this detailed information on how the facility is running is not something I am familiar with. I am aware the casuals at this

facility are on an as-and-when contract basis. They are extended until the year 2001, and are called in when required. This is a contract situation.

We know the union made the request to provide some certainty to employment, so we are looking at that as a department. In regard to students being hired, I am aware that two students who are in the criminology and corrections program at the Aurora College in Inuvik, are doing their practicum experience. They need their practicum experience to graduate. They are working this summer at the institute.

This is done to train students from Inuvik for upcoming new jobs that will be in Inuvik at the female young offenders' facility. As I said, the casual positions are as-and-when contracts. That is what I am told. They will be called in when they are required. When the students return to school in the fall, more hours will be expected at that time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 37-14(3): Staffing Procedures at the Hay River Young Offenders Facility

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister inform the House as to how many full-time positions at the centre are vacant at this time?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 37-14(3): Staffing Procedures at the Hay River Young Offenders Facility

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not know the number at this point in time. I will find out as soon as I can and let the honourable Member know. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 37-14(3): Staffing Procedures at the Hay River Young Offenders Facility

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has informed us that these students are in training. The fact is that these students are displacing employees at the centre right now. What assurances can the Minister give us that this is not creating an unsafe practice at the centre?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 37-14(3): Staffing Procedures at the Hay River Young Offenders Facility

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the corrections section of the Department of Justice will ensure at all times that unsafe working conditions will not be created with the students being at the job. As I have said, the students have been training. They have been taking the criminology and corrections program at the Aurora College in Inuvik. They have had some part of the program. This summer job is a practicum experience, so they have hands-on in the setting that they will be working in eventually in Inuvik once the female young

offenders' correction facility is there. I will check again on this particular aspect of the honourable Member's question with the correctional division of Justice and get more detailed information, to make sure this job-training program does not create an unsafe working situation. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 37-14(3): Staffing Procedures at the Hay River Young Offenders Facility

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister inform us...there has been some talk for some time now about the centre being closed down or turned into open custody. Can the Minister inform the House where we are on that, if there is any definite date set for that taking place?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 37-14(3): Staffing Procedures at the Hay River Young Offenders Facility

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Deninoo Kue facility is currently open custody. The female young offenders' facility in Inuvik is expected to be finished in two years, hopefully less than that. The male young offenders' facility, once it is constructed here in Yellowknife, will be another two years. In about two years time, roughly, is when changes are going to happen to the Deninoo Kue facility.

The plan is that it will remain a facility to deal with open custody at that time. Thank you.

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

Question 38-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have heard the Premier indicate that he is willing to look at what we can do as a government to deal with the issue of the human resources management and application of the Affirmative Action Policy. Mr. Speaker, I think, as I stated in my Member's statement, that previous governments have tried this and it has not worked. Personnel was disassembled and each department took over its own area of human resources management and Affirmative Action Policy implementation.

The numbers have clearly shown that program is not working. If we are really going to do something and be positive, and as I stated, it is time to walk the talk and do things differently, an opportunity exists now. As we heard the Premier saying, work is going to be done during this summer on next year's budget. There is an opportunity to put something in place that would see the development of a Public Service Commission for the next fiscal year.

I would like to ask the Premier if he is willing, knowing that it is a high priority on this side of the floor, that he will instruct his Ministers and staff that the Public Service Commission should be put into the works? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 38-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the Member means by putting the Public Service Commission idea into the works. I have said the suggestion is going to be taken seriously. We will develop a discussion paper that will include the idea of a Public Service Commission and bring that to the Members of the Legislature and the workshop. We plan to have a working session in Inuvik in the first week of September. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The time for question period has expired. I will allow Mr. Roland to continue with his supplementaries. Mr. Roland.

Supplementary to Question 38-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is very positive to hear that in fact we will look at it and the Public Service Commission will be one of the things that will be worked into this paper. Will it be too late in September to have it put into the budget plan process for passage in April of 2001? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 38-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my view that the idea of a Public Service Commission would be one of many ideas that would be discussed and considered by Caucus in the fall. It will certainly give direction to Cabinet as to which way is best to proceed, given the time and resources we have available to us.

As to further commitment beyond that, it is not my prerogative to comment. Once Caucus has met and given some firm direction to Cabinet, Cabinet will try to come forward with some position for consideration by the Legislature in the November Session. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 38-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact, it will be looked at, but there is no commitment that it will become part of the business planning process and the main estimates review coming this fall. Is that correct? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 38-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if we were running like a private sector, I am sure we could do it. Government being government, it is our nature to

ride along methodically, cautiously and with much debate. It is not my expectation that either Cabinet nor the Legislature would be willing to make such a commitment with very limited time for discussion and consideration. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 38-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Ordinary Members on this side of the House provide you with the necessary means and will to proceed from our side for the setting up of a Public Service Commission, will you then feel that is enough to move ahead and crack the whip on those plodding horses? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. I trust he means Cabinet, not horses. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 38-14(3): Establishment of a GNWT Public Service Commission

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is something that is of great interest to us over here. If there is some way we can agree on a plan and a strategy that could lead us to increase the number of aboriginal people in the civil service, particularly in the management level in each department, as well as a number of women working and employed in this government across government, particularly at the headquarters level, the senior management level, and equitably in each department.

I can categorically say that Cabinet will be in full support of a plan of action that is developed properly and formally by this Legislature. I cannot make pronouncements on which way that will go.

Once we have full discussion and there is a course of action agreed to, this Cabinet and government will work to find every way possible to carry out the wishes of Caucus. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Question period is over for today. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 2-14(3): Alaska Housing Agreement

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a written question for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, regarding Alaska housing agreements.

Can the Minister provide a list of all Northwest Territories businesses and manufacturers involved in the project in Alaska? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. 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. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**Tabled Document 3-14(3): Report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations Working Group on Affirmative Action and Human Resource Management**

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in order to assist Cabinet from having to reinvent the wheel regarding affirmative action and human resources management issues, I would like to table the report by the Standing Committee on Government Operations of the work they did on affirmative action and human resources management, initially tabled in this House on June 2, 1997.

Tabled Document 4-14(3): GNWT Response to the Report of the Working Group on Affirmative Action and Human Resource Management

I would also like to table the response from the government, provided on September 22, 1997, the Response to the Working Group on Affirmative Action and Human Resource Management by the 13th Assembly, specifically Mr. Todd. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have three documents I would like to table today.

Tabled Document 5-14(3): Affirmative Action Data From PeopleSoft, as of December 1999

The first is the affirmative action data from PeopleSoft as of December 1999, provided by corporate human resources services.

Tabled Document 6-14(3): Human Resources Data – Occupational Group Comparison, 1995-2000

The second is human resources occupational comparison, 1995-2000, provided by the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

Tabled Document 7-14(3): Change in Human Resource Positions, 1993-1994 to 1997-1998

The third is the change in human resources positions, 1993-1994 to 1997-1998 provided by the Department of the Executive, in response to Committee Motion 4-13(5) in the 13th Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Tabled Document 8-14(3): GNWT Policy on the Equality of Men and Women in the Northwest Territories

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a document called Equality of Men and Women in the Northwest Territories. It contains a policy that says the Government of the Northwest Territories will actively step forward and encourage the participation of women on an equal basis with men in the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION**Motion 5-14(3): Establishment of a Public Service Commission**

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier is asking for a clear signal. So, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 26, 2000, I will move the following motion. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that this Legislative Assembly wishes to ensure that the Government of the Northwest Territories has a professional, non-partisan and representative public service;

And further requests the Executive Council to bring forward legislation to establish a Public Service Commission for the Northwest Territories;

And furthermore, that the Executive Council introduce this legislation by February 15, 2001. Mr. Speaker, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Dent, you may proceed.

ITEM 17: MOTIONS**Motion 5-14(3): Establishment of a Public Service Commission (Carried)**

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

WHEREAS it is incumbent upon the Government of the Northwest Territories to provide services and deliver programs to the residents through the establishment and maintenance of a public service;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories, in recruiting and retaining a professional public service, must ensure that it is representative of the diversity of the Northwest Territories population and allows access to all residents to opportunities within the public service;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories, in meeting its obligations to have a professional, non-partisan and representative public service, must ensure that human resource policies and procedures are adhered to;

AND WHEREAS since the dismantling of the Department of Personnel was completed in 1996-97, successive governments have not demonstrated their ability to actively coordinate the human resources needs of the public service;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories statistical information regarding the success of the Affirmative

Action Policy, does not appear to reflect the desired representative public service;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories continues to demonstrate that it cannot coordinate and be accountable for its actions in certain aspects of meeting its human resource responsibilities;

AND WHEREAS the human resource function and responsibilities are now delegated to and spread throughout departments and boards of this government;

AND WHEREAS there is a need for adequate reporting, monitoring and accountability by the Government of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the current public service, and those wishing to become members of the territorial public service, must be satisfied that the hiring process is transparent, fair and accountable;

AND WHEREAS there is a need for an independent agency to ensure that all persons are treated fairly and have access to employment opportunities in the territorial public service;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories is currently the only jurisdiction in Canada, with the exception of Nunavut, which exercises authority over a public service and does not have an impartial or independent body or agency to ensure a representative public service;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that this Legislative Assembly wishes to ensure that the Government of the Northwest Territories has a professional, non-partisan and representative public service;

AND FURTHER requests the Executive Council to bring forward legislation to establish a Public Service Commission for the Northwest Territories;

AND FURTHERMORE that the Executive Council introduce this legislation by February 15, 2001. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The Chair recognizes the Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the four times I have run for a seat in this House, during four election campaigns, when I have gone door-to-door, there have been concerns expressed to me about the hiring practices by a significant number of constituents each time. People have brought up concerns as to whether the hiring processes are fair, whether they are consistent across government, through departments, and whether affirmative action policies are being interpreted and applied properly.

Mr. Speaker, in the 12th Assembly, serious concerns were raised about human resources practices. We were then told that by ripping the Department of Personnel apart and splitting its functions between the Financial Management Board Secretariat and the departments, we would help solve some of the problems. We would save money and by bringing accountability to the departments, we would achieve better affirmative action statistics.

Mr. Speaker, in the 13th Assembly, the concern continued unabated. The Government Operations Committee did extensive work, submitting a detailed report with many recommendations which were adopted as motions in this House in committee of the whole. That report was tabled by Mr. Miltenberger.

Mr. Speaker, there has been no significant response from the government to this report. Earlier this year, the Accountability and Oversight Committee identified their concerns about human resources practices to the government. The committee sent a letter to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

In that letter, we noted that:

"It is felt that with the abolition of the Department of Personnel, and the subsequent reassignment of those responsibilities to each department, that it may now be time to complete an evaluation. The committee would like to be advised as to whether the government would be prepared to perform an operational audit of the Government of the Northwest Territories' human resource administration and services. This audit could be performed by the audit bureau, and include a cost-benefit comparison between the previous human resource management model and the present model."

Mr. Speaker, the government chose not to agree to follow through on this request. We received a letter from Mr. Handley, in which he noted a number of new initiatives that had been undertaken in the past couple of years. He summarized the rejection by saying:

"I do not believe the timing is right for a management audit of human resources management in the government. I suggest we review this idea in about one year's time."

Mr. Speaker, we have spent many years talking about this issue. We do not have time to wait a year. We are not satisfied waiting a year. We want this government to take action now.

In the past, Mr. Speaker, cost has been used as a reason to not proceed with an independent body like the Public Service Commission. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, given the growth of the number of people performing the job that was formerly done by the Department of Personnel, I cannot buy that argument.

A Public Service Commission should certainly not increase cost. In fact, it would probably allow for some economies. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier today, there has been a 21 percent growth in the number of people providing human resources functions for this government since 1991-1992.

Over that same period, the people for whom they provide the services, including all boards and agencies, has dropped from 6,133 to 3,481, a 43 percent decrease. Twenty-one percent more people providing services to 43 percent fewer people.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I had questioned the Premier on accountability. The Premier indicated that Cabinet as a whole has collective responsibility for ensuring there is accountability

and fairness with the policies across the government departments.

Mr. Speaker, I remember when this decentralization of the Department of Personnel was first talked about. It was sold to many Members of this House as, rather than a collective responsibility, an individual responsibility. Ministers would be held responsible for the performance of their departments and how human resources functions were being performed. Ministers would be held accountable in this House for their performance, and there would be consequences if we did not see positive action in affirmative action.

We were told that the individual deputy ministers would be held accountable, that they would not receive performance bonuses if they were not making sure they were following the practices of this government when it came to human resources.

Today we have heard that there may not be a method of keeping this accountability. That causes me significant concern, Mr. Speaker. I believe we need to have some way to ensure we are monitoring what is happening in human resources practices. We need to know that we are having that done by an independent agency, which ensures fairness and equity and ensures they are following adopted practices and procedures of this Legislative Assembly.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all Members to vote in favour of this motion and encourage the government to follow through in a speedy fashion to meet the request that we make with it. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be requesting a recorded vote.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have heard through this House today of the failures of the work of previous Assemblies. Mr. Speaker, since 1976, this is an issue that has been wrestled with by governments. The first Office of Native Employment was established in 1986. In 1984, a paper on affirmative action was released, and there is still much discussion on it.

The current Affirmative Action Policy was implemented a decade ago in 1989. Since then, we have been continuing to wrestle with the idea of a representative workforce in the Northwest Territories. I am sure we can find some positive examples, but the majority are at the bottom end of the scale in the smaller communities and regions.

Mr. Speaker, overall, when you look at the public service that performs the work on behalf of the government compared to those who are trying to get into a government position, to be fair to them, I think we need to take positive steps towards establishing something that is open, transparent and accountable. They can feel trust in what they say at that level will not hurt them in the long run, because that is some of the stuff we are hearing on the streets.

Mr. Speaker, as I stated, this government has said on a number of occasions that it is going to do things differently. It is going to change the way government does business. It is time to walk the talk. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to speak in favour of this motion. It is very exciting to be speaking on one of two issues that were front and centre in our campaign platform, the first one being a Human Rights Act, which we passed a motion for earlier in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is obvious from the discussions today that a Public Service Commission is something there is a huge need for. I can say to you, Mr. Speaker, that during the campaign and thereafter, I do not think there is a day that goes by when somebody is not happy with what is happening and what they are experiencing when they go to get a job.

As I said in my statement, the complaints are on both sides. There are people, non-aboriginal people in my riding who feel they have no chance of getting a job. Then there are aboriginal people or people of diverse backgrounds who feel they are not being treated fairly. I think in many cases, that is true. That speaks to the need for an independent body.

The message I really want to send out, Mr. Speaker, is that this should not be seen as a negative attack on the management or the government itself. I know many of the human resources personnel who work for the government, and I know full well they are doing the best they can in their jobs.

I think the Public Service Commission will help those employees, so they are not saddled with a daily deluge of complaints from people who really believe they have been treated unfairly. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about this motion, I think we should be aware of the fact that we are talking about people's careers and lives.

This is not just about whether government is doing this or that, or what the people on that side believe compared to this side. It does not have anything to do with that. We are talking about people who want to have a say in their career, who want to make the advancement they feel they deserve. They want to be treated fairly for the education they have received. I think this is the right thing to do.

I think the motion is worded very well, and states the motives behind this. I do hope the government will take this seriously. We will work with the government to make this happen after so many years of talking about it.

I also have to add, Mr. Speaker, it is a great thing that we have such a consensus on this side of the floor. That is not always the case, but this is a very strong consensus, and I would like the government to be aware of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few things to clarify a couple of points and issue a word of caution before we get too eager to create more government. I have mixed feelings in a way, because this is more Yellowknife government. My riding represents Yellowknife.

Seriously, do we not want to take some time to look at other options? There are other options out there. I do not know that we want to jump into a Public Service Commission as being the panacea for everything. It may not be. It does move control

over our human resources to an arms-length from this House. We are talking about creating something independent that is going to be better. I do not know, maybe it is. We need to look at what the options are. There may be other ways of doing it.

A second issue in my mind is when the previous government dismantled the Department of Personnel, no resources were transferred to departments. The departments created their own human resources services. No resources were transferred.

If we do this, you can look at it two ways. We are either going to be taking resources away from departments like Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment, where we did not give them any, or else we are going to be adding to our bureaucracy. We have to keep that in mind as we go.

This may be costing us dollars. Departments were not given any when the transfer was made. The Department of Personnel was dismantled partly as a way of saving money and as a way of trying to decentralize things out of headquarters into the regions and departments.

Another major issue in my mind, and it is a fairly important one, is our labour relations for GNWT employees fits under the Canada Labour Code. We do not have a labour policy in the Territories. We have not, as a government, made a decision to even pursue that from Canada. There are implications there from aboriginal land claims groups and for aboriginal self-government authorities. We should look at that issue first because the impact on us, in terms of our ability to make our labour legislation, is a question that we need to consider before we jump in and create another body here that may complicate lives for aboriginal land claims and self-government groups.

The other concern I have is that although some MLAs may have discussed this for many years, as a government we have not discussed this for many years. Again, I say, take a little bit of caution here because we do not want to jump from the frying pan into the fire with our need to create something new. A lot of us have not had the opportunity to sit around a table and discuss this, and I think that the kind of schedule that you are proposing is really pushing it fast. There are a lot of issues involved here.

The other point I want to make is that we have, as a government, said that we want to work in partnership with other governments; the federal government, aboriginal governments, and so on. For us to go racing off to create a Public Service Commission without ample time for consultation with other levels of government, particularly aboriginal governments, causes me a lot of concern here.

I do not have a problem with the general intention of this motion. I think the general intention is to create a better public service, a more accountable public service, but to just jump in and say, "A Public Service Commission is the way to do it," without really looking at what the options are, looking at what the implications are. Asking that legislation be brought forward by February 15th 2001 is really pushing the edge of the envelope. I am not sure that this is really a good way to create new legislation or to create new institutions. I am not speaking against the intention, I am just saying let us exercise some caution. Let us be responsible; we are a new government. Let us not jump into something that is going to get us from behind here. I think it is much more complicated than just setting up a commission. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of this motion. This issue, for me, has been on the table for almost the entire life of the 13th Assembly, into this one, where a bad decision was made to dismantle and blow up the Department of Personnel with no clear plans in place. We have paid a price ever since. We are now faced with, very clearly in everybody's estimation, a fragmented and uncoordinated human resources service across government.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers clearly indicate that the costs and the number of people that we are using, who are put to the task, are greater than before in the Department of Personnel. This tells me that there is duplication, there is extra cost, there is overlap, and that it should not cost more, and, in fact, there should be a cost savings.

I would, once again, hope that this Cabinet, this government, would reach out and embrace this motion and the intent of this motion. It is worrisome to me, once again, like with Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, where we requested to take a critical look at Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and it was blocked. We requested to take a clear look at personnel services and do an audit, and that was rejected. Now we are being cautioned against doing this, that we have to take time.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the political clock does not stop ticking. We are already six months into our term. This is a critical issue; it is going to take time to put things in place. I think the will of the Ordinary Members will be clearly demonstrated. I think the Public Service Commission will help alleviate not only the concerns raised by my colleagues who have spoken so far, but also the concern that was raised earlier in this House, that I think every Member has heard.

That is the perception in many quarters by many people that the process is not open, transparent and accountable in many cases. That in fact, it is often a meaningless formality because there are already decisions made on who to hire. By supporting and passing this motion, the implementation of a Public Service Commission will help do away with, if nothing else, the perception of managerial interference and political interference in the hiring process. That, I think, is one of the most fundamental needs for this particular agency that is being promoted.

Mr. Speaker, of course, I would encourage Cabinet to embrace this and to show us that they are not going to sit on their hands and want us to defer, defer, defer. We are going to embrace this and make a move on this long outstanding issue, tied in directly with affirmative action, which, by all accounts, is considerably less than effective. That is the kindest way that I can probably refer to that.

I would also like to suggest, as we look at this motion, that the work that has been done in the past by the previous standing committee and the recommendations that were put forward were very detailed and addressed a lot of the issues. The government chose not to respond actively on any of them that I can recollect. I really fully support this motion and I encourage Cabinet to get ahead of the parade on this one, and embrace the motion and the intent in it. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am standing up in support of this motion. My honourable colleague from Weledeh had mentioned partnerships, or aboriginal partners having a say in it. I dare say the establishment of such a Public Service Commission and the establishment of a mandate of such a commission could work with partnerships, in partnerships with aboriginal organizations.

We talked about money. It might cost money, but if the aboriginal content and the management sector of this government goes up by only six percent in nine years, then only by eight people in five years, I have a problem with it.

One of the biggest complaints I get as a Member of this Legislature and also as a private member of the community before my election, by people and organizations who are aboriginal governments today, is that the Government of the NWT does not represent the people of the Northwest Territories. The number of aboriginal people within the government is too low. The duplication of responsibilities is too high. The cost of government is too high, et cetera. If this commission could alleviate some of those problems, get more input from aboriginal governments and reduce the number of duplications, I think the aboriginal governments would accept this government a lot more than they are accepting it today.

By putting it on the shelf, saying, "Well, let us talk about it some more," and what not, I think it has been talked about since 1976. I think that is enough talking. Let us walk the talk. Thank you

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. To the motion, The Member for Sahtu, Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has become apparent that Members on the other side had decided yesterday amongst themselves that they were going to come away today with a specific plan of action, no matter what was said in question period. Mr. Speaker, I am kind of thrown a bit by this because I took the time during question period to assure Members that before this Cabinet took any initiative to create any new institution, to allocate new resources, particularly after receiving a very strong message in the last two Sessions of no more growth in Yellowknife, no more growth in headquarters, that we are now entertaining a motion to create a Public Service Commission.

A commission that is somehow going to help us meet all of our goals and aspirations in hiring more northern people, more aboriginal people in management, more women in management, and that the best way to do it is by setting up an independent body, giving up our power and authority to an independent board that we have no idea of how it is going to be structured or set up and mandated, that that is the way to resolve all the problems that we have discussed so far.

Mr. Speaker, that is only part of my concern. My greater concern is, are Members of the Legislature on the other side going to start dictating to the Executive what we should do without any discussion? What happened to this spirit of consensus? We offered to include it in the discussion in September. I think, it is a very valid assertion that the Members have made, that we should look at a Public Service

Commission. We have offered to do that, we have agreed to do that. I thought there was some acceptance of that suggestion.

Now you are going to pre-empt the discussion in the fall, I guess. In accepting this motion, you would say you do not need to discuss it anymore, you just want to tell us what to do. It is a concern because it is not in keeping with the spirit of consensus, for the Members on the other side to meet by themselves and then unilaterally impose direction on this Cabinet without at least allowing some of us to have some discussion with Members about the merits of the motions and directions that they propose. We will not be voting on this motion. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this item has been around as long as I have, in terms of the whole concept of the Affirmative Action Policy itself, the hiring procedures that are in place in the government, and also the amount that was spent in the human resource area. The Minister responsible for Finance stated that there was no money attached to these transfers to these different portfolios. There were thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of dollars passed through this House in supplementary appropriations to assist those departments in hiring human resource officers and staff.

There was a lot money spent ensuring that the departments increased their capacity to take on this new workload. We see that in the increases in the Department of the Executive and the Financial Management Board Secretariat. In the whole area, when it comes to ensuring that the Affirmative Action Policy is being carried out, what do we see? Money is being lapsed, so a lot of people are not being trained so they can take on these positions. The same thing applies in regard to ensuring that we have a reflective workforce within this government.

I think we talk about working in partnership with the aboriginal people and First Nations, as they make 50 percent of the population. The government does not reflect that, yet we go around telling the industry and government that you have to sign an agreement to ensure that you will have so many Northerners working in the different sectors. As a government we do not practice that. I, for one, feel that this is the first step to make sure that we do fulfill those obligations that are in place in the policies of this government.

I fully support this initiative, and we have to somehow take the next step and not see dollars being lapsed because they are not being used for training. I support this motion, and ask my colleagues to do so. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am standing here today to tell you that I will certainly be supporting this motion. I have to say, one of the hardest things for me in the early stages of my career has been having people coming into my office and talk about how they felt they were really shafted out of a job or did not get fair treatment. It has been something that has been very difficult for me to deal with. What is even more difficult is that I have not been able to recommend that they seek recourse because I did not know where to send them and they

did not know where to go. They were concerned about being blacklisted, and I think that, at times, can be a fair concern.

I do not think that, as I mentioned, is a workable situation. Mr. Handley asked if we want to give away our ability to handle human resources, and he asked the question, "Can a Public Service Commission do a better job?"

I would like to ask you how they could possibly do a worse job. Mr. Nitah has let us know here today that aboriginal people in management has increased from eight percent to a not exactly staggering 14 percent. Ms. Lee indicated that women in management in the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is something like 0.8 percent.

I think there are other concerns. We have 30 percent of appeals being upheld, and I think we are only seeing the beginning. I think a lot of people do not appeal because they fear reprisal. Additionally, I think what we are talking about here is not a full-blown Department of Personnel. We are not talking about huge bureaucracy and creating more jobs in Yellowknife. We are talking about a watchdog. A watchdog that would report to everybody in this House and when we set the mandate, we will decide how the Public Service Commission is going to act and going to represent the people of the Northwest Territories, and Government of the NWT employees.

I think we are essentially throwing our hands up here and saying the time for talking is over. We would like to act. The government would like to wait until the fall to discuss this and I can appreciate that. Mr. Kakfwi said he has to take the time for due diligence. This is a public government, this is not a private corporation. But I think the people on this side of the House are saying we are fed up. Our constituents are fed up. and they would like to see some action. That is why we have taken this course. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the motion. The Chair recognizes the Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have heard from people who have spoken on this side of the House who said, "We believe that an independent body is needed." We have heard from the other side that this moves things at an arms-length from this House. Mr. Speaker, what that means is that political interference is removed. As you know, this House sets policy. An independent body would have to follow the policy set in place by this House. What we are saying is that we believe we need an independent agency to be accountable for enforcing the policies that are set by this House.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard about the issues of costs. If, in fact, no funds were moved to departments, and I believe that Mr. Krutko was right that supplementary funds were approved, but if no funds were moved to departments, then that means that they had to take more money out of programs and services to put into human resources. And as I mentioned earlier, we have seen a dramatic increase in the numbers of people performing those functions. That means we are spending way more than what we were for far fewer people.

There is no way that you could not find a way to build a Public Service Commission into this process, bring some equity and fairness or ensure equity and fairness across government, and consistent application of our policies, and not find ways to economize. Mr. Handley urged us to slow down. Mr. Speaker, two days ago he was in this House and in a new pair of running

shoes, urging us to be quick on our feet, ready to take advantage of opportunities.

Now, we are talking about plodding along. There was a suggestion I believe Mr. Handley made, that we were pushing the envelope by the dates that we had proposed. It seems strange to me that just yesterday Mr. Handley was defending those same target dates for a tax. This tax was not one that has been discussed by governments for years. It was not even one that had been discussed by Members for years.

So, maybe governments have not talked about a Public Service Commission for years, but Members have. The Minister is right. We have heard from our constituents, the consultation has taken place, and it is time to move on. Let us get this process going and deal with any problems that crop up as the bill is drafted. Let us see some action start, and start now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, I request a recorded vote.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Debate has ended. Question has been called. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please signify by standing.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All of those opposed, please signify by standing. All those abstaining, please signify by standing.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Handley, Mr. Allen, Mr. Ootes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The results of the recorded vote are: in favour, 11; against, zero; abstentions, six. The motion is carried.

-- Applause

Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 18: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 2: Write-off of Debts Act, 2000-2001

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes that Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 2000-2001 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 2000-2001 has had first reading.

Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 3: Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River

South that Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001 has had first reading.

Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 4: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, 2000-2001 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, 2000-2001 has had first reading.

Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2 has had first reading.

Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Bill 6: An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act has had first reading.

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; and 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, 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; and Committee Report 3-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Review of the 2000-2003 Business Plan and 2000-2001 Main Estimates. Yesterday we left off when we were dealing with a motion. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would suggest that the committee continue consideration of Bill 1 and Committee Reports 1, 2 and 3 concurrently.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, we will take a short break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call the committee to order. Mr. Roland would you like to read your motion for the record.

Committee Motion 2-14(3): Recommendation to Provide More Detailed Categories of "Other Expenses" (Carried)

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, as we ended yesterday I did present a committee motion.

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the government develop more detailed categories for other expenses to justify the request for funds;

AND FURTHER that where possible, 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 capital asset accounting system, considered as an operation expense.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your motion is in order. We did debate the motion yesterday. General comments. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions. The motion is carried. Motions, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman I have a committee motion.

Committee Motion 3-14(3): Recommendation to Coordinate Sectors of Government Involved in Self-Government Negotiations (Carried)

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the government establish clear lines of authority and develop mandates for all sectors of government involved in self-government negotiations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Motions. Mr. Bell.

Committee Motion 4-14(3): Recommendation to Present the Program and Functional Review Final Report Before Fall of 2000 (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the final report and recommendations of the government's Program and Functional Review Senior Management Task Team be presented to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight before the next business plan review process scheduled for the fall of 2000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Motions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Committee Motion 5-14(3): Recommendation to Produce Standardized Affirmative Action Information (Carried)

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the government produce on an annual basis, more consistent and detailed affirmative action information in standardized government-wide categories;

AND FURTHER that the standardized categories include affirmative action priority, and job categories broken down to the regional and community levels to ensure appropriate levels of detail, scrutiny and accountability;

AND FURTHERMORE that affirmative action statistics for senior management be presented with senior management defined as all positions at a director or superintendent level and above.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those against? The motion is carried. Motions. General comments. Bill as a whole? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some brief opening comments. General comments about the budget. Mr. Chairman, one of the key issues that I touched on yesterday, which was addressed through a motion as well, was the issue of a need for clear measurable targets and goals so that government and departments can be held accountable and that we require of ourselves as government, the same stringent requirements that we have in terms of information and targets

that we ask of all those agencies and boards that are funded by the government.

Very clearly, as today's discussion and debate in the House has indicated the human resource issue is a very big one. The issue of a Public Service Commission is one key issue, but the other one as well over the last four or five years has been the fragmentation of the human resource service in government. This is a corporation that services thousands of employees, but it has been balkanized. There is a need for an overall human strategy, which I hope that this government will address.

As an MLA from a small community in the South Slave, I am very concerned about growth in headquarters as I was during the interim appropriation and when we were looking at supplementary appropriations for the Executive. I think that it is critical that the Executive continues to lead by example. We have to recognize all the facts that have been mentioned before with Nunavut and the loss of half the jurisdiction or 40 percent of the jurisdiction. The shrinkage in the political area, especially when we are asking the municipalities' tax bases to take a cut. I recognize the fact there has been some growth, like education, as the Minister has pointed out which are good and supported by this house. However, we have to be very vigilant and cognizant at all times of the insidious growth that always occurs quietly and under the cover of administrative requirements at headquarters.

Another issue that I think I have to draw attention to is the informatics issue that has been raised in this government and in this budget. Mr. Chairman, this particular strategy has been out there. They have been planning for years.

When I was superintendent, that goes back five or six years ago now, this was on the table and the government appears no closer to any kind of comprehensive coordinated strategy. The departments are unconnected. Information is fire-walled off. There is no ability to coordinate, consolidate, and share on areas where it is necessary. Even in the social envelope it is clear within departments that there is still work to be done, like the child welfare information system.

We have a government in the 21st century that still has to hand count the paper to get statistics. We have the PeopleSoft system, where the health boards and education boards are not included, which we have paid millions for. I think we should be looking at a thorough review of how that was implemented. We have tied our star to that particular system and, at the very least, part of this comprehensive review of the human resource strategy should look at those kinds of issues. It is tied directly to the informatics system.

I am also very concerned about the digital communication network, which we bought into, which we are committed to for the next few years. We could have the best systems in the world sitting in our offices but if the pipelines to get information around are inadequate, antiquated, outdated, cannot carry the load, do not have the band width, then we are stuck. You can have a \$10,000 computer system and you cannot tie into the rest of the world. It defeats the purpose.

For myself as well, an ongoing issue has been the pressing, insistent and growing need for meaningful cooperation between departments, in planning and business plans and strategic developments and programs that are being moved ahead. The communities made it very clear to me, where I have travelled, that it is not enough for the government to come in and tell

communities and boards and agencies and groups to work together. Then everybody goes back to Yellowknife and it appears that the departments rarely talk to each other. And the business plans reflect, once again, at least in the social program area that whatever cooperation is there is cursory at best.

I know that it takes months sometimes to get the social program Ministers in the same room to talk about an agenda given the constraints of time and other pressing agenda items. This Cabinet has chosen as well to put two other Ministers into the mix with portfolios where they do not have any resources and for me the mandate is not clear, Mr. Allen for Youth and Mr. Steen for Seniors.

It is a cause of concern. While it is nice to have a Minister specifically acknowledged and targeted and tasked with that function, I think that there has to be work done in terms of the mandate and how do you actually bring the resources to bear so that when the Minister responsible for Youth speaks, he speaks with the full backing and resources that the government has at its command for that area. The resources are significant. They are scattered across a couple of departments but when you target all the money that is there for children and youth, it is a significant amount of cash.

When you look at the money that is there for seniors, scattered across government there are significant amounts of money and that often is not recognized. While it was a positive step, I think the government has to make some serious concerted efforts to demonstrate to us and to the people that they are working together, that they talk to each other and for me, Mr. Chairman, I would look for the day where in key areas, a joint business plan is put out in the social envelope that links services to seniors or links healthy children, that demonstrates that in fact the departments are working together and not coming to the table often using different terminology for the same strategy.

This could be considered something of a stand-pat budget, Mr. Chairman, as the Minister responsible for Finance has indicated. Unfortunately one of the reasons is, is that a lot of the work that was to be done has not been done. The functional review was supposed to have been done months and months ago. This was supposed to form the basis for planning. We are still waiting for that.

The economic strategy is far past the gestation period of an elephant and we are still waiting for something, a birth, a presence, of something coming forward. I know that they have been working for months. But at the 13th Assembly it was a tortuous experience in terms of getting organized on that particular issue. And here we are planning for the financial future of the Territory without that critical component at our fingertips so that we can incorporate some of the findings and strategies and recommendations that they are making.

I will have many questions as we go through department by department. I just wanted to make those general ones and I am also going to be watching and very interested in how successful we are with the issue of momentum. Especially in southern jurisdictions, we have put a lot of our financial eggs and hopes and aspirations in the basket of new revenues from the federal government in the very near future. We recognize, with the debt wall, that the time we have shrinks daily in terms of the new revenues that are required to maintain even the level of services we now have. We know that if we are not

successful, then the decisions that we make the next time around will be, in fact, much more difficult. It would be very similar, I would suggest, to the dark days of the early years of the 13th Assembly, where we had to make very tough decisions because the revenues clearly did not meet our expenditures.

The money, for me, is an issue, but a lot of these other process issues and structural issues are equally critical as we try to become an effective and efficient government. It is not just a revenue problem, but an expenditure problem, and we spend money, as a government, in many ways that are sometimes not effective, efficient, or economical. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. General comments, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to make some comments on the general issues on the budget, and I will not try to cover all areas. I think it is worth repeating some of the concern that the committee has expressed about benchmarks. I certainly, personally, feel very strongly that it is absolutely essential for departments to very clearly set out what their goals are, when they present a budget or a business plan.

I think they have to be equally as clear about how we will rank their performance as they work to achieve those goals. The public has to get a clear picture of how we are progressing towards the goals that we set, and they have to know that they are getting value for money. The only way they can do that is if there is an easy way to assess whether or not the departments are achieving their benchmarks. I would like to see significant improvements in those areas when we review the business plans in the fall.

I have to say too, Mr. Chairman, about what I see happening to capital expenditures in this budget. In 1996-97, capital represented 15 percent of the total expenditures for the Government of the NWT. This year, the percentage is down to about half of that, down to about seven percent. Mr. Chairman, I understand that we have a difficult cash situation, and I know that the Minister responsible for Finance did not have a lot of flexibility, but my concern is that the longer we put off necessary maintenance, necessary building of infrastructure, the greater the costs grow. Where we may need only a million or two in retrofit or renovations to a school this year, if we delay those renovations or the retrofit for another two or three, or four years, the costs will grow above that one or two million to perhaps as much as five million dollars. Or perhaps the structure will get to the point where it is no longer worth doing the retrofit, and we will have to advance the construction of a whole new building. Delaying capital expenditures can turn out to be a short-term cash gain, but in the long run, it could turn out to be a significant problem for a government. I am concerned that over the past four years we have cut and cut and cut capital. We have had to in this budget, again, cut capital even further. These cost savings to the government, will cost our society in the long run.

Capital projects, in fact, are one of the significant ways that this government provides employment opportunities for Northerners and communities across the North. This drop in capital spending will translate into fewer jobs for Northerners this year. That is going to be a significant problem. It is going to be a significant problem because we have been relatively successful over the past seven or eight years through the use of the Business Incentive Policy, in seeing more companies getting

started up and established. Now that we have companies getting established, they are used to being able to bid successfully on government programs or government contracts. They are not going to be there this year. What is going to happen to those companies? I am very concerned about the cut to capital. I think that it is a short-term solution, and perhaps a shortsighted solution. I think we should look for ways to solve that very quickly.

I would also like to take the opportunity to go on record as being opposed to the proposed hotel tax, which I know is not in this budget, but was floated in the budget speech as an idea for next year. Mr. Chairman, we are in a very high cost travel area. I think we need to look for ways to reduce costs for tourists, not to drive them up. I do not believe that the net gain we will see through this tax makes it worthwhile. I think, as has been noted, it is particularly galling to me, because I believe that at least 50 percent of the tax will be, in fact, a reallocation from government departments. Those hotels will be paying the tax. I bet they see 50 percent of their business from government travel. It would be far more efficient, if we were going to take money from the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Department of Transportation. If we are going to take that indirectly through a tax on hotel rooms, as their employees travel, it would be far more efficient to take it directly from them. I would ask the Minister responsible for Finance to consider a reallocation instead of taxing.

I am also concerned that, although we have been assured that we will not hit the debt wall this year, our expenses continue to outstrip our revenues. I do not see the line getting particularly closer between the two. I will be interested in hearing from the Minister when he now thinks we will, in fact, hit that \$300 million borrowing limit, based on our current expenditure and the trends there, and the current revenue line and the trends there. I would, at this time, like to ask the Minister responsible for Finance when does he expect that if we see no new revenues, based on current trends, when would we hit the \$300 million borrowing limit? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Dent directed his question to the Minister responsible for Finance. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, if we saw no revenue increase at all, which I do not think is likely, I think we are already seeing a bit of a turnaround, and a little bit of population growth, and so on. But if we saw no increase at all, then we would hit our maximum within two years. Within two years we would be there, and quite possibly within 18 months. That is an estimate because things all change.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Handley. General comments. Bill 1. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have heard, as the Finance Minister spoke on this issue of the budget and as it is coming forward, someone made reference to a stand-pat budget, that, in fact, we are holding the tidewater back, I guess. We have heard a couple of comments that initially I think most people can applaud the fact that there are not a lot of reductions during this budget cycle, but I raise the concern, since I have become a member of the 14th Assembly,

of the impending debt wall. If things are not improved on the revenue side.

I applaud the work of the Minister and Cabinet in terms of pursuing Ottawa to transfer the royalty revenues to the North. I think that realistically, that is not in the very near future. Settlement of that -- I do not believe that we will see it this year. Although I pray for miracles, it still is a difficulty that I see out there. We know that in government, and my experience with government since being a Member of the 13th Assembly, that every year we see departments come back with forced growth, as they call it. We have got to get that money from somewhere. Even with all the reductions during the 13th Assembly, few of the reductions actually addressed the workload and the red tape, as we call it, of government.

The structure basically exists the same as it did previously. We have done one big amalgamation and that was Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. That still draws a lot of attention and questions. I think that if we are going to make a real difference, the opportunity is early in the government's life. To address some of the potential savings out there for streamlining and for creating a more effective, efficient government, especially when we are dealing with land claims and the settlement of those land claims, because they will be impacting the government, and that is an ongoing battle on its own with Ottawa. As I said earlier, I think we can look at trying to hold the tidewaters back. The reality is the tide will continue to move and we will be left sitting in high tide, stuck in the mud and nowhere to go. I think we need to start addressing some of the issues of the functions of government and procedures. We tell departments that they have to provide for and move forward with, and we impose that onto non-government organizations as well, when we ourselves do not have the ability to monitor and track a lot of what goes on. That is not a good way of doing business. We need to be a little more proactive in dealing with the issues that come to us. I have always said, as government we seem to be going from one fire to the next, and putting those out. That continues to be, as I see it, the way things are going to be done for the first part of this government. I think we need to put more ingenuity into what we can do.

I know I was looking at the procurement and functional review of the government, and was disappointed to know that it has not gone as far as I thought it would have during this timeline that was set out. Things will become more difficult to change afterwards. It is good to be optimistic, but as a government we have to face the reality when it comes to what we can truly provide to the residents of the Northwest Territories. Priority setting is a big exercise for government and nobody likes to hold the bad news, but I feel that if things do not come around; if new money does not become available, we will end up having to do that later, anyway. The pressures will be on us. On the capital side it is a concern. My community has been impacted already. I am concerned that if things do not turn around that could be used against our community one more time. It is not something I look forward to. I will do my best to represent my community in the government today, and as I have done in the past.

The one bright thing, truly bright thing, we have in the future, is the non-renewable resource sector. A recent trip to Calgary for the World Petroleum Congress showed me the great interest in the Northwest Territories now, and the resources we have that are yet to be developed. It is very promising to see the aboriginal groups that are now steering the ship, so to speak.

They took the proactive steps to band together to get a motion to proceed with some form of development. I think that is very positive, and something we need to be proactive in, and assist in any way possible as a government with what resources we have. I have seen the government's plans as they presented the non-renewable resource strategy and the intention to reinvest dollars, but if we do not get the federal government on side here, it is a plan. The plan will not be able to be implemented within our existing resources. We have the Department of Health and Social Services that is crying out for dollars. Education needs more. We have the UNW in negotiations now, and has that been built into this. There is so much growing pressure here.

In my community of Inuvik, because of reductions to the government, tax payers have had to pay more. That is my fear, again, as we have been informed. The reduction to tax-based municipalities, does that mean, myself, at the end of day, will be paying more in my community? We can blame tax-based municipalities but the bulk of their funding comes from this government. As my colleague mentioned, it may only happen in Boot Lake, but I think that our community council is very fair and will do things across the board.

The cost of living in the Northwest Territories continues to skyrocket. That is something that is out of our control, but it impacts how we can do things. We have heard of the hotel tax. That will be added on to people coming in from out of the jurisdiction, but it will also impact on the Government of the Northwest Territories. It will impact on education boards, health boards as they travel to their meetings, and the training that we put our employees through. More of a concern is, how do we lower costs, or as a government try to impact decisions made by big corporations? That is next to impossible. Esso in Inuvik is a monopoly, supplying gas. It is a bulk agent there that supplies to a couple of the gas stations. We are paying 98 cents now for a litre of unleaded gas, and there is no choice of gold, silver or bronze. It is unleaded gas, one quality fits all tanks. No choice there, you go to the pumps and you pay for it.

That will impact food prices. Heating oil went up over 50 cents a litre this past winter and with this reduction to municipalities the possibility is that we will see other things. I know that the community I live in is looking at taking over the utilidor system. People are wondering if that will be impacted as we hear Municipal and Community Affairs is doing the changes. That impacts water, sewer subsidies, so will that impact us even further?

It would be nice if we could all live in locations that are as low cost as some of our southern communities. But the cold, hard facts are if we are going to live in the communities we are as a government going to have to find some way of dealing with the diversities and the costs of living in the Northwest Territories through the harsh climate we do.

I do not envy the task of the Finance Minister trying to put this together. I know that it has been a short time as we have heard so many times. It has been recently since Cabinet got together and tried to put this together. But the fact is if we are going to make significant changes in government and how it looks and how it functions those changes have to come early. Otherwise we only build up the debt and build up the growing concern with how we are going to provide services in the Northwest Territories at existing levels.

The Finance Minister stated that we are holding our own. We can point out examples and as we go through the budgets, I will definitely point out my concerns for my community level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. General comments, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too have some real concerns especially in the way that the business reviews have taken place. I see areas that I feel that we have not really done justice, especially to the communities and the municipalities where they received a cut, yet what we see happening is the bureaucracy continuing to grow in some cases up to 28 percent in different departments. I, for one, feel that in order to be able to relieve the pressures from all sectors we have to be fair across the board.

Another area I have a real problem with is the number of vacancies and dollars that have been lapsed in different areas and in different departments. I feel that it is critical that as a service provider that we have the human resources in place to provide the services that they are for. By having these vacant positions within the different departments we are not adequately servicing the people we represent by not having the resource people in those different jobs that they were prescribed for.

In different areas in my riding I noted that in regard to the development in the area of transportation, in the Inuvik region alone there are something like nine vacant positions. Yet those are major senior positions, especially when it comes to engineering. We should make sure that we have the people there so that we can identify the work that has to be done and how it is going to be done. Without having these professionals in place and within the government bureaucracy, we are not doing justice to those different portfolios.

The same thing applies to the infrastructure and cap in our communities. I feel that sooner or later we are going to have to bite the bullet realizing that there is a major cost associated with not maintaining the facilities that we do have in our communities, and also upgrading those facilities so that they can take on the capacity in a lot of our communities. A lot of these facilities and infrastructures that are in our communities were built almost 20 years ago. The populations of these communities from the time that they were put in place have almost tripled in size since the original infrastructure was put there. Because of these impacts on those facilities, we are starting to see the effects on the population and also being able to realize that there is a cost associated with having to maintain these facilities without improving them over a period of time.

The other area I have a lot of concerns about that we mentioned here today is the question of human resource funding being lapsed. We have to ensure that we have the ability to train the people that are within the public sector and give them the tools they need. Realizing that there is a change in regard to how government thinks today from where we were five or ten years ago.

I am talking about the technology that we have in place now. We have to realize that there are certain aspects in regard to telecommunication, computers and also management regimes of how do we manage our public service. How do we administer programs and services to derive the best return on

the dollars that we can spend to ensure that we meet the goals and objectives that we set as a government.

The other area that I am very concerned about is the cost of negotiations with the UNW. We have just finished negotiations with the teachers. That set the precedent for the negotiations with the UNW. We have given them, in some cases, almost eight percent increases and that will be on the bargaining table with the UNW. So what will that cost be to this government? In regard to our deficit situation where we have a very slim window to allow for any more unforeseen expenditures and that is one that I feel that we have to ensure that we have the resources in place to confront whatever the cost or outcome of those negotiations are going to be.

The other area I have a real problem with, is ensuring that as government we are improving the social and economic conditions of the people we represent. We have a lot of people in our smaller communities that are dependent on income support because there is no economic base in a lot of our communities. We have the potential to take advantage of what we see is happening in the oil and gas industry, the mining sector, and tourism. But in order to do that we have to ensure we have the trained human resources and the businesses in place to take that on.

I would like to touch on the area of the businesses which have policies and initiatives in place that this government has put there. The purpose was that instead of importing all our goods and services, we start producing our goods and services so that we can export these goods and services to other places in Canada and Alaska and other places. Yet what we see happening is that we continue to spend money importing goods and services and not really concentrating on the development of our infrastructure and the industry that will be able to take advantage and generate jobs and opportunities for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

We, as government, cannot do that, but the private sector and the business community can do that for us. I, for one, feel because of what is happening in the oil and gas industry in regard to the mining industry and tourism we have to support industry and the business community to assist them to generate their businesses, locate them in the North and expand those businesses to develop tools that we are going to need to improve the quality of life for the people in the Northwest Territories. We cannot do that on our own.

The other area that I have very grave concern about is improving our infrastructure in the Northwest Territories. Without the infrastructure in place to be able to sustain this development in regard to the oil and gas and mining industries and also tourism, we will not be able to achieve the goals that we want to set. One of the areas I do have concerns about is the announcement from the federal government in regard to national highways funding that we may have access to. The concern I have is that we can access those dollars but the precedent has been set in the past that you can match those federal dollars, dollar for dollar, only on new projects. A large portion of the monies that we spend to-date on improving our infrastructure is spent on Highway 3 somewhere in the range of \$8 million.

Yet the portion of dollars that is left is very minimal compared to the majority of the money that is being spent on the one highway. But in order for us to match the dollars from the

federal government, dollar for dollar, we cannot put new dollars into Highway No. 3 because we have already capped at \$8 million.

So I, for one, feel that this government has to seriously look at the implications of us not being able to arrive or be able to find ourselves penalised from accessing federal dollars because we have put too much money into one system. We have to spread the dollars around for our infrastructure fairly across the board to all highways. We have some 2,200 kilometres of highway in the Northwest Territories. Yet a large portion of the money for maintenance is on a small stretch of 100 kilometres of road. I feel that we may lose out on the highway dollars that we could access from the federal government.

So those are some of the areas that I have concerns about. I would like to ask the Minister, could he comment on the question I raised earlier about what is the cost for the negotiations with UNW and what implications that will have on the government's ability with the deficit situation that we find ourselves in. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Handley would you care to respond to that.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the collective agreement between our workers and the UNW is currently under negotiations, so I cannot really say too much about it, because I do not want to in any way influence the negotiations. But what I can say though is just to repeat what I have said before is that our dollars are very limited. We do have a deficit. We are running a deficit budget this year so we want to be fair to employees but at the same time we do not have money to give away.

The teachers' collective agreement was somewhere in the neighbourhood of six percent over three years and I suspect that the Member is right. It has set a precedent of what we can expect from the UNW but other than that, because it is under negotiations I really do not want to say too much about it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments on Bill 1. Department by department, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will follow the order that we have listed. We will proceed with the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development under page 11-7 of the main estimates. With that, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for this portfolio if he has any opening comments on the department's estimates. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to make the opening comments for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Chairman, I would like to discuss the main estimates for the Department of Resources, Wildlife, and Economic Development. The mandate of the department is to promote economic self-sufficiency and growth through the sustainable development of natural resources and to enhance the creation of new, sustainable opportunities in the traditional and wage economies

The four key priorities of Towards a Better Tomorrow are: one, self-reliant individuals, families and communities, working with governments, toward improving social well-being. Two, better

governance through partnerships. Three, a northern controlled economy that is balanced, diversified, stable and vibrant. And four, adequate resources helping all levels of government to become more self-reliant in meeting the needs of the people they serve. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development contributes to the achievement of each of these.

The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development plays a critical role in assisting in the creation of a diversified economy. The key is providing an effective balance between the development of our resources, enhancing employment opportunities for residents and minimizing social and environmental impacts.

The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has the lead role within government to ensure that our northern environment is protected and managed responsibly. Environmental protection services is responsible for the protection of the northern environment through initiatives and programs regarding air quality, hazardous waste discharges, solid waste management, and environmental assessment.

Priorities for this fiscal year are: exploring a revenue neutral beverage container recovery program, completing a greenhouse strategy to be released to the public for consultation and improving the northern environmental regulatory system. The goal is to create a modern regulatory system that has consistent practices and standards. For example, a new air quality code of practice for the oil and gas industry is being drafted for release this year. Hazardous waste management guidelines for biomedical waste, institutional waste, and lead paint are also being developed.

A key part of the department's mandate is forest management. Forest management is responsible for the administration and management of the NWT's forest resources, including issuing harvest authorities, completing resource inventories and forest health assessments, reforestation and fire management. Fire management emphasizes the protection of people, property and forest areas from wildfire through prevention and suppression activities. A major fire management initiative this year is a framework agreement between RWED and MACA. The objective of the agreement is to improve the protection of communities from the threat of forest fires in the urban/wildland interface.

The issuing of timber harvest authorities, forest inventories, and silviculture activities will result in the development of capacity at the community level and the direct involvement of aboriginal people in the management of forest resources on traditional lands.

Parks and tourism is responsible for the implementation of the Protected Areas Strategy and the development and operation of parks and visitor centres. One of the priorities this year is to complete outstanding commitments under the strategy including reviewing the Parks Act to include a category for protected areas. A second priority is the development of a tourism strategy for the NWT that includes marketing the NWT as a prime tourist destination and developing quality regional attractions.

Wildlife and fisheries will concentrate on programs that support individual harvesters and harvesters' organizations throughout the NWT in an effort to ensure that opportunities remain

available in the traditional economy. Wildlife and fisheries will also collect baseline wildlife information, particularly in the Mackenzie Valley. Data collection programs are required to predict, monitor, and mitigate impacts to wildlife from resource development. This information is critical in facilitating the environmental assessment and review process for development proposals.

Managing development and maximizing benefits are important for the future of the NWT. We have an unprecedented opportunity to move towards greater economic self-sufficiency through the development of our non-renewable resource sector. Minerals, oil and gas provides expert advice on mineral and petroleum resource development in the NWT. The division participates in developing strategies to increase economic benefits from resource development to NWT residents and businesses. This includes pursuing northern control over northern resources through a northern accord.

With one diamond mine in production and two at the feasibility and development stage, the NWT is at the forefront of the international diamond community. Diamond projects has four main priorities this fiscal year. They include: the development of a marketing plan for northern diamonds and diamond products; negotiating an agreement with Diavik on the supply of rough diamonds to northern manufacturers; implementing a monitoring program for NWT diamond manufacturers; and a certification program for diamonds mined and cut in the NWT in order to promote their sale in export markets.

Trade and investment provides expert advice and financial support to the NWT business community and promotes the NWT as an investment location in the international marketplace. It also provides support to the Business Credit Corporation and the NWT Development Corporation. Trade and investment will continue to develop partnerships with business and professional associations to create the environment conducive to increased trade and investment

The Business Credit Corporation provides direct support to northern businesses through the provision of loans, loan guarantees, and contract security to eligible businesses. Emphasis for the BCC in the coming year will be to increase local decision-making capacity, encourage self-reliance, and improve access to capital for business enterprises.

The NWT Development Corporation provides financing through equity investments in NWT businesses. The Corporation is mandated to provide investment and ongoing support for ventures in small communities where the prospects for profitability may be weak, but benefits from employment creation are high. Continued efforts will be directed towards providing assistance in strengthening management and production capacity at the community level, and developing markets and the products to satisfy the needs of those markets.

Community economic development services provides funding and overall co-ordination for regionally based Community Futures development organizations that facilitate access to capital for entrepreneurs. The priority this year will be to continue the expansion of the network of Community Futures organizations by establishing a new organization in Fort Smith.

Mr. Chairman, as you can see the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is working within the vision of Towards a Better Tomorrow. The key to success is

partnerships, sustainable development, economic diversification and fiscal self-reliance. These move us closer to being the first "have" Territory in Canada's history. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee responsible for overseeing this department have any comments? The chairman of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General

The mandate of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is to promote economic self-sufficiency through the sustainable development of natural resources and to enhance the creation of sustainable opportunities in the traditional and wage economies.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development reviewed the 2000-2003 business plans and main estimates for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development on Thursday, May 25 and Friday, May 26, 2000.

The committee observed an overall increase of \$3.765 million (five percent) in the draft 2000-2001 main estimates from the 1999-2000 main estimates. The department reduced its number of staff positions by one. There are presently 458 positions in the department.

The committee is concerned the department is not able to effectively fulfill a mandate that includes not only economic development, but also that of environmental protection. This conflict may lead to a decreased ability to take full advantage of the current oil and gas resurgence, but to also properly manage the environmental challenges that come with increased resource development. In a motion made on March 31, 2000 in the Legislative Assembly that requested a comprehensive audit of the department, this potential conflict was also stated. The motion, however, was defeated.

Tourism

The committee emphasized that tourism has the potential to be an important contributor to the economy of the Northwest Territories. However, proposed funding levels for this sector is expected to decrease slightly from \$1.056 million to \$1.044 million. Although the proposed decrease of \$12,000 is minimal, in real terms it represents continuing erosion in funding for tourism.

Committee members are concerned that tourism continues to receive inadequate levels of funding and if this sector of the economy is expected to grow, more funding and support is required.

The committee also noted the lack of a NWT presence at the Expo in Hanover, Germany. Europe represents a large market for tourism and northern products and committee members were of the opinion that the government might be prudent to have a presence there.

The department explained that it could not afford a booth at Expo. However, the committee suggested that advanced planning for upcoming Expos might result in greater savings.

Environment

The department continues to deliver programs and services with conflicting values and functions. The committee was concerned about the department's ability to equitably balance its core functions, environmental protection and economic development. Although the department explained that it relies upon its Sustainable Development Policy to balance these core functions, committee members remain unconvinced.

The committee pointed out that communities and the department have on several occasions experienced a lack of coordination in their firefighting efforts. Better coordination will result in a reduction of damage and a more efficient, economical and effective allocation of limited resources. The department agreed with the committee and explained that a list of priorities (protection of human life, community infrastructure and property, natural resources including species at risk and cultural sites, in that order) has been adopted by the department in its fire suppression efforts. The committee urges full consultation and coordination between the department and the communities to improve fire suppression.

The department reported that revised emission standards are being developed. The committee noted that in some jurisdictions, certain emission standards are industry-specific and as a result may place unfair and expensive restrictions on a particular sector. Committee members received assurances from the department that the air quality standards, existing and proposed, are and will be applicable to all northern industries.

Economic Development

A focused and effective economic strategy is essential to economic growth in the Northwest Territories. The development of an economic strategy was attempted in the final year of the last government, but without success. There is a need for a coherent economic strategy for this government. A new strategy is in draft form and the department has agreed to supply the committee with a copy for its review prior to tabling. The committee looks forward to reviewing the strategy document.

The petroleum industry is developing a greater presence in the North. Committee members observed that this development represents an opportunity for increased employment and community development. Training for entry into the oil and gas sector will reduce out migration from smaller communities and the Northwest Territories overall.

The committee added that jobs should be located in the communities and regions where the development is taking place. More money and training must be made available for Northerners, especially in the smaller communities, to allow them to take full advantage of petroleum and other resource developments.

Furthermore, the committee encouraged the department to work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and industry to develop training programs for Northerners. The committee reminded the government that funding for oil and gas development and training could be found "from within", as the government has done with the diamond industry.

The committee also encourages the government to expend more effort on the traditional economy versus the new wage

economy. The traditional economy based on hunting and harvesting, and arts and crafts are sometimes the only viable means of support in many communities. Many communities and regions do not have oil and gas or other large-scale projects in their regions to supply employment opportunities. In addition, many people do not wish to abandon their traditional lifestyle.

Committee members note the lack of an Agricultural policy that will guide the government and industry to effectively and economically harvest and manage our large tracts of arable lands. However, the government replied that until land claims and self-government issues are settled, the development of an effective Agricultural policy could not take place.

The committee supports consultation with stakeholders, especially communities in any policy development or licensing approval including forestry and other resource developments.

Human Resources

In its review of the department's business plans, the committee took note of the 64 vacant positions in the department and the minimal presence of women and aboriginal persons in management.

The department replied that many of the vacant positions are seasonal and they are working on efforts to increase the number of women and aboriginal persons in management.

Northwest Territories Development Corporation

The committee was concerned that the Northwest Territories Development Corporation did not have a corporate plan. A corporate plan would result in a more responsive, effective and auditable allocation of resources. The department agreed to supply a corporate plan of the Development Corporation once it is completed.

Committee members further pointed out that given the lacklustre investment history of the Development Corporation, the government might not be receiving value for money on its investment. The committee urges the Minister to review the Corporation's subsidiaries and looks forward to receiving and discussing the report with the Minister. That concludes the committee report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Before we proceed, I would like to recognize someone in the gallery who is familiar to most people in the North, Mr. Paul Andrew of CBC Northbeat. Welcome, Paul.

-- Applause

At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in any witnesses.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he could introduce his witnesses for the record.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my left is Bob McLeod, deputy minister for the department. I would also like to point out that Mr. McLeod is a P1 affirmative action person and we are proud to have him here. Just for the record. On my right is Jim Kennedy, director of corporate services for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Not a P1.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are there any general comments regarding the department's estimates? General comments? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a number of comments, which I will tailor to the report as well as to the Minister's opening comments. First, I would just like to quickly point out that this department has been the source of a significant amount of interest since the start of the 14th Assembly. There has been, in the last four years, a significant number of changes in the department. There are concerns about the mandate and the ability to carry out the very divergent parts of the mandate.

Mr. Chairman, this brings me to the issue of the beneficial outcome I see as being there if in fact we took the time, after four years since the department has been amalgamated from at least two others, to see how things are working. I still think there is a benefit to doing that.

This issue as well has been discussed with the federal auditors, in terms of how do you do a value for money audit and this kind of review. I still think that is something we should consider.

I am glad to hear about the revenue-neutral beverage container recovery program, which I think was committed to last year. It is a big issue. The amount of cans and bottles that are consumed in this Territory is significant.

The greenhouse strategy, Mr. Chairman, is a good initiative, but as the Energy Alliance, in their briefing to us pointed out, it is only one piece of a very critical, broader strategy. When we look at the numbers they used, \$270 million that is spent on energy provision, it is far greater than the numbers that were provided by the government, which was about \$30 million, which was just their direct cost.

I have a real concern that Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development should be leading the way in providing direction to start this kind of strategy. It took two years to develop in the Yukon. The greenhouse strategy on its own is good, but it is only one piece. I am going to be pursuing this issue in the House and in committee as well, simply because of the magnitude and importance of the issue and the amount of money involved.

The tourism area is undernourished. There is no doubt of that. It would be beneficial to see if money could be moved there. On a more structural level, the concern I have had since the 13th Assembly is the decision that was made in the 12th Assembly to get rid of all the regional tourist associations, leaving only two central operations in the east and west. I think we have paid a price for that. If we talk about supporting the regions and communities, we seriously have to look at re-instituting some sort of mechanism that will allow communities

and regions to come together in areas of common interest and plan out their strategies.

It cannot be done effectively, and I think this has been demonstrated, out of Yellowknife. Some things possibly can, but not that. I will be encouraging the government to look at that support.

One of the key concerns in the area of economic development is the many processes the department has in place for allocating money through grants and contributions. The concern of coordination, effectiveness, potential double, triple, quadruple dipping of different funds all from the same department...the lack of coordination and the fact that there are so many pots. I am speaking specifically about the DevCorp, the BCC, Community Futures...while I appreciate there is one in Fort Smith, there is finally going to be one set up in Fort Smith, there is a broad area that has to be looked at.

Of course, the department itself and the money it has for economic development, it is scattered. If there was no overall review of the department on the economic development side, I think there was a benefit to come up with a review and a possible broad strategy of how we are going to look at being more effective and efficient in the disbursement of the millions of dollars that are given away in grants and contributions to make sure it is accountable and effective, and it is above board. There is no chance of any kind of political interference or involvement. I think that is a key area.

The human resources area we have touched on fairly thoroughly in the House, Mr. Chairman. I am not going to review those particular areas of affirmative action and the need for a human resource plan.

If I could move to some comments on the Minister's opening remarks, I as well, support the issue of getting an adequate forest inventory. I recall raising this issue a number of times in the House in the 13th Assembly. It is very hard to plan without information, in terms of timber permits and development of the forest sector, if we do not know exactly what the magnitude is and the type of resource that is there. I think it is critical that we pursue that, because there is going to be a growing demand as world consumption and paper products continue to expand. There is going to be northward pressure on that very valuable resource, which takes a long time to regenerate. Very easily, in the South Slave, you can cut down jackpine for firewood that are 100 to 150 plus years old. It is not a product you can afford to waste.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to briefly touch on the area of the diamond production, specifically the secondary diamond industry. I think every community outside of Yellowknife would like to see efforts made for secondary development in communities other than Yellowknife. Yellowknife has received exclusive benefits so far, but there are other communities who have the workforce and training capabilities, educational facilities, costs of living, costs of operations that definitely put them in the ballpark for consideration.

Mr. Chairman, I would hope if the Minister chooses to respond to my general comments, that he would address some of the broad areas, like the economic ones. I would like to point out as well that I recognize the department does a lot of good work. In Fort Smith, it is a very important part of the community on the forestry side, on the economic side...I think, like the Minister and his staff, I am interested in how we improve the

system. There are many people who work very hard to deliver the services they do, the fire centre, the forest management centre. I would like to acknowledge their contributions, not only in Fort Smith, but across the Territory. It is a service we rely on very heavily.

I look forward to the more detailed discussion and the comments of my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Would the Minister like to respond to some of the questions? Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's words, particularly the words of support for the department. It is a big department. It is diverse. It has a mandate that is tremendously important to a lot of people from a lot of perspectives. It is very much on people's minds.

Maybe just to mention an overall review. While I believe everything should be reviewed to make sure it is functioning and that it is effective, and is efficient as possible. I am not against that. The one thing that I will say about the department, though, is that it is a very busy department. There are not any days for any division where people can say that they have caught up with their work. They are going full tilt because of what is happening, whether you talk about the energy strategy, the tourism strategy, the need to coordinate and integrate some of the service we provide, better delivery out there, the demands and the need to be on schedule on oil and gas issues, and so on. It is a department that is driven very rapidly. Rather than, at this point, undertaking some kind of major review that would use up a lot of people's time, not just in the department but outside the department, we are better off to meet some of the more important targets we have to meet on a timely basis. Second, do the things that are most obviously not working as well as we would like them to work.

On the energy side, we are doing the greenhouse gas strategy. We are looking at some of the alternatives to fossil fuels and ways to possibly set up programs that are not going to bankrupt us but will enable us to do some innovative things in the use of solar heat, for example. We are working on some of those. I realize there is a need for a comprehensive energy strategy, but just in terms of time and demands, it is one thing I do not think we can take on right now. But we are working on pieces of it and as we get time I think these will come together into a good comprehensive strategy.

For tourism, we really have to look at the big picture. That, to me, is the big opportunity for a lot of small communities. They are not all going to have a pipeline, or a diamond mine, or a diamond-polishing facility. They all have a lot of tourism potential. We really have to look at the big picture here, not be stopped because you want to save five cents here or there. We have got to look at the big picture and make some critical investments right now, not just the government, but in partnership with the private sector. All of us, government and private sector, have to work together on this one. It is too important for all the communities, including the bigger ones like Yellowknife.

In terms of the other comments you made in regard to the overlap and possible confusion with the Northwest Territories Development Corporation, BCC, Community Futures, business development funds, all of those things, even our grants and contributions programs, we have set that as a priority for this

year on how to integrate those and make them more efficient and more effective. We are undertaking that one. We need to do that one and we will do it. In terms of the broad economic picture, we have to keep that in mind, whether it is in forestry, or oil and gas, or in tourism, keep mind the need to have a diversified economy, the need to make sure that we are using northern products, that we are manufacturing, adding the value in the North. I guess all I can say is that I appreciate the Member's comments and certainly support them. I think we are heading in the direction he indicates. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Handley. General comments. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a few comments. In reading the report in committee, I was awaiting information from the department and I am happy to say we have that information. I hope the Minister is prepared with me to take this page-by-page as we go through the department. You have a lot of filler information in here. Thank you for providing it, but as you are aware, we just received this as we returned back to prepare for this. Many of my colleagues have not had the opportunity to go through this. As I sit here I am trying to go through it but it is taking some time.

That goes to the process of the information, why we as Members have requested a layout that all departments will use. Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development did have a fairly good presentation during the committee review, and there were many questions. As a result of some of the questions, some of that information was not available. The Minister did provide a lot of information that we are going to need to go through, as time permits. I will not go page by page, and will throw this on here, but I will ask some clarification on some of this because you have a lot of information in one section alone, that will apply further into the details.

I will have some questions in the area of some of the previous work that has been done in reference to this department when it comes to the amount of different lending agencies it uses when it comes to business development and business support. What role they are playing, and possibly what this budget will do, or what this department will do to try to deal with some of the issues that were raised. There is previous work in the report that was done that I will use as we go through the detail here. We have heard through a lot of discussion, it was raised in committee, the concerns that remain out there about the roles that this department plays.

Almost from day one, when it was said to do the amalgamation, there were concerns of the roles one department would play in trying to develop the North, and another role of trying to protect the North. It is not an easy task to do within each department, and it is not something that you would envy doing, especially, when number one, you are being moved around and some jobs were reduced and a lot of funding was pulled out of the departments that were used, or previously did the functions, now carried out from the one department. It would be nice to have a summary at some point, I do not expect it at this point, but of how far the department feels it has come since being first amalgamated. That might try to address the concerns raised by the private sector, by government itself, and by the committee and Members.

A lot has been done. A lot of water has gone under the bridge, so to speak, but there remains much water yet to be tread, so

to speak, and to move forward on. I will save the details until we go through here. There is concern with the information that has been there. Again, I thank the Minister for providing it, but we did receive it rather late, I must say. Understandably, we are all operating under the gun here and trying to deal with this budget cycle and having the late election and all, and having us sit here this month and possibly into the next month. But we must do the best we can and hopefully the Minister will have information and responses to the questions we will raise as a result of the information being provided, and putting it on record.

We have had many questions in committee that only the committee members and the Minister and his department were able to deal with. Hopefully, at this forum, he will be able to put on record some of the issues that were raised and some of the plans of the department in trying to deal with some of the concerns out there in the potential development, as well, facing us in the Northwest Territories. And, as well, how the department will work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the private sector. As I stated earlier, the trip to Calgary was very beneficial because we heard from a lot of the companies that are willing to do work in the Northwest Territories, and some which have signed deals now, that are willing to do their part when it comes to the training section of our residents. It just seems that one of the pieces of the puzzle, a fairly significant one, is our government. Hopefully the Minister will be able to put some emphasis on that and have some measurable outcomes as to how we can see this being done and achieved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, just a couple of brief comments on a couple of the issues. First of all, on the economic development strategy document you just received, if you had a chance to flip through the pages you are ahead of me because I received it this afternoon and I committed to giving it to you as soon as I did. I have not read it either, I just signed the covering letter and passed it on to you. The development of that strategy is an example of how the department works effectively by using, in that case, a panel of people who represented the Territories and also the private sector quite broadly, as well as government. I look forward to reading it and discussing it with you.

On the issue of development versus protection, that one I used to feel you had to separate the responsibilities of development from protection. But the more I think about it, and the more I have worked in Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development over the years, the more I have become convinced that balancing development and environmental protection is a reality that every community has to face, whether it is a pipeline or a mine. They have got to face that. The mayor and council, or whoever it is, chief and council, have to deal with that balance. In many ways, there are advantages to having one department that helps them achieve that balance, rather than two separate departments tugging and pulling them in different directions. We certainly had examples of that in the past when you used to have Renewable Resources and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, and both of us are of the opposite view. There are some advantages in, I think, the structure of the department even though it makes it more complex.

We did appreciate the Member's and all of the members of the standing committee's support in the Calgary trip, and we look forward to your help as we set priorities. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make my comments short so Mr. Handley can call detail again. I will address the opening remarks by Mr. Handley in the areas of priorities set by this government. I believe our budget reflects some of it but our budget really reflects the fiscal reality that we live in today. It would have been nice to see a real, good budget, but not having the money does not allow us to do that. In terms of building partnerships and development capacity, the support for these building capacities and partnerships are important, I believe. I believe it is incumbent upon all of us individual MLAs to work with our communities in getting prepared for the future. The document, The Strategy For Non-Renewable Resource Development, I went through it very carefully, and I think it is a very good document. I shared that document with people in the resource development sector. The responses that I got were very positive. I know the intention of that document, if it goes through, and we start seeing the financial gains from the development of our non-renewable resource sector, is to use those funds to help pay for the diversified Northwest Territories economy as we speak. That may be a few years away, but I do not think we can sit back and wait for that to happen.

We need to work with the regions, the communities, the leaderships, at all levels of government throughout the Northwest Territories and help to prepare our communities so that once we are able to develop a pipeline and get more into the mining sector, that when we start seeing money that they are prepared to take advantage of those revenues, as groups of peoples who are independent and arms-length from government. I do not see the funds available in the budget for that kind of support. I am hoping that the Minister and the deputy minister will be able to find some funds in order to assist communities and regions in preparing and building capacity within the regions. I am personally going to work with my communities doing just that; looking at, for example, tourism associations for my region. I may include some other communities outside of my region, but we are going to need help. We are going to need resources to set up the people, the offices, and what we are going to do, et cetera. Not only that, there will be areas to work with resources companies in partnership with community and government, to set up offices where people could go and apply for employment or business opportunities, et cetera. But we need financial resources to get those going.

The communities and local aboriginal governments just do not have the cash. Resource companies have the cash but they like to see in-kind services, basically, from other partners. I will do my part in achieving the goals that we set for ourselves for a better tomorrow. I think those are good achievable goals that the people of the Northwest Territories will support. However, having said that, we need to build towards it, not wait until we get there before we start building. We need to build starting today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I will make some very brief comments. I appreciate the Member's recommendations. We have taken on a pretty ambitious agenda as a government, particularly not having a lot of resources. I take your advice that we have to work together with other departments, particularly Education, Culture and Employment on the basket building. We have to be creative on how we spend our limited resources. We also have to keep being creative and persistent in our efforts to have the federal government pick up its shares of the investments that are necessary. We have not given up on that one. Hopefully, we can be successful. If not, we just have to temper back our agenda a bit.

Capacity building at the communities and at the regional level is important, otherwise we will see fly-in, fly-out operations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Handley. I have Ms. Lee next on my list. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to be contrary to anyone who might think I will be asking questions on the hotel tax, I am not going to ask questions or say anything about that. It is certainly not a dead horse, Mr. Chairman, I am going to keep that alive. I want to put it on record that I do not question the complexity of the mandate this department has.

All I want to see is for this department and its 421 employees do the best job it can to spend the \$75 million they are asking for. I want the department to be the best it can be and do the things it is mandated to do, even if, Mr. Chairman, they have to do it without the help of women in management.

I might say, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister corrected me on their figures of women in management. It is not 0.8 percent of the total management, but it is really three out of 19 senior managers, which works out to about 15 percent. We are improving a little, but I noticed that in their latest figures, they did not have a category on women. It just does not seem they are very proud of it.

I want to make one statement. I would like to ask for an update, based on the Minister's opening comment. It says in here, Mr. Chairman, on the section on the diamond industry, the Minister talks about the department's priorities for this industry, in particular the secondary industry and so on. Diavik is experiencing quite a bit of trouble at the moment with respect to their water license. It may be that no one is feeling safe and sound that this project is going to go smoothly. I would like to hear from the Minister what the department is doing to facilitate this process. At the same time, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could update us on the latest news on the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister, would you like to respond?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I think there were two questions Ms. Lee had asked. First of all, with regard to the water license, the water license is a license that is issued by the federal government through the water board. We do not have a direct role in it because water is not within our mandate. However, with Diavik, we are concerned about some of the very stringent performance requirements that are placed on them by their draft water license. Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development did a review of the requirements and has

provided a letter to Diavik outlining some of our perceptions on what is possible, what is reasonable and so on. As I say, it is not our responsibility, so it is very difficult for us to intervene in that process.

I have met with the Minister responsible for DIAND and his special envoy when he was in town. It was one of the things that he was looking at, the issue around the water license. I certainly did everything I could to have the Minister not delay in signing off the water license, assuming they could come to an agreement that is reasonable with Diavik.

The second question was about the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy. We are continuing to keep that at the top of the agenda. I think, with the help of the standing committee, we did a good job in Calgary. We had an excellent response from industry. We have been in contact. Both the Premier and I have talked this week with the Minister responsible for DIAND and the Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Paul Martin. Mr. Steen is meeting today with the Minister responsible for Transportation. Mr. Ootes is looking at meeting shortly with the Minister responsible for Human Resources Canada. We are continuing to keep this at the top of the agenda.

It takes time. It is frustrating at times. We are continuing to make sure it is there. We are focusing on the three areas of training and employment dollars, infrastructure, and business support. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As my colleagues have observed, there are many areas of the department that we are asked to look at. I would like to focus on one area, the diamond industry. We have been subject to an interesting and unfortunate surge here in the Northwest Territories in the last five of six years, faced with two very distinct surges, booms if you will, in the mining sector and the upcoming oil and gas sector.

I do not want to suggest that one is better than the other, but I would like to look at the sustainability and the job quota that we can see over the long term from the diamond industry. With the announcement this week from the Jericho Developments which, although it is on the Nunavut side, I think will be relying very heavily on the Northwest Territories infrastructure to supply and build that mine, we are now looking at four very feasible projects.

I anticipate a life of 50 plus years for diamond mining in the Northwest Territories. The Minister suggested that this year, the diamond division of the department has four mandates. I wanted to support all of those. I think they are going in the right direction. I think they are going to have payoffs in the long run. However, I did want to ask the Minister a specific question. In his remarks, he referred to implementing a monitoring program for Northwest Territories diamond manufacturers. Could the Minister give us a bit more detail as to what he means by a monitoring program, and how is this going to create a value-added industry for the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief with my answer. The most important element of the monitoring

program is to ensure that the diamonds that are being marketed as Northwest Territories or northern diamonds are really our diamonds. There is always a risk of diamonds being brought in from somewhere else and being mixed in. The real value of our diamonds is they are good quality diamonds, but second, people like them because they come from a country that has good human rights legislation, does not use child labour, they are not conflict or blood diamonds and so on. We need to make sure the industry maintains its reputation. It is all tied together with having a certification program to ensure we have a clear market for Canadian northern diamonds that will maintain its current high price, which is much higher than the average diamond. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to put one more topic forward. Anticipating these four projects are attracting and have the potential to attract hundreds of workers and provide sustainable jobs to the Northwest Territories, what kind of approach is the department considering, if any, to work with communities, other sectors of the Northwest Territories, to work with the employers to help attract and keep these people in the Northwest Territories as residents. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Braden. I would like to recognize the clock. I would like to ask the Minister if he can provide the answer to Mr. Braden's question tomorrow when we resume this session in committee of the whole. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. We will rise and 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: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2000-2001, and Committee Report 1-14(3), Committee Report 2-14(3), and Committee Report 3-14(3), and would like to report progress with four motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake. All those in favour? All those opposed? 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, meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. Orders of the day for Friday, June 23, 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
 - Motion 4-14(3), Setting of Sitting Hours by Speaker
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second 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
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 2000-2003 Business Plans and 2000-2001 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 2-14(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Review of 2000-2003 Business Plans and 2000-2001 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 3-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Review of 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 Friday, June 23, 2000, at 10:00 a.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:10 p.m.