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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 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

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you Mrs. Groenewegen. The House will come to order. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 29-14(3): Federal Contribution to the GNWT's Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy**

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the Government of the Northwest Territories introduced a Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy for the Northwest Territories based on the vision of this Assembly as expressed in Towards a Better Tomorrow.

The Non-Renewable Resource Strategy for the Northwest Territories seeks to position the Northwest Territories and Canada to benefit from increased non-renewable resource development in the Northwest Territories, through a combination of investments in much-needed infrastructure, in our human resources, and in support to business and industry. Because the benefits from this development will extend beyond the Northwest Territories, we have asked the federal government to join us in making the strategic investments needed to realize these benefits.

Today, I am very pleased to join the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew in announcing that the Honourable Robert Nault, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, has just approved the expenditure of \$3.7 million to improve our infrastructure and work towards the goals laid out in our Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy. Over the next two years, this funding will help complete seven permanent bridges over river crossings on the winter road extension of the Mackenzie Highway between Wrigley and Fort Good Hope.

This is a partnership project. The GNWT will provide \$2 million to the construction project and work will begin as soon as equipment, materials and construction personnel can get onto the land.

Canada's contribution is predicated on two conditions that are acceptable to the Government of the Northwest Territories. They are:

- 1) that \$2.3 million of DIAND's contribution will be spent on the employment of aboriginal workers and contractors; and

- 2) that before the conclusion of the construction period, industry will have made a \$200,000 contribution in cash or kind.

Though the amount of this approved contribution is modest, when compared with the four-year partnership investment figures set out in our Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy, it is nonetheless a very important contribution.

It signals Canada's commitment to sharing the cost of preparing the Northwest Territories for the oil, gas and mining development that is in our mutual best interests. It represents a down payment on the investment we asked the Government of Canada to make with us to prepare our infrastructure for accelerated exploration and development. It tells industry that Canada cares about their hopes and their plans to bring our frontier resources on stream to southern markets. It confirms to the aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories that Canada and the Northwest Territories share the commitment to ensure that benefits from non-renewable resource development in the NWT will not be allowed to pass them by.

The aboriginal government and business leadership in the Deh Cho and Sahtu are unanimous in their support of this initiative.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Minister Nault for taking this important step in advancing the development of the NWT. His commitment to follow through on his promises to me and to this government is gratefully acknowledged. It is critically important to us, to the oil and gas industry, and to the communities along the winter road that the shipping season be extended from five weeks to eight weeks. Minister Nault recognizes this and, through today's announcement, has ensured the funding for permanent bridges to make this happen.

I also want to thank our Member of Parliament, the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, for her assistance in persuading Minister Nault and their shared Cabinet colleagues of the importance of the federal contribution to this initiative. She has been tireless and unrelenting in her efforts to this end and much of the credit for this announcement is hers. Thank you to Ethel.

I want to thank my Cabinet colleagues, particularly Minister Joe Handley and Minister Vince Steen and their respective staff, for their work with DIAND officials to ensure that the requirements, terms and conditions of this funding were fulfilled and confirmed. A job well done!

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge the positive feedback and encouragement that the government has received to date for our strategy from various federal Ministers and departments, including the Minister of Finance and his

department, the Minister of Transportation and his department, just to name a few. My Cabinet colleagues and I look forward to the continued support of the federal Cabinet as we seek additional investments in the Northwest Territories Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy in the months and years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Minister's Statement 30-14(3): Deh Cho Process Negotiations

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I committed to Members of Caucus to keep them apprised of the status of the various land, resources and self-government negotiations.

I am pleased to report on the status of the negotiations related to the Deh Cho process. Negotiators met on November 3rd, 2000, and have a framework agreement that is ready for initialling. Negotiators should also have an interim measures agreement ready for initialling by the negotiators in December. The next step would then be the approval of the agreements by the respective parties. These agreements will set the stage to allow for formal negotiations of an agreement-in-principle to begin in the new year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Déclarations de ministres. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Minister's Statement 31-14(3): Addictions Awareness Week

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, November 12th to November 18th is National Addictions Awareness Week. As you know, addictions is one of the most critical issues we face and I would like to take this opportunity to speak about what my department is doing to address this problem.

Over the past several years, our stakeholders have directed us to provide an array of programs and services that:

- address the underlying issues of addictions and abuse;
- provide services as close to home as possible;
- are delivered in a holistic manner; and
- emphasize more effective programs targeted to women and children.

Mr. Speaker, in response to this direction, the department joined with representatives from health and social services boards to form the Alternative Programs Steering Committee to better address community and regional addiction needs.

Established in April of 1999, the committee has consulted with a wide variety of stakeholders and worked with a number of partners to pilot three new programs:

- the Women's Mobile Treatment Program;
- the Women and Children's Healing and Recovery Program; and
- the Youth Mobile Treatment Program.

The Women's Mobile Treatment is a three-week program that addresses a number of issues specific to women and can accommodate up to 15 clients each session. Mr. Speaker, some women have difficulty with residential treatment due to a lack of reliable child care, and discomfort with co-ed programming that can make it difficult to openly discuss sensitive issues such as family violence and sexual and physical abuse. Furthermore, women told us that the programming was often geared to male needs. To date, programs have been successfully held in Rae, Fort Simpson and Lutselk'e and there are plans to deliver these programs in Inuvik and Hay River before the end of this fiscal year.

Another initiative we are very proud of is the Women and Children's Healing and Recovery Program, which was formally launched November 1st. Our partners, the YWCA, Yellowknife Women's Centre, the Status of Women Council and the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board, have developed this pilot project that supports the healing of northern women who have experienced trauma such as family violence, spousal abuse and other forms of sexual or emotional abuse.

The Youth Mobile Program addresses the well-being of youth. It was piloted in Fort Providence and Fort Simpson with the Deh Cho Health and Social Services Board. This program is targeted at high-risk youth and, like the Women's Mobile Treatment Program, it is customized for the community or region where it is delivered.

This week, I am pleased to advise Members that with our partners, the Native Women's Association of the NWT and the Status of Women Council of the NWT, we are launching the beginning of an FAS awareness campaign. The campaign recognizes that unresolved trauma such as sexual abuse and family violence may affect alcohol use during pregnancy. The campaign focuses on prevention by supporting recovery from abuse and addiction. I would like to recognize the efforts of all the partners, particularly the Native Women's Association, for their commitment to this project.

Mr. Speaker, this awareness campaign and our alternative programs initiative are the beginning of addictions reform, and there are more under development. Currently, the department is working with a variety of partners to establish a territorial Addictions and Mental Health Strategy that will improve our response to addictions and mental health issues which are often interrelated.

The Alternative Program Initiatives and the upcoming Addictions and Mental Health Strategy are not intended to replace existing programs and services. Instead, they will complement the alcohol and addiction projects we fund in 23 communities, the six-bed withdrawal management program at the Salvation Army and the 30-bed residential centre operating out of Hay River.

Compared to other jurisdictions in Canada, we have the best bed-to-patient ratio at adult residential treatment programs. When we are unable to meet client needs in the NWT, referrals can be made to appropriate programs outside of the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, our new initiatives address the fact that there are many approaches to addressing addiction and substance abuse issues and we are committed to exploring new, innovative methods that meet the needs of our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 32-14(3): Gwich'in Tribal Council Election

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on November 6th, elections were held for the executive of the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

The Gwich'in have elected Fred Carmichael as the new president and re-elected Wilbert Firth as the vice-president. Fred Carmichael enjoys a rich reputation, not only as an astute businessman, but also as a person who has given of himself to the community in several different ways, including service in municipal government and Metis organizations at the political level. The newly elected executive will join vice-president James Wilson, whose position was not up for election, on the executive of the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

On behalf of this House, I offer our congratulations to these newly elected leaders and express our sincere desire to work closely and in collaboration with them.

The outgoing president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council is well known to us all. Mr. Nerysoo has a long history as a leader in aboriginal politics and as an important past Member in this House, including service as the first aboriginal Government Leader of the Northwest Territories. I am sure my colleagues will join me in wishing him the best in his future endeavours. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Minister's Statement 33-14(3): Public Works and Services Wins Safety Award

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell you today about a recent award with the Department of Public Works and Services.

The North American Occupational Safety and Health Week is an annual event held throughout North America. It is intended to focus the attention of employers, employees and the general public on the importance of preventing illness and injury in the workplace.

Public Works and Services received an Employer Recognition Award for its sponsorship of a variety of workplace safety

events during North American Occupational Safety and Health 2000. Each regional office took part in planning meetings, worksite inspections and safety courses. In Yellowknife, the department's safety inspectors used a display at a local mall to explain safety concerns related to boiler, gas, electrical and elevator installations. The department was also able to turn the award ceremony into a staff celebration that raised safety awareness.

I would also like to congratulate two other award winners: Inuvik Gas and Northland Utilities Ltd.

The Government of the Northwest Territories needs to be a leader in the prevention of workplace injuries. I am very proud of the efforts of Public Works and Services and would like to challenge other departments to take a leadership role in the next North American Occupational Safety and Health Week, which will be held May 6 to 12, 2001. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on National Addictions Awareness Week

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge National Addictions Awareness Week from November 12th to the 18th. Mr. Speaker, alcohol and drug residential treatment centres are apparently a declining service. The Northern Addictions Services Dettah facility has been closed since June of 1999. The detoxification program on Franklin Avenue in Yellowknife was moved to the Salvation Army at the same time. After consultation for alternative programming a number of priority areas were identified. They are children and youth treatment programs, children's assessment and treatment services, and men's healing and recovery programs. A women's and children's post-trauma healing and recovery program has been developed and is underway. Meanwhile, addictions treatment programs for women and youth have been delivered.

Overall funding levels have remained the same over the last two years. The Hay River treatment centre received \$1.3 million and the Salvation Army's withdrawal management plan received \$325,000. Given the nature of addictions in the NWT, this does not seem to even scratch the surface of what is needed, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I would like to, at this time, acknowledge the people who are dealing with their own recoveries and the people who are helping them to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Déclarations de députés. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on RCMP Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the financial support of the NWT

Power Corporation and First Air for their contributions to the RCMP program DARE, or Drug Abuse Resistance Education.

The Power Corporation provided \$20,000 to the RCMP to help them take this program to our schools across the North over the next two years. First Air provides free air travel to the RCMP to offset what would otherwise be a very significant cost to the program.

Mr. Speaker, since the inception of this program in 1997, the RCMP have been to over 20 communities and reached more than 1,500 students. The program is run by the RCMP's drug awareness office and over a 17-week period, youth learn about conflict resolution, anger management, alternatives to substance abuse and violence and how to say no to drugs.

Without the financial support of the NWT Power Corporation and First Air, this program clearly would not be viable. I think it is important for us to recognize this financial support and the dedication and commitment of the RCMP officers involved in delivering this program. I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking these folks for working to improve the lives of our children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Fur Garment Manufacturing Industry

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today concerns the Government of the Northwest Territories' support for the fur garment manufacturing industry.

Mr. Speaker, the fur garment manufacturing industry is a relatively small industry in the North, yet at the same time it helps to capitalize on the skills and capacities of many Northerners that are unsuited to work in the non-renewable resource sector. In particular, the work that the industry provides can lend itself well to the cottage industry and home production techniques that allow Northerners with traditional skills to participate in the wage economy.

It is important that the government moves forward and provides support for the renewable resource industry; that it takes steps to ensure all sectors of the northern society can participate in economic growth and opportunity. The NWT Economic Strategy 2000 document commits in paragraph 46 to develop a more co-ordinated approach to training, raw material supply, product development and marketing in regards to arts, crafts and cultural industries.

However, Mr. Speaker, I have a great concern that support currently shown by the Government of the Northwest Territories towards this industry and towards the fur sector in the North as a whole is uncoordinated, ad hoc and ineffective.

In my own riding, Dene Fur Clouds, the Fort Providence-based fur garment producer working with the NWT Development Corporation, has experienced continuing frustration and a lack of focused attention to the community-based business. This is a business that is committed to a realistic commercial approach to the manufacture and design of unique knitted fur products for sale both in southern and northern Canada. It is certainly

not what some would call a "make work" project. Since 1996, targeted training and product development in conjunction with southern partners and northern, aboriginal designers, have combined to position Dene Fur Clouds as a supplier of unique, high quality products.

Dene Fur Clouds now has seven trained and experienced local producers, specialized knit fur machines, and a modern building that was committed to and recently completed by the community development corporation in order to provide manufacturing space for the business.

However, now that this has been done, it would seem that meaningful support from the NWT Development Corporation and presumably therefore from the GNWT has disappeared.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. McLeod, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

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

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, in March of this year, the NWT Development Corporation informed Dene Fur Clouds that its northern designed sample product lines, months in the development, would not be produced, citing problems with the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur initiative. Commitments to further investment also went by the wayside. Dene Fur Clouds subsequently suspended operations in May and closed down, years of work seemingly wasted.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that the GNWT implement a focused and coherent fur strategy for the North that will allow the primary fur producing industry and secondary manufacturing industries to complement each other so that we can be manufacturing and exporting high value products from the North. Perhaps the same vigour that was applied to the establishment of a secondary diamond industry can be brought to bear on the fur industry in the North also. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on National Addictions Awareness Week

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to address the awareness week, National Addictions Awareness Week. It is often great to say in the NWT that we are leading the way in something or other, Mr. Speaker, but in the area of substance abuse, we are demonstrating a tremendous degree of negative leadership. Some statistics have come to light. For instance, there is particularly trouble among our youth, Mr. Speaker. I talk of people in the 15 to 24 age bracket who, when they sit down to have a few, really do have a few.

A heavy drinker is defined as someone who has more than five at one sitting. Some 43 percent of our youth, Mr. Speaker, are

in that category. That is triple the national average. Among hash and marijuana users, we are double the national figure at 15 percent. Among illegal drugs such as speed, LSD, cocaine, our use is again 50 percent higher than the national average, Mr. Speaker. Forty-four out of 100 adults in the NWT are smokers compared to the national average of 27 percent.

A senior RCMP officer recently told a Yellowknife public service group that there is mounting evidence of an organized crime problem in the NWT with distribution of illegal substances from southern centres in to the NWT. Mr. Speaker, we have a substance abuse problem that is not turning the right corner.

It is encouraging and I do applaud the announcement by the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services today of the start of a new campaign for fetal alcohol syndrome awareness. I would like to advocate, Mr. Speaker, that this is the kind of thing that we need to have much more of in the NWT. Public awareness campaigns such as National Addiction Awareness Week tend to become routine. They tend to become kind of ordinary and the more that we can break that cycle of complacency and routine, the more impact we are going to have on our population in dealing with this very, very troublesome topic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

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

Member's Statement on Aklavik Water Quality Study

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the community of Aklavik, there is presently a study being looked at for the community which was initiated by Dr. Jay Morris, who is a doctor here in Yellowknife, with regard to a parasite better known as **H. pylori**, which is a carcinogen in the water system, which has a lot of effects that cause cancer in families, especially in various families in the community of Aklavik with regard to stomach cancer and lung cancer.

Also, he would like to do two stage tests, one dealing with the cancer study and the other dealing with the water tank study to look at the quality of water in Aklavik with regard to the water tanks that are in people's homes and also testing the water treatment facility to see if this parasite is in the water system. Mostly, they are considering that there is a possibility of dealing with this matter through treatment. This carcinogen has nine times more effectiveness of causing stomach cancer than any other causes. If it is caught soon enough it can be treated.

The community of Aklavik has had several meetings on this regarding the problem of the shortage of nurses. They were considering doing an in-depth study of all the families in the community and the whole population of Aklavik. Mr. Speaker, this study is not only useful to Aklavik, it can also assist other communities up and down the Mackenzie Valley and in the North to deal with this problem that we see in our communities when it comes to cancer.

The community of Aklavik has taken steps to work along with the Beaufort Delta Regional Health Board to take efforts to carry out this study along with Dr. Morris who will be overseeing this study.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think it is also important that it is not only up to the community and the regional health boards to look at this issue, it is up to this government to deal with a matter which we should take seriously and also put the resources and resource people in place to assist this study, to carry it out for the benefit of all people of the North. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister responsible for Health questions on this matter.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Adult Offender Bush Camps

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak briefly to the issue of adult offender bush camps. This is a program initiative that has significant support I know in this House and is very, very well received in the communities and regions. However, Mr. Speaker, I have a significant concern because the Department of Justice has promised to review the formula for financing and funding these camps. It is many, many months overdue. I understand after my visit home this weekend, that one of the camps in the South Slave has shut its doors and that the one in my constituency, at **Kozo Lake**, is on the verge of doing so as well because there is not adequate funding and they have been running deficits, expended all their own savings and insurance money trying to keep the camp open.

Mr. Speaker, the initial concept was to have inmates go and move in with a trapper, put another bed in the cabin and they would sort of exist out there and do part of their sentence on the land and learn some skills. However, Mr. Speaker, that concept quickly evaporated and what came in its place is a much more formal kind of camp where there has been an incremental increase in demand for health standards, for safety standards, for security standards, for program standards, all of which have a cost that has not been quantified by the Department of Justice. I know, and I have heard, the Minister himself speak very strongly about the benefit of these camps. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice does not seem to be doing the required job to maintain this very valuable and rehabilitative service for adult offenders.

Mr. Speaker, if both camps close in the South Slave, there will be a significant gap in the service that is provided to adult offenders. It will be a tremendous loss of years of work. I have been to **Kozo Lake**. The amount of work that those folks have put into that camp is major. They have made a tremendous personal investment and I would hope that the Department of Justice would see its way clear.

I see this as an emergency situation. Funding has to be looked at and I know that those two camps are not alone. This issue has been on the table for the last two or three years, when we do the business plans for Justice. Later today I will be asking the Minister responsible for Justice questions on how he can deal with this very pressing issue so that we do not lose these valuable resources that have been years in the making by very dedicated individuals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Accountability for Actions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On January 14th of this year we held our swearing-in ceremonies as new Members of the 14th Assembly. Following that, on January 19th, Cabinet did their swearing-in ceremony. Mr. Speaker, we swore solemnly and sincerely, we promised and swore that we would dutifully and faithfully, on the best of our skills and knowledge, execute the powers and trust reposed in us as Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we have come to a time where we have to look again at the whole area of accountability. A new era of transparency. How are we going to do things better than old government, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I took this oath as a very serious thing. I have been very fortunate; I have been able to do it twice. The second time I have done this, I have followed through and I believe in the commitment to the people of the Northwest Territories when we take this oath.

Unfortunately I feel that recent events here in the Legislative Assembly amongst Members indicate that we have tarnished this. I believe there is a need to come straight. Let us show our accountability by enforcing this oath. Let us show our accountability and respect to the people of the Northwest Territories. We ask for respect. We have to give them respect back by being up front and truthful.

I feel that issues have come before this House recently that need to be dealt with and I will be questioning the Premier later in regard to this specific issue that I raise; being forward, up front and accountable for our actions, Mr. Speaker.

I have given it time. I have allowed some events to happen and I sat back purposely to look at what was going to come forward and hopefully be dealt with. It has not been, Mr. Speaker. It is dragging on. It is time to deal with it, up front. At the appropriate time, I will be questioning the Premier. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Medical Travel Benefits for Family

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the July session, I raised an issue that is of ongoing concern to my constituents. When a family member becomes sick, that person must come to Yellowknife to the Stanton Regional Hospital. As their family and friends from the outlying communities wish to visit, particularly in the case of a long-term illness, they must rely on friends, hotels or commuting back and forth to Rae. In some cases, this is unaffordable. In all cases, it is inconvenient.

Last week, my colleague for Hay River North raised the issue of the need for accommodation for families of women from Hay River who have come to Yellowknife to give birth. Without temporary accommodations for their families, these women are separated, for at least three weeks, from their loved ones. In

some cases, arrangements must be made for child care as there are children in the family and arrangements must be made for accommodation and travel.

Until permanent physicians can be established in the communities, there is a definite need to provide accommodation for family members in Yellowknife. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services on this matter at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Harmful Effects of Tobacco Addiction

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the National Addictions Awareness Week starting today, and further to my message in the news pullout, I would like to make a personal statement about the harmful effects of tobacco addiction which I believe is a most preventable addiction. I was hoping to make this a simple but meaningful statement for the benefit of the children of Range Lake and like magic this group of children appeared in our gallery today. So hopefully I can say something to them as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to state for the record that I consider myself a reformed smoker and, Mr. Speaker, I must say how horrible it was for my mother when she first saw from a distance her daughter doing this terrible thing. Like many others who picked up this habit, I thought it was not really anything serious. It was something that all my friends at school did in the bathroom and I thought I would get over it. It was years before I realized that I was addicted to this drug and it has been a struggle every day to fight this addiction. So far, I am successful.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that we are all aware of the cost of tobacco addiction. I know that when I do not smoke, money stays in my pocket. It seems that whenever I smoke, I have to go to the bank machine twice a week.

Mr. Speaker, we know that it causes bad smells, it causes premature aging, it is bad for our heart, lungs, mouth, gums, and teeth. It causes bronchitis and asthma. I think the most important message that I want to give to the young people is really how hard it is to kick this habit once it is picked up.

Mr. Speaker, I consider myself a very disciplined person. I have always been able to set a goal for myself and work really hard to achieve it. When I wanted to learn English, it was no big deal for me to write a statement a thousand times on a page until I learned a word. It is not difficult for me to sit for eight hours and go through a text book and memorize it, but I have never done anything harder than quit smoking. So I make a public declaration and hopefully that will be an incentive for me to keep off tobacco for the rest of my life.

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

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, my colleagues. I want to, Mr. Speaker, recognize the fact that there are very few among the membership of this House who smoke. It is considerably below average. I do not believe there are any more than about three out of 19 Members who may suffer from this addiction and I know we are going to get better at this.

Just a simple message, Mr. Speaker. Just say no to tobacco addiction and you will not have the struggle, the hardest struggle that you will ever engage in your entire life.

Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that has helped me lately. The Department of Health has produced a poster that is so startling that when you look at it you will never, ever grab a cigarette ever in your life again. It has helped me and I am going to distribute a copy to every Member. It looks like this. I would like to commend the government for doing so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I should remind Members that perhaps as graphic and as explicit as props may be, the rule of the Assembly is that we do not use things other than statements. However, this is the first time it has happened. Déclarations de députés. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement on Support for the Agricultural Industry

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak briefly on an issue that I have raised in this House before. It has to do with agriculture in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT has a large number of families involved in the agricultural industry. Mr. Speaker, current regulations in effect for assessing land within the municipal taxation area state that land must be assessed at market value. Regulations also state that assessed value must be fair and equitable. Mr. Speaker, the Property Assessment and Taxation Act does not contain any unique treatment for agricultural properties.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot figure out why this current government is not able to provide an agricultural policy. We have been told on numerous occasions that it is because land claims have not yet been settled. However, the lack of an agricultural policy, in conjunction with not giving any concessions to agricultural farmers in the area of municipal taxation, is serving as a great deterrent to those people trying to make a living in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder how this government foresees any progress being made in the industry without an agricultural policy. The government continues to put up barriers to these hardworking people who are attempting to provide for their families and the public. When it comes to the areas of oil and gas development and the diamond industry, Mr. Speaker, we seem to be able to deal with the land use issue.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is a renewable resource and I would think that this government would have no problem issuing whatever it takes to get this industry moving. The only thing that agricultural people in this Territory are concerned about is moving the Territories towards self-sufficiency in food production.

Mr. Speaker, this coming weekend, on Friday and Saturday, the TFA will be holding their 11th annual seminar in Hay River and on Sunday, their annual general meeting. A number of Ministers and politicians have been invited to attend those functions. I would seriously encourage this government to bring some words of encouragement and some positive feedback on their industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Question 218-14(3): Aboriginal Studies and Self-Esteem

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by Mr. Nitah on November 7, 2000, regarding the portion of the South Slave Divisional Education Council funding for teaching aboriginal culture.

In 1999-2000, the department provided the council with \$1,060,000 for aboriginal language and cultural programs. This included \$767,600 for language specialist teacher and classroom assistant positions and \$292,400 to support the development of relevant program materials and interpretation/translation services. The department also provided the council with \$97,000 from funding provided through the Canada-NWT agreement for French and aboriginal languages.

It was the responsibility of the South Slave Divisional Education Council, through its budgeting process, to allocate this funding to its district education authorities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Ootes. Réponse à des questions orales. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 216-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Services Contract

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by Mr. Krutko on November 7, 2000 in regard to information being withheld from the municipality of Fort McPherson.

I have ensured that the information requested by the Member for Mackenzie Delta has been sent to him. I have been informed that regional officials from MACA will travel to Fort McPherson to review the invoices with the SAO, or senior administrative officer. This visit will occur before the end of November 2000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Allen. Réponse à des questions orales. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 240-14(3): Business Development Fund List of Recipients

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by Mr. Dent on November 8, 2000 regarding the tabling of the Business Development Fund Annual Report and Recipients Report for the Year Ended March 31, 2000.

The honourable Member asked whether the list of recipients for the Business Development Fund will be tabled along with the Annual Report of the Business Development Fund. The Hansard states that the 1999-2000 Recipients Report was tabled along with the 1999-2000 Annual Report on November 2nd. A copy has been provided to the honourable Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Réponse à des questions orales. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize in the gallery, Carol Roberts, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

-- Applause

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize someone who has not been here for a while, Ms. Pat Thomas, the former president of the NWTTA. Welcome back, Pat.

I would also like to recognize Ms. Sue Heron-Herbert, a long-time colleague of mine when I was with the Denendeh Secretariat.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some women in the gallery today, and I hope I can do this in 15 seconds. Diana Beck, Rosalind Minault, Agnes Etsemba, Marie Speakman, Mary Anne Melanson, Delores Michel, Crystal Menicoche, and as Mr. Krutko said, Sue Heron-Herbert, also Addena Sumter-Frietag. I am sorry. I do not know Lona's last name, but Lona from the department. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Bobby Dryneck from Rae-Edzo. He is the member responsible for the petition with 600 names for the addictions

centre. He is also one of the new counsellors being trained by the Dogrib Community Services Board. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mot de bienvenue aux visiteurs. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize Lona Hegeman and Pat Thomas. Welcome to the gallery.

-- Applause

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

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize in the gallery, Ms. Delores Michel from Lutselk'e, and I would like to thank my honourable colleague Mrs. Groenewegen for pointing her out again. Mr. Speaker, I cannot see anyone in the gallery, so I recognize all of the people from Lutselk'e. As always, you are always in my heart when I am speaking at the Legislative Assembly representing you. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 270-14(3): Information on Chief of Staff Contract

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as in my Member's statement I raise the question of accountability, it is not the first time I have stood up to speak on that issue, Mr. Speaker, or ask questions on that subject. Mr. Speaker, in this particular case, a situation was brought forward to Members about a contract that might have been let out and authorized by this Premier and Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, the way I approach things is I look at the issues and I wait to get the other side of the story. We had decided as members of AOC to send a letter to the Premier for response. That response has been made public. My question to the Premier is, will he make available to Regular Members the pertinent information in that contract to prove to all Members of this Assembly and the Northwest Territories that in fact that contract was authorized and legal and that it falls within the Public Service Act? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 270-14(3): Information on Chief of Staff Contract

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, on Friday I went to the AOC Committee to account for myself. It is called the Accountability and Oversight Committee. Some of the Members were there, others perhaps were not there. I do not recall that there was perfect attendance. However, we made it very clear at the time that everything Cabinet does is advised

by our staff, whether we are consistent with the laws, policies and past practices of government.

With this particular issue, we have been telling the Members we have been consistent with the advice we have received from our officials, that there was nothing that we have done that is inconsistent with our legislation and with our laws. What we did not point out on Friday is, in fact, previous governments, previous cabinets, previous premiers have agreed to give leave to the present chief of staff to be involved in previous federal elections because there was a suggestion that only this Cabinet, only this Premier, was willing to do such a thing. In fact, leave was granted and the individual that you are speaking about was allowed to do this on at least two separate occasions over the last 12 years.

We said on Friday that the contract does not spell out the duties and responsibilities that are contrary to the Member of Thebacha's allegations or suggestions. There are no terms of reference in existence for executive assistants. We have been categorical in suggesting that this position, entitled chief of staff, has been from the beginning deemed by Cabinet with full knowledge and support of our civil service and our advisors, that being of an executive assistant to the Premier.

Both the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development were advised of that. There was no difficulty when the Member was present when we were talking about it in March. We also discussed that here, in the committee of the whole, when we were doing the budget in March. So for the Member to get up and make vague suggestions that somehow we are not being accountable without being specific, I do not believe this is the way to get at accountability. Be specific and be clear. We have done that, as a Cabinet, since we got into office.

The question was put to me last year, what are the new and revised positions you have in the Department of the Executive. I laid those out on two separate occasions, one to a standing committee and one to the committee of the whole, and these were approved. The budget figures were discussed and approved. That is being accountable, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. I just want to take this opportunity to remind the Members that oral questions, under Rule 38, should be clear and concisely put and refer only to a matter which is reasonably to be assumed to be within the present knowledge of the Minister and that the responses should be as clear and concise as possible. While I realize that some questions may require lengthy answers, we only have 60 minutes for question period, so if Members could take that under advisement and govern themselves accordingly. Item 6, oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary to Question 270-14(3): Information on Chief of Staff Contract

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer I received did not address the question I asked. Will he make the information available to Members so we can look at it, not have legal interpretations floating around here?

For a specific reason, Mr. Speaker, I did not speak to the specific employee of this government for the simple fact of trying not to address that. It is the contract. It has been a side issue that the contract was done up that might be outside the Public Service Act. That cloud has been allowed to hang over

this Assembly for over a week now, a couple of weeks, and we waited for a response. He has not responded with an answer. Will he make that available so we can clear the air once and for all? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 270-14(3): Information on Chief of Staff Contract

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, again, on Friday, we said that we are not in the business of handing out contracts that we have with the employees of this government. They are considered confidential. In any case, had he been listening on Friday, it would be clear that the most sullied civil servant in our government, Liz Snider, said specifically, the contract does not spell out the duties and responsibilities of the employee in this case. The contract says that it is an executive assistant position. That position, because it is tied to the Premier's office, is re-titled Chief of Staff.

The Member is not listening so we might have to repeat this again. However, it is important to get clear that the contract that the Member wants to see has been conveyed to the Committee by the deputy minister to the Executive, the secretary to the Cabinet, Liz Snider, on Friday. The contract refers to that position as an executive assistant position.

If the Member would like, apparently, the employee that is being sullied here by these Members that say a cloud hangs over everybody, which I reject. I think it hangs over two or three Members. If they do not take my word for it, they do not believe I am representing Cabinet properly in this case, I deplore this implication. They can go as doubting Thomases, call up the legal counsel for the employee and ask to see the contract. I am sure they will be allowed to do that.

It is not my place and not my capacity to share the contract with these Members. In any case, it does not spell out the roles and responsibilities of the employee in question. It says categorically that it is an executive assistant position. That is what it says and it has been re-titled chief of staff. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 270-14(3): Information on Chief of Staff Contract

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the cloud that hangs over us is, in fact, not the position. I am not interested in that part. It is the contract that was signed, and I believe signed by the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, he says that information is not available because it is privy to the Executive Council. I am aware, through the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, that that type of information is available. Again, are we establishing two different standards, one for the public and one for Cabinet?

Mr. Speaker, my question again, will he make that information available to Members so we can deal with it once and for all? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 270-14(3): Information on Chief of Staff Contract

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say again, Cabinet is advised by staff, by the Department of Justice, by the secretary to Cabinet of all discussions, all decisions and undertakings that we engage in to make sure that we are consistent with the laws and the policies in past practices of government.

In this case, we were advised right from the beginning in January when we started organizing our offices and our staff. We have revisited this issue recently to ensure that the advice and the legal advice has been consistent, and it has. I have mentioned that Cabinet was through this discussion. The decision we made was very clear.

The contract itself, as I have said to the Member, is not for me to circulate to Members; but we have spoken to what the contract does and does not do. The main thing is that the Members on the other side want to look at is the duties and responsibilities of this particular position. The contract does not speak to that at all. Mr. Speaker, again, it is not for me to be sharing with Members of this Legislature, contracts that we have with employees of this government. They are considered confidential and private.

However, I understand that if the Member who is asking me these questions and anybody else on the other side of the House want to have a look at that contract, they can call the lawyer representing that particular employee and I am sure they will allow them to review that contract. That is what I understand. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 270-14(3): Information on Chief of Staff Contract

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have had people tell me this should have been dealt with a while ago. I agree. It could have taken one day if things were followed through in an orderly fashion, but by doing this and not accepting responsibility for a contract that I believe he signed, he is allowing this government to be tarnished and telling us to go outside on our own to do this. Well, I might take him up on that.

The fact is that report was made public, at least by the CBC, and they made a report saying it stated deputy minister contract in there. At one point it referred to a deputy minister level.

I am just asking that he put that forward. As leader of this government, he has a responsibility to be open and forward with the people of the Northwest Territories. Is he failing to do that? Is he abrogating his responsibility? That is my question to him. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I would ask the Member if he would just rephrase that question, please? That is a bit rhetorical. Rephrase the question, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it, in fact, not under the power as Premier that his responsibility is keeping the perception of a good government out there? Is it not in his

responsibility as Premier to keep good government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Premier, a brief response.

Further Return to Question 270-14(3): Information on Chief of Staff Contract

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have assured all employees that the private and confidential information which they provide to us, which is contained in their contracts, will not be released to the public. That is accountability, Mr. Speaker. I do not have much control over what Members say on the other side of the House. I have said before that I know Members can say outrageous things; they can say things that are not based on fact. They can create legislation that does not exist and make reference to it. Nobody can correct Members in the statements that they make.

We have seen the legal opinion that Mr. Miltenberger produced. It does not substantiate anything that he has made in terms of allegations. It does not do that at all. More recently we had another attached legal opinion that seems to be contrary to the original legal opinion in one point. So what is the point of all this, Mr. Speaker? The point is we say we are consistent with the legislation, with the policies of this government and some of the Members, I believe, want to continue making the allegations that we are not, although they have absolutely nothing to base it on. We have made a suggestion on Friday. We said okay, we need clarification, we agree. We have been working on that since January. We are now proposing to make amendments to the Public Service Act to clarify roles and responsibilities of political positions, those positions that are considered political. This, Mr. Speaker, is what we intend to do. Thank you.

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

Question 271-14(3): NTPC Board of Directors

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. It has to do with the administration of the Power Corporation. Last Thursday, according to page 1836 of unedited Hansard, when asked about running the corporation, the Minister said:

“Running the corporation is left to the board of directors, but there is a shareholder involved in this that has the interest of all the Northwest Territories at heart, in mind and in consideration for the future.”

Mr. Speaker, by this, does the Minister mean that the board does not have the interest of all the Northwest Territories at heart in running the corporation?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 271-14(3): NTPC Board of Directors

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The board of directors has the interests of the board in mind when it does its administration from a financial point of view and, of course,

from a public point of view as well. The government has a shareholder point of view that is long term and all pervasive for all residents of the Northwest Territories. There are some communities that the Power Corporation does not operate in, for example. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 271-14(3): NTPC Board of Directors

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in running a corporation, that long-term view that the shareholder brings to the table does not often contain an understanding of staffing needs of a corporation. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister maintain that he and his Cabinet colleagues have a better understanding of staffing needs for the corporation than do the board of directors?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 271-14(3): NTPC Board of Directors

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that with reference to staffing needs, there is also the question of the current time as to a study that is being undertaken and not all of the information with regard to finalizing that particular study have been completed. That could potentially impact upon the staffing needs of the corporation. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 271-14(3): NTPC Board of Directors

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Surely the study the Minister refers to will not lead to an increase in the staff. I would expect that, in fact, the corporation will need to be restructured on division, leading to some downsizing. So why did the government decide to direct the corporation not to advise employees who might be affected by such downsizing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 271-14(3): NTPC Board of Directors

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Circumstances could be such that changes to the staffing levels could take place because of perhaps other opportunities or other changes that may come forward because of the study that is underway. Also, Mr. Speaker, there is an opportunity to address this once the study is through, and there is a requirement for three months' notice. So there is ample opportunity still to address the staffing issue, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 271-14(3): NTPC Board of Directors

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the notice that was planned to be given by the board, affected employees would have had perhaps five or six months instead of just three months to plan. Mr. Speaker, the Minister said things could change with this study that might lead to a need for increased staff. Obviously, if they are not allowing them to let people know they are being laid off. Could the Minister outline what some of the potential opportunities would be for increased opportunities, as he said, for the Power Corporation?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 271-14(3): NTPC Board of Directors

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that would be premature to address in light of the study that is being undertaken by a group of individuals. That report will be available at the end of November and will no doubt clarify a lot of the questions that have been raised with regard to the future of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Thank you.

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

Question 272-14(3): Support for Aklavik Water Study

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. It is in regard to my Member's statement. There have been several requests made by the community and also a doctor here in Yellowknife to consider looking at doing studies in Aklavik; one dealing with a cancer study and the other one dealing with a water tank study. The first study is to look at the effects of something that is called helicobacter pylori, for which the short term is H. pylori. There has to be more done with regard to that. One of the requests from the doctors is to do a massive scan of the entire population of Aklavik and also take fingerprint, saliva and breath tests as some of the methods used in this study to see if there is a connection between the increased number of stomach cancers in the community of Aklavik.

I would like to ask the Minister if there will be costs associated with these tests. Will there be an unforeseen cost? I would like to ask the Minister if her department is willing to sponsor such tests and ensure there are resources to carry on these tests?

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

Return to Question 272-14(3): Support for Aklavik Water Study

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. There has been some interest indicated by Dr. Morris here in Yellowknife to do some research work in Aklavik with respect to this bacteria which is believed to contribute to duodenal ulcers in patients and over a period of years may also be associated with stomach cancer.

At this point in time, to the best of my knowledge, they are still at this stage of exploring the feasibility of such a study. There have been some consultations done with the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board and also with our chief medical health officer. At this time though, the research proposal is not fully developed and we are attempting, with the proponent of this study, to identify potential sources of funding. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 272-14(3): Support for Aklavik Water Study

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another concern with regard to this study is the whole thing about the water tank study to test all the water holding tanks in people's homes and also the treatment facility and the water delivery truck that delivers water to the homes. I would like to also ask the Minister who is responsible for the environmental health of the residents of the Northwest Territories, if she is also willing to consider the costs associated with that, which is something that her department can take on and possibly do separately from this study. So will the Minister consider looking at doing this with regard to environmental health?

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

Further Return to Question 272-14(3): Support for Aklavik Water Study

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again the Member is correct. I understand that when the terms of reference are fully developed, it may look at whether or not there are places in the community where this bacteria is building up and an obvious place to look would be in water tanks. Mr. Speaker, environmental health does fall under the Department of Health and Social Services as well and certainly the monitoring of drinking water in the communities and the testing of that is a responsibility that does fall to our department as well. I believe the Member's question is, are we willing as a department to look at the water supply from an environmental health point of view. Yes, we are. But in relation to this specific proposal for this research project for the community of Aklavik specifically, at this time without the terms of reference of a proposal for this research being fully developed, it is not possible to commit to funding this from the department. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 272-14(3): Support for Aklavik Water Study

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all know this study is not unique to Aklavik. It could have beneficial outcomes that could be used in other communities up and down the valley. Because it is a possible benefit to the whole North, what results come from these studies and how the study is carried out is important to all people of the North. So will the Minister commit to ensuring that there will be a speedy answer to this study and to get it off the ground as soon as possible so we can see what the results of this study?

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

Further Return to Question 272-14(3): Support for Aklavik Water Study

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to commit resources from the department to this study at this time. It needs to be looked at in the context in the incidence of cancer and stomach cancer and ulcers which may be related to this particular bacteria. We have ways of tracking the rates of cancer. We have a very good cancer registry, so we would need to prioritize this expenditure in relation to the incidence that we see this problem occurring. In fact, in the Northwest Territories in general, there are actually very small rates of stomach cancer and they have been steadily decreasing over the past several decades. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 272-14(3): Support for Aklavik Water Study

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been quite a bit of work done on this so far. We are waiting for the final study or strategy to be put forth. I believe it will be ready within the next week or so. With that, I know the Minister says that this may not be a priority of this government, but I think it is essential that we do adhere to what the doctors are telling us, if they feel there is a very serious possibility of avoiding stomach cancer in our communities by treating it, if we find it early enough and through this study they are hoping to detect that. Because it is a priority of the community of Aklavik, the Inuvik Regional Health Board has supported it. We have a doctor who is going to be overseeing it. It is very important and I, for one, feel that it is this government that has to take a leadership role and ensure that this study is carried out. So will the Minister and her department take that role?

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

Further Return to Question 272-14(3): Support for Aklavik Water Study

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there may be information relevant to this research project which is more current than the information that I have before me. The Member refers to more information being forthcoming in the next couple of weeks and I will certainly commit to the Member that when this information does come to the attention of the department that we will give it due consideration. Thank you.

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

Question 273-14(3): Accommodation for Relatives of Stanton Patients

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, the

Honourable Jane Groenewegen. Last week, the Minister acknowledged many issues facing women who must travel to Yellowknife to give birth. She stated that her department will look at what they can do in terms of temporary accommodations for family members wishing to be near an expectant mother. Can the Minister make the same commitment for temporary accommodations for people wishing to be near relatives with long-term illnesses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 273-14(3): Accommodation for Relatives of Stanton Patients

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I remember when the Member for North Slave raised this issue of accommodation for people who are accompanying family members with illnesses who are staying at the hospital in Yellowknife. I remember when he raised this last July. I had suggested that we might check if there were any vacant housing units or any kind of infrastructure which was not already in use here in Yellowknife. I think most Members are aware that there is actually a housing shortage here in Yellowknife at the present time, certainly in the public housing side. There was nothing that came of that particular inquiry.

However, Mr. Speaker, the Member is right. We do have people who come to Yellowknife from communities who do not fall within our medical escort travel policy and who are not reimbursed through any other insurance for accommodations while they are here.

I could undertake to look at the policy we currently have in place for our boarding homes that we have here in Yellowknife, look at the utilization of them and what some of the cost implications might be of expanding the availability of those facilities. Currently, they are primarily used for patients and a medical escort. We could undertake to determine whether or not it is possible to expand on that policy. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 273-14(3): Accommodation for Relatives of Stanton Patients

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since June, in Rae alone, we have lost five elders. Out of those five elders, four of them spent their last days in Stanton Regional Hospital. Their families spent their last days with them. Each family who spent their time commuting back and forth have spent from over \$2,000 to \$10,000 per family. I would like to ask the Minister if she can make accommodations for family members a priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 273-14(3): Accommodation for Relatives of Stanton Patients

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can undertake to look into this further, but the

Member raises the issue of elders who have come to Yellowknife, or people who have come to Yellowknife from his community and have spent their last days here. Their family, for good and valid reasons, want to be near to them.

One of the discussions I think we need to have with the communities as well is the whole discussion around the kind of support people might need at the end stage of their life, and whether or not they want to be out of their community and whether or not the services could be enhanced in the community through the nursing stations that could provide the medical and emotional support that they would need to actually stay in their communities and, in some instances, even stay in their home. That is a discussion I think we need to have. I do not think we should assume that everyone who has an illness prior to the end of their life wants to be in a medical institution. Thank you.

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

Question 274-14(3): Closure of Adult Offender Bush Camps

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are addressed to the Minister responsible for Justice and they are in regards to my Member's statement and the concern that I have about the funding to adult offender bush camps and an impending closure of bush camps in the South Slave. I would like to ask the Minister if he is aware of the dire straits that these bush camps are in and what the intention of the Department is, in terms of trying to maintain these very valuable resource in the Department as well as the people involved who have put in a tremendous amount of time and investment into setting them up and operating them. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 274-14(3): Closure of Adult Offender Bush Camps

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I am aware of the situation with the adult offenders' bush camp program that is being run by the Department of Justice with support from different camps and camp operators. I know that there are changes in the programs and that the department is doing a study right now. Hopefully, we will have something on a strategic plan basis in place by the middle of December sometime.

However, we are aware of the situation, and I have instructed the Department of Justice to try to come out with the strategic plan as soon as we can, and I am told that the soonest the strategic plan of action that we may have is by the middle of December.

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

Supplementary to Question 274-14(3): Closure of Adult Offender Bush Camps

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister clarify whether this strategic plan, unlike

some others, will actually have dollars attached to it, the issue of formulas and standards that has been critical to this discussion? There are camp operators that are tying up their own savings, using all their own investments to maintain their camps. I appreciate the middle of December in terms of the strategic plan, but can the Minister indicate when the operators will be able to see some relief? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 274-14(3): Closure of Adult Offender Bush Camps

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department did complete the first part of this review here, and it looked like with the costs of both to the GNWT as well as to the camp operators, there are different models used in camps where there are camps that could hold quite a number of beds versus camps that are maybe two, three or four beds. So there are different models of camps that are out there. We reviewed that part of the review and using that, we are trying to establish a program with goals and objectives to develop some cost analysis and strategic plan and hopefully, by that process, we will determine dollars and cents and how to continue with this program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 274-14(3): Closure of Adult Offender Bush Camps

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that there are no standards for this program, that it is developed basically on an ad hoc basis. However, the concern is that there are camp operators, I believe, up and down the valley in the Northwest Territories that are struggling to provide a service that is deemed to be very valuable and beneficial to all concerned. I am concerned that there may be more victims, more closures of camps, while the government struggles to come to grips with the issues of standards and formulas and such. So, my question again to the Minister, is there any kind of relief, at least on a short-term basis, that can be provided to ensure that no more camps close as the government tries to get its house in order?

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

Further Return to Question 274-14(3): Closure of Adult Offender Bush Camps

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this current time, I have not instructed the department to develop a relief program for any of the camps. We want to conclude the review and then take it from there. So, there is no relief at this point in time to any of the camp operators. The only thing that I could say is that the camp operators have had difficulties in maintaining the operations due to the inability to guarantee a consistent number of inmates. Not all inmates are suitable to go to camp. They go through an evaluating process and there are different numbers that go out to the different camps at different times, so it is a difficult situation to guarantee a consistent number of offenders to go to these camps. That all has to be taken into consideration when we look at the

review, but again, there is no relief planned of any sort at this point in time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 274-14(3): Closure of Adult Offender Bush Camps

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate once again the fact that there is no relief planned, but I am concerned the department has made a concerted and very conscious effort to establish camps all over the Northwest Territories, once again without a strategy in place and standards and formulas for funding in place as well. My question to the Minister is, given the fact that it is not coming out until the middle of December, just before Christmas, how soon does he anticipate the department will be able to take proactive steps to start implementing the strategy, whatever it may be? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 274-14(3): Closure of Adult Offender Bush Camps

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this program is, for me, very important. I think that it has a unique northern background to it, and I would like to continue to see the development of this program. Yes, there has not been a very good strategic plan in the past; the program just sort of developed. Some of the operators have done very well in helping people in the North to go through a healing and rehabilitation program out on the land, rather than being in the institution. It is a very good alternative for justice here in the North and I would like to see it continue. There is a review underway, like I said earlier, and as soon as we have some form of a strategic plan in place, which I am told will be ready by the middle of December, we will try to implement it as soon as we can following that, some time in the new year. Thank you.

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

Question 275-14(3): Alcohol and Drug Mobile Treatment

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen. It is Addictions Awareness Week, as she has mentioned. I have had constituents call me with concerns about the number of treatment facilities in the Northwest Territories. I think a short time ago we had five operating facilities and I think that we are down to one. The department seems interested in pursuing mobile treatment facilities. From what I can tell, it seems primarily motivated by money; this is a much cheaper alternative. Other than money, can Mrs. Groenewegen tell us why the department has chosen to go this route instead of reopening permanent facilities? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 275-14(3): Alcohol and Drug Mobile Treatment

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department did not intend or plan to go this way in isolation. In fact, there was considerable funding committed previously to a Yellowknife facility. When it looked as if those resources would become available, there was an alternative programming steering committee that was struck that worked together to look at the best utilization of these resources. This encompassed quite a number of stakeholders, NGOs and people in the communities, so the government in isolation did not make choices with respect to these. We did consult with many people and it was felt that the most effective expenditure of our limited resources was these other various mobile and post-trauma recovery, these types of initiatives which we recently announced, and we will be monitoring them to see what kinds of results and outcomes they achieve and to determine their effectiveness. It was not a money-saving exercise. It was an exercise to determine the most effective way of addressing the problem. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 275-14(3): Alcohol and Drug Mobile Treatment

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most effective way to address the problem and an effort to deal with the problem while saving money, I would assume. One of the things that some Members of the House heard and I, myself, heard from child protection workers, is that the number of children in care, half of them are from the communities and have been in Yellowknife for less than six months. They indicated this is likely due to the fact that there is a lack of treatment in communities and you have to come to Yellowknife for treatment. Of course, we have also shut down facilities.

However, as far as mobile treatment, Mrs. Groenewegen mentioned that we are keeping an eye on it and we are analyzing it. Do we have results? Are we still at the pilot project stage? Do we know if these mobile treatment facilities are in fact working, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return to Question 275-14(3): Alcohol and Drug Mobile Treatment

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the Member is well aware, when you are dealing with addictions and clients who struggle with addictions, we do not always immediately have a clear indication of how these treatment options are working. Certainly indications we have had back to date with respect to the Women's Mobile Treatment Program have been very positive. There are some real advantages to the mobile program and the initial reaction is positive. It will take time, though, to determine what the long-term effects are. If there was a quick solution to addictions problems, I am sure we would all be the wiser. Unfortunately, there is not one set way of addressing these problems and it does take a spectrum of options available to people. That is what our research and statistics show. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 275-14(3): Alcohol and Drug Mobile Treatment

MR. BELL: Thank you. This spectrum of options available to people, if it has mobile treatment, I assume at the other end of the spectrum is permanent facilities. We have heard various Members of the House, Mr. Lafferty, indeed Mr. Roland, talk about the need for permanent facilities in their communities. I know we need one in Yellowknife. If we are talking a spectrum, a range of options, are we currently looking at permanent facilities and establishing whether or not there is a need for permanent facilities in the communities and in Yellowknife? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 275-14(3): Alcohol and Drug Mobile Treatment

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am not aware of any permanent residential facilities that are being considered anywhere in the Northwest Territories. When I talk about the spectrum of solutions that are out there that people might find help through, I am not just talking about efforts that are undertaken by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Information we get on feedback for people who have overcome addictions are that some people are assisted through things like Alcoholics' Anonymous. Some people are helped through connecting with a spiritual group and finding a sense of community and support there. There are a number of different ways in which people find the help they need to overcome this problem. So I am not just referring to government programs and institutions. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 275-14(3): Alcohol and Drug Mobile Treatment

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is all well and good to hope that other non-government agencies will help deal with their problems but, in fact, the buck does stop here. We have a commitment to the people to deal with addictions. I was looking for a response from the Minister that would suggest that we are certainly analyzing the full range of possibilities and looking at permanent facilities. Clearly mobile treatment may work for some folks, but the only answer for others may be permanent facilities where they can be out of the problems that they have in day-to-day life. Would the Minister now acknowledge this?

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

Further Return to Question 275-14(3): Alcohol and Drug Mobile Treatment

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, of course I would acknowledge it. As a government, we do have a responsibility to help people in any way we can. However, we also have an obligation to work with other

partners who work on the frontline in addressing these issues. We have an obligation to consult with communities.

One of the complaints we often receive as a government is that we sit here in Yellowknife and try to dictate to communities how they should deal with their issues. So I do believe that the partnership approach is a good approach and I think we have had excellent input from some of the non-government organizations and some of the volunteers who work every day first hand with people and see what some of the answers to these very challenging problems are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 276-14(3): Environmental Health Concerns

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is in the area of environmental health. It is following what Mr. Krutko was talking about earlier today. Water is one of the biggest problems, one of the biggest areas that could potentially become a large problem in the Northwest Territories. We look at Walkerton and what not...there are a lot of health problems in the Northwest Territories that this government just slacks off as saying it is a lifestyle problem. However, if you listen to people and elders in my constituency and elders in other parts of the Northwest Territories, they say there are more people dying of cancer. People are not living as long.

In light of all the diseases that we experience in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, should it not be the responsibility of environmental health to pay for studies that are territorial-wide? Water studies, death studies, for example? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 276-14(3): Environmental Health Concerns

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Member's question was, does the GNWT have a responsibility to address issues of environmental contaminants and research associated with such potential contaminants. Yes, the Department of Health and Social Services does have a mandate to minimize the exposure of NWT residents to environmental health hazards and does work collaboratively with territorial, federal and aboriginal governments to respond to issues such as contaminants.

There is a lot of research that does go on in the Northwest Territories at any given time in this area. We are kept informed of it. We do not always initiate it. This is something that is carried on by more than one level of government, but we do actively participate. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 276-14(3): Environmental Health Concerns

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a doctor in the Northwest Territories who has been paid by this government to deliver medical services. That doctor has a

concern and wants to do a study on the people and water in Aklavik. When asked who is paying for that, the Minister replied by saying we are dealing with the regional health board to see who is going to pay for it and until we have a terms of reference for this study to be done, the department cannot pay for it.

I think the department should have a budget that is pan-territorial and does not have to go through the regional health board. They are stretched to the limit already.

Getting back to the study. I want to ask the Minister if she would be willing to pay for a collaborative study say in Lutselk'e, to do a similar study so that there can be comparisons done? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 276-14(3): Environmental Health Concerns

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not exactly sure what kind of a study Mr. Nitah would like to see undertaken in Lutselk'e. What we would have to do is look at the terms of reference of a proposal for research. We would have to look at the statistics that would indicate that there was a need for that, then we would be in a better position. We would have the information that we need to evaluate the necessity and the priority of such research.

So in answer to his question, if those things were in place and there was evidence that there were outcomes, that there was a serious problem that was occurring...the Member refers to rates of cancer and the increase of incidents. In fact, I think members of the Social Programs committee have been advised of this on numerous occasions. The life expectancy of aboriginal men in the Northwest Territories has increased by ten years in the last decade. I would say that is a fairly good indication -- peoples' life spans are increasing -- that there are improved conditions for Northerners. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 276-14(3): Environmental Health Concerns

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Life expectancy may be going up but it is still lower than the national average. We do not know what is causing people to die earlier than normal. Maybe medications are just keeping people alive longer. That does not tell us that the environment is not causing the diseases. We may have medication that is just keeping us alive longer. What I would like is a collaborative study.

The study that Dr. Morris is recommending we do is a study on people and water in Aklavik which may be causing stomach cancer and other illnesses. What I would like is the department to do a similar study outside of Aklavik so that there is collaborative studies. There are similar studies done in Lutselk'e and compare that to the study done in Aklavik. If the results are similar, then there is obviously a problem. You could deal with that problem at that time.

That is why I am asking the Minister, can the Minister approve a budget to do a study? What she is saying is that she wants to do another study to determine if a study is required, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member did ask a question there. Can you approve the study? The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 276-14(3): Environmental Health Concerns

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try and remember what the question is. Mr. Speaker, what I am trying to say is that if it can be shown that a study was required to address a specific issue based on...we compile very detailed statistics. For example, on cancer. We have a registry that has won a national award. It is a very good registry on the types of cancer, the age of the people, all these different things. If we see something in there that indicates that we have a serious concern in a specific community...you know, there is a lot of competition right now for the very limited resources that we as a department have.

I was not saying that the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board would have to pay for something like that, but again, we would not go into a region and start undertaking a major environmental health research project without consulting with a regional board such as they have in Inuvik. So we would not necessarily be asking them to find the resources to do something like that, but we would have to have some good data, some good baseline information on which to determine the necessity for such a research project if we were going to fund it. That is just good, prudent management.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 276-14(3): Environmental Health Concerns

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me then when do you draw the line? When do you have to have a study to determine if you are going to need another study?

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

Further Return to Question 276-14(3): Environmental Health Concerns

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not think we need to conduct a study. We would need to compile some of the statistics which we already have in our possession because of the good record-keeping by the department on statistics about various types of illnesses and cancers and so on.

So I think if the Member would like us to work with our chief medical officer to look at some of those numbers to determine if there is anything unusual going on out there in the regions or in specific communities to do further work and research to try and find out what some of the contributing causes are, that is something that we could do within the department. It would not require a study.

I am sure the Member can appreciate that we cannot just one day decide we are going to undertake a study. Scientific research is something that you would have to have a good plan in hand to undertake. You would have to have a good rationale for the expenditure of the funds prior to embarking on the project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 277-14(3): Federal Contribution to Build Bridges

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had hoped to address a question to the Premier. This was in regard to the statement that he made earlier today on Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy, but I will ask that question of the Minister Responsible for Transportation.

The news that has been presented today is indeed good news. We do have some signals from Ottawa that they are paying attention. However, the situation is a familiar dilemma. I would note that the contribution put forward by the federal government is far less than even one percent of the \$500 million that was earned this summer from oil and gas leases and just over one percent of the total value of our proposed strategy.

My question is, what efforts is the government maintaining, Mr. Speaker, to keep this issue at the front of the burner in Ottawa, especially given that we are in the midst of a national election and a lot of competing agendas? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 277-14(3): Federal Contribution to Build Bridges

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the statement the Member is referring to is the Premier's statement and I would defer the question to the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member should be aware that only the Premier can defer a question to another Minister. This is a bit of a dilemma. The honourable Member did answer, so we go into supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary to Question 277-14(3): Federal Contribution to Build Bridges

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To clarify some further information about this project, and I also note that it is a partnership and I think that is a very positive trend that we are setting here, could the Minister please confirm that we have \$3.7 million in new federal money and we have \$2 million in new Government of the Northwest Territories money and that we have \$200,000 in new industry money coming into this project? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The question is still directed to the Minister of Transportation unless the Premier wants to intervene. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 277-14(3): Federal Contribution to Build Bridges

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the overall cost of the bridge program is roughly \$7 million. The federal portion of this would be approximately \$3.6 or \$3.8 million, which would include \$200,000 from industry. The rest of the project funding is GNWT funding. I cannot suggest that this is new funding. This is part of the overall bridge plan. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 277-14(3): Federal Contribution to Build Bridges

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier's statement made reference to a contribution coming from industry in the value of \$200,000 in cash or kind. I would like to seek clarification on which industry is making this contribution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 277-14(3): Federal Contribution to Build Bridges

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the major beneficiaries of the acceleration of the bridge program in the Deh Cho and Mackenzie Valley would be the oil and gas industry. Therefore, we would be looking towards the oil and gas industry to make this contribution. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. The time for question period has expired. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

Petition 2-14(3): Water Service Rates in Fort McPherson

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of water service rates in Fort McPherson. Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 69 signatures from Fort McPherson residents and, Mr. Speaker, the petition requests that the costs of repairs to the present water system not be borne by the residents of the community through the subsequent rate increases and that the responsible GNWT departments resolve this problem.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 9, petitions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Petition 3-14(3): Extending the Mackenzie Highway to the Beaufort Sea and Extending the Dempster Highway to Aklavik

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of the extension of the Mackenzie Highway to the Beaufort Sea and the extension from the Dempster Highway to Aklavik. Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 170 signatures and, Mr.

Speaker, the petitioners request the Government of the Northwest Territories submit to the Government of Canada a budget extension of the Mackenzie Highway to the Beaufort Sea and consideration of extension of the Dempster Highway to Aklavik, Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 75-14(3): NWT Power Corporation Annual Report

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Power Corporation Annual Report 1999-2000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 76-14(3): Proposed Plan of Action Re: Fort McPherson Water Supply Concerns

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to table a document called Proposed Plan of Action and Schedule for the Hamlet of Fort McPherson. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Motion 12 remains on the order paper for tomorrow. Motion 13 will remain on the order paper for tomorrow. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 14: An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act (Ootes)

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ootes. The motion is in order. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 14 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Tabled Document 63-14(3), Bill 11 and Bill 15 with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome to committee of the whole. We have three items to deal with. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we deal with Bill 11 first, followed by Bill 15 and then the tabled document.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Let us start with Bill 11 after a short break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call the committee to order. We are reviewing Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 3. I will ask the Minister to proceed with any opening comments.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, I am pleased to introduce Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 3. This bill will amend the definition of the "Year's Maximum Insurable Remuneration" (also known as YMIR) to raise it from \$60,000 to \$63,350.

The YMIR is a fundamental element of workers' compensation. It is used to determine the benefits payable to an injured worker, as well as the amount of payroll for which an employer will be assessed in the year.

When a worker becomes entitled to workers' compensation, his or her benefits are based on the worker's annual salary to the maximum of the YMIR, which is currently \$60,000. An employer is assessed according to its payroll. When a worker receives a salary greater than the YMIR, the employer is only assessed on its payroll up to \$60,000.

The WCB's board of directors has recommended that the YMIR in both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories be increased to \$63,350. That will, at this point, make it the highest YMIR in the country. The Nunavut Legislature has just increased its YMIR to \$63,350.

This amount will allow the WCB to fully cover the salaries of 85 percent of workers in both territories.

In light of the assessment rates which will take effect in 2001, some employers will experience a nominal increase in their assessments as a result of the YMIR increase, and some will actually experience a decrease.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Does the committee responsible for overseeing this bill have any comments? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 11, an Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 3 at its meetings on November 9th and 10th, 2000. This bill amends the Workers' Compensation Act to increase the amount of a year's maximum insurable remuneration, known as the YMIR. The amendment will increase the YMIR from \$60,000 to \$63,350, effective January 1, 2001. Section 52 of the act requires the Workers' Compensation Board to do an annual review of the YMIR and to make recommendations on

changes to the Minister responsible for the act. Mr. Chairman, the YMIR is used to determine the benefits payable to an injured worker, as well as the amount of payroll for which an employer will be assessed in the year.

The committee would like to thank the Minister and his officials for presenting the bill and responding to the issues raised by the committee. During the public hearing of the bill, the Minister advised committee members that the amendment will, at this point, make it the highest YMIR in the country, and that the Nunavut Legislature has increased its YMIR to \$63,350. The amendment will allow the Workers' Compensation Board to fully cover the salaries of 85 percent of workers in both territories. Mr. Chair, committee members may have additional comments or questions on this bill during the review in committee of the whole. This concludes the standing committee's comments on Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Worker's Compensation Act, No. 3. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, I will.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witness in. Mr. Minister, for the record, could you introduce the witness?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with me is Gerry Meier, the president of the Workers' Compensation Board. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome. General comments on the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Detail. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as a Member I have been getting a lot of people approaching me on the Workers' Compensation Board. One area that they are approaching me on is the area of approachability. The mission statement developed by the board is one of, come to us, we will help you. In actuality, people who have to deal with the Workers' Compensation Board, do not seem to feel that way. They are very difficult to deal with, very bureaucratic, and they are not user-friendly. I am wondering if the Minister can speak to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the purpose of the committee of the whole today is to speak to the principle of the bill here and I think that we may be getting a bit off the principle. I am certainly open, as Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, to hear any concerns that people may have with regard to approachability or accessibility or issues that they may have. We are working, as a compensation board, to try to continually improve our record on that side and I think that if we are running into difficulties, then those should be directed to the Workers'

Compensation Board first of all. I would like to know about them if Members are hearing anything. We want to maintain a good service and certainly be approachable to the public. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Clause-by-clause. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Does the committee agree that Bill 11 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Bill 11 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and his witness. The committee agreed that the next bill that we are going to deal with is Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act and Public Service Act. It is tab 15 in your grey binders. With that, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for introducing this bill if he has any opening comments.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the agreement of the NWT Power Corporation to provide services in Nunavut expires March 31, 2001. To enable a smooth transition of employees from the NWT Power Corporation to the Nunavut Power Corporation, amendments to legislation in both the NWT and Nunavut are required. The approach we are taking to facilitate this transfer is the same approach that was taken to transfer employees from the GNWT to the Government of Nunavut on April 1, 1999.

The president of the Union of Northern Workers has been consulted regarding these legislative amendments and did not express any concern. The amendments to the Nunavut Power Utilities Act were given assent on November 3, 2000, by the Nunavut Legislature.

Mr. Chairman, we are proposing amendments to both the NWT Power Corporation Act and the Public Service Act that together, with the amendments made to the Nunavut Public Utilities Act, will result in a smooth transfer of employees to the Nunavut Power Corporation.

The amendments to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act will result in the employees located in the Nunavut Territory ceasing to be employees of the NWT Power Corporation at the end of the day on March 31st, 2001. The amendments further clarify that these individuals will not be entitled to severance pay or compensation as a result of the change in employer. It should be noted that the employees will transfer to the Nunavut Power Corporation with all of their terms and conditions of employment intact.

The amendment to the Public Service Act is minimal, consisting only of a consequential amendment to Schedule A, which is the schedule that sets out the portions of the public service of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee responsible for overseeing this bill have any comments? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has reviewed Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act and the Public Service Act, and held a public hearing on November 9, 2000. There were no comments or presentations made by the public or any other stakeholder. Bill 15 amends the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act to provide that effective April 1, 2001, the Government of Nunavut will become responsible for the severance, benefits, pay and compensation for the former employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation who work in Nunavut. The consequential amendment to the Public Service Act removes a previous amendment that allowed the employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation to be employed in Nunavut. Similar legislation has been introduced and passed in the Nunavut Legislature. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight had no significant concerns with the amendments proposed in Bill 15. Individual members of the committee may have comments or questions as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witness in? For the record, Mr. Minister, could you introduce your witness?

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome. We are dealing with Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act and the Public Service Act. Any general comments? Clause-by-clause? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 1?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 15 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Bill 15 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and his witness. So we have dealt with Bill 11 and Bill 15. The other item in committee of the whole is Tabled Document 63-14(3), Human Resources Development Proposal Relating to Non-Renewable Resources in the Northwest Territories. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I think that the committee might be ready to conclude the tabled document.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay. Since that concludes the items in committee of the whole, I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 3; Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act and Public Service Act; and Tabled Document 63-14(3), and would like to report Tabled Document 63 is concluded and that Bills 11 and 15 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah. We have a motion on the floor that is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, item 22, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. CLERK: Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight at 4:15 this afternoon, at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning again of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, November 15th:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns To Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address

10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 12-14(3), Establishment of a Special Committee to Review the Official Languages Act
 - Motion 13-14(3), Establishment of a Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 12, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2000-2001
 - Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 5, 1999-2000
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 3
 - Bill 15, An Act to Amend the NWT Power Corporation Act and the Public Service Act
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly the House stands adjourned to Wednesday, November 15th at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

