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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 2001

Members Present

Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Honourable Jane Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, 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, Ms. Lee. Good afternoon, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 7-14(4): Minister Absent From the House

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Roger Allen will be absent from the House today to attend funeral services for the late Kyle Harry. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Minister's Statement 8-14(4): Maximizing Northern Employment

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people are an invaluable resource in the North. We need to help people harness their skills, labour and productivity so that they are prepared to take full advantage of the economic opportunities before us. Maximizing Northern Employment is a key government priority that will help ensure that Northerners are positioned to take advantage of these opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, Maximizing Northern Employment is a government-wide, coordinated effort that is building partnerships with aboriginal governments and the private sector. It supports several of the key goals identified by the Legislative Assembly in the vision document Towards A Better Tomorrow. These include:

- healthy, educated Northerners making responsible personal choices for themselves and their families;
- a healthy, diversified economy providing employment opportunities for Northerners in all communities; and
- an effective balance between development of our resources, socio-economic impacts and preservation and protection of our natural environment.

Today I would like to talk about nine initiatives under the Maximizing Northern Employment priority, representing an investment by this government of about \$6.5 million.

These are practical initiatives dealing with real life problems, initiatives that will get Northerners working. Some of these initiatives are already in place. Others will be in place shortly.

The Northern Student Employment Program

One of the ways that the GNWT supports northern students is through summer employment opportunities. A number of exciting changes have been made to improve the quality and range of the student employment program such as a student employment web site, career development, an opportunity to enhance employment skills, a Progressive Work Experience Program, student orientation and mentorships. Students will have one point of access to the GNWT system and they will be met and assisted by trained personnel.

The Northern Graduate Employment Program

In an effort to retain and recruit Northwest Territories residents to the territorial labour force, the Northern Graduate Employment Program offers recent graduates of recognized degree and diploma programs a range of options to return to live and work in the NWT.

There are many occupations into which the government has significant difficulty recruiting Northerners with the necessary education and experience. Accordingly, we have guaranteed employment to all northern graduates of recognized nursing, teaching and social work diploma and degree programs.

In addition, we are offering one-year internships to post-secondary graduates of other programs in a range of additional occupations. This will provide a year of relevant work experience for students wishing to return to the NWT to work.

The private sector is also playing an important role in this initiative. Each private employer who hires a northern graduate will be eligible for a wage subsidy of \$15,000 for the first year of employment.

The Employment Support Program

The Employment Support Program is an important initiative to provide employment support to northern communities, enabling its residents to find rewarding careers.

This territory-wide program will foster cooperation between industry, aboriginal governments, community governments and the GNWT to coordinate employment support services at the community level.

The Aboriginal Government/Private Sector Partnership Fund

This initiative will further develop partnerships with aboriginal governments and the private sector in order to offer training and skill development directly in the field, creating a local pool of skilled employees for local needs. In partnership with aboriginal groups, this fund will provide a series of community-based business development workshops in areas impacted by industrial development. The fund will also undertake work mobility initiatives with employers and communities to ensure that northern employment and development is maximized.

Expanded Northern Teacher Education Program

We are expanding the Northern Teacher Education Training Program in order to make the Aurora College Teacher Education Program more accessible to all NWT residents. This will be done by offering the three-year teacher education diploma program at all three campuses of Aurora College. An access year to help some students upgrade before entering the full program will also be offered.

First Degree for all NWT Teachers

We are making special funding available to allow up to 20 NWT teachers to pursue full-time and part-time studies towards their teaching degree. This will enable NWT teachers to receive a Bachelor of Education, as required by the Education Act and Regulations, without losing their teaching positions.

The Healthy Workplace Program

The Healthy Workplace Program will coordinate the existing worker support program to provide a safe, supportive working environment for all GNWT employees.

Specialized Training for the Oil and Gas Industry

In order to ensure our residents are prepared to take advantage of new opportunities in non-renewable resource development, a specific program to enhance training for the oil and gas industry has been developed. This program will help meet the requirements of NWT employers for advanced and specialized skilled trades people.

Student Success Centres

Student success centres will be established at the three Aurora College campuses in Fort Smith, Yellowknife and Inuvik. These will provide a comprehensive set of support initiatives to help students succeed and complete their studies.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is committed to Maximizing Northern Employment in the Northwest Territories. We have supported that commitment by identifying Maximizing Northern Employment as a key priority based on the following criteria.

First, Maximizing Northern Employment initiatives must ensure the government fulfills its role as a proactive employer.

Second, Maximizing Northern Employment initiatives must provide support that encourages NWT residents to be proactive and find employment and training opportunities that help them to realize their personal goals.

Finally, these initiatives must be developed through strategic alliances with business, industry and other governments so that they support employment on a territory-wide basis across all sectors.

Mr. Speaker, Maximizing Northern Employment will help to ensure that the people of the Northwest Territories seize the opportunities before us today and harness their skills and labour to transform them into prosperity and better lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ootes. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Minister's Statement 9-14(4): National Transportation Week Award

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, June 1st to 9th marks National Transportation Week across Canada. Canadians are encouraged to take time to consider the important role of transportation in our past, our present and our future.

National Transportation Week is organized and sponsored by Canadian private and public sector transportation organizations.

Mr. Speaker, as part of National Transportation Week, I am pleased today to inform the House that Mr. Doug Howard, assistant deputy minister of the Department of Transportation, has received a National Transportation Week Award of Excellence.

-- Applause

The Award of Excellence is presented annually to those men and women who have made outstanding contributions to the betterment of the Canadian transportation industry over several years. Mr. Howard joins a distinguished group of people that have been presented with this award over the past years.

Mr. Howard has had a long career in the North. Mr. Howard was presented the award in recognition of his dedication to ensuring excellent transportation services to the North and for his continued contributions to northern transportation policy and strategy.

On behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I would like to extend our congratulations to Mr. Howard in achieving this accomplishment and to thank him for his contributions towards improving northern transportation over the past 33 years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 10-14(4): Development of Our Energy Potential

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as the Premier mentioned in his Sessional Statement, the North American demand for energy currently favours the development of our abundant

energy resources. However, any resource development must result in maximum benefits to the people of the Northwest Territories. This includes ensuring that residents have access to clean, affordable and efficient energy sources. As well, development of our natural resources must be done in a manner that respects our land and environment, and the unique ties we have to it. Our government has taken steps to ensure these principles are respected.

Mr. Speaker, over the past year we have been working to expand the benefits of natural gas development. Our efforts have successfully raised the national and international profile of the Northwest Territories and the need for a Mackenzie Valley pipeline. Indeed, both Prime Minister Chretien and President Bush have acknowledged the need to develop the gas reserves in the Northwest Territories. Now, as Canada sets its energy policy and works with the United States and Mexico on a continental energy framework, we want to see Canada make the timely development of Canadian gas reserves a condition for Canadian participation.

Mr. Speaker, we are confident that we will see an application for a Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline by year end. The major challenges identified by industry have been addressed. By the end of the summer, the Environmental Assessment and Regulatory Agencies Coordinating Group will release a draft framework for a single environmental assessment process for the review of a Mackenzie Valley stand-alone and Beaufort offshore pipeline proposals for public comment. Yesterday, the majority of aboriginal leaders were satisfied with the business plan prepared by the Aboriginal Pipeline Group and Mackenzie Delta Producers to provide aboriginal people with an equity share in a Mackenzie Valley pipeline. This is all good news for our economic future.

Through the Mackenzie Valley Gas Development Project, we are proceeding with implementing training initiatives to increase employment opportunities for residents, assessing options for communities to access natural gas as a clean and cost-effective alternative energy source and working with regional aboriginal groups to build their internal expertise and capacity to deal with oil and gas technical issues, environmental issues, business and human resource development.

We also want to see that the environment is protected. Accordingly, we plan to work with aboriginal governments, industry and the federal government to prepare a funding proposal for a joint method of gathering biophysical and socio-economic data in the Mackenzie Valley, similar to the approach taken by the West Kitikmeot Slave Study which conducted research on impacts from diamond mine development. To maximize socio-economic benefits, we are negotiating an industrial benefits protocol with the Mackenzie Valley Producers Group.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that resource development will lever the investment required to diversify our economy. That is certainly the intent behind our most recent energy initiative -- looking at the immense hydroelectric potential of the Northwest Territories in partnership with aboriginal governments. Our government will continue to make presentations to aboriginal and municipal leaders throughout the summer to inform residents about this clean and efficient energy source.

The major projects reviewed to date indicate that the Northwest Territories has 12,000 megawatts of run-of-river potential,

which would be sufficient to satisfy territorial needs and export power to energy-hungry markets down south. The attraction of run-of-river hydro projects is that they use earth-filled dams to direct water to the powerhouse as it flows by. These projects do not lead to contamination of the water and do not have storage dams that create lakes.

The other major benefit of hydro plants relates to climate change, which people of the Northwest Territories are already experiencing. Generating power through hydro plants will reduce the need to generate electricity through the burning of fossil fuels, thereby reducing northern greenhouse gas emissions. This will enable the Northwest Territories to lead by example, as Canada works towards managing causes and impacts of climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that hydro projects are just being considered. No projects will proceed without partnerships with aboriginal governments and without full consideration of environmental and socio-economic impacts.

Lastly, I would like to speak about alternative energy sources and energy conservation. The Arctic Energy Alliance continues its work to assist residents, businesses and government to identify ways to save energy and reduce energy costs. As well, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has committed \$50,000 to a new renewable energy technology conversion assistance program to support application by any territorial resident or organization to convert conventional electrical and heat energy systems to solar, wind or other renewable source.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that partnerships with aboriginal and federal governments, industry and other stakeholders in developing our energy reserves will result in clean, affordable and accessible energy for all NWT residents, employment and socio-economic benefits and a diversified economy. This will make a positive contribution to the energy needs of Canada and our southern neighbours. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 11-14(4): Second Intergovernmental Forum

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Following the statements made by Premier Kakfwi and Minister Handley earlier this week, I would like to provide further details on the second Intergovernmental Forum meeting which took place in Inuvik on May 22.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all leaders for entrusting me with the chair for the meeting in Inuvik. In addition to my participation as the chair, Premier Kakfwi and Minister Handley attended representing the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Honourable Robert Nault, attended on behalf of the Government of Canada.

Representing our other partners in this process were leaders from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Dogrib Treaty 11 Tribal Council, North Slave Metis Alliance, Akaitcho First Nations. The Deh Cho First Nations sent an observer. Leaders from the Sahtu Secretariat

Incorporated, Sahtu Dene Council and Deline First Nation attended representing the Sahtu region.

I was also pleased that a number of Members of the Legislative Assembly were able to attend including the host Members, Mr. Floyd Roland and the Honourable Roger Allen.

Attending on behalf of the Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause was my committee co-chair, Mr. Speaker, Sandy Lee. Also attending was the co-chair of Caucus, Mr. Bill Braden.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the community and people of Inuvik and particularly the two host organizations of the Aboriginal Summit, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Gwich'in Tribal Council for hosting the meeting in Inuvik.

As the Premier noted in his statement, the Intergovernmental Forum was first established as a means for aboriginal governments, the federal government and the territorial government to come together to share information and to consider issues of territorial-wide interest. More than that, Mr. Speaker, it is an historic arrangement because it is the first and only forum of its kind in Canada. A forum that recognizes and respects the place of aboriginal governments as equals at the table.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform Members that the second Intergovernmental Forum resulted in a number of agreements.

Leaders representing the GNWT, Canada, Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Sahtu, Dogrib and North Slave Metis signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Principles for the Intergovernmental Forum. This agreement formalizes the place of aboriginal governments as equal partners in this process and represents a significant commitment by all three parties to operate the forum on a government-to-government-to-government basis. We are optimistic that the leadership of the Deh Cho, Akaitcho and South Slave Metis will sign this document once they have had the opportunity to review it with their constituents.

As Members are aware, at the initial meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum in Hay River in May of 2000, leaders identified a number of important and complex issues as priorities for joint work. Those issues were economic development, capacity building and devolution and resource revenue sharing.

At the Inuvik meeting, leaders reiterated their commitment to building capacity for aboriginal people as a fundamental element of building stronger communities and governments. Officials provided a progress report on the work that is being done to inventory current capacity building programs currently delivered by the territorial and federal governments and to identify gaps. Leaders instructed officials to continue this important research and to make recommendations on how to make government programs more effective and responsive at the next IGF.

With respect to the economic development priority, leaders agreed to establish an NWT Economic Development Advisory Forum that would bring together a broad range of economic interests from across the NWT. The advisory forum will be mandated to provide advice and make recommendations to the IGF on territory-wide economic development matters.

On the critical issue of devolution and resource revenue-sharing, leaders endorsed a Memorandum of Intent (MOI) at the Inuvik meeting. This paper sets out the objectives, principles and process for future devolution talks and includes a commitment for the parties to seek instructions and appoint negotiators by March 31, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, the Memorandum of Intent is a critical step as we work toward the establishment of a formal process to negotiate the devolution of federal responsibilities over land and resources...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, the time for Ministers' statements has expired.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude this very important Minister's statement. Thank you.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the Memorandum of Intent is a critical step as we work toward the establishment of a formal process to negotiate the devolution of federal responsibilities over land and resources in the NWT, including resource revenue sharing.

Control over our resources by governments of the Northwest Territories is essential to ensuring the future prosperity of the Northwest Territories. Significant progress towards this goal was made at the second Intergovernmental Forum.

Mr. Speaker, one of the goals established by this Legislative Assembly in Towards A Better Tomorrow is to "foster mutually respectful and cooperative partnerships with aboriginal governments." The strong partnerships that we are forming at the Intergovernmental Forum illustrate the progress that we are making in this regard. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Energy Subsidy Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the heels of Mr. Handley's message today and the Premier's a couple days ago, as well as a number of other messages, we are very much an energized Assembly these days, and that is indeed the topic of my statement.

On Tuesday, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's Sessional Statement acknowledged that while the increased demand for energy in North America has resulted in increased employment here in the Northwest Territories, it has also resulted in increased energy costs here at home. Mr. Speaker, this is the crux of my problem.

How do we balance the rewards we stand to gain in jobs and wealth against the cost of energy to the average northern

consumer? Mr. Speaker, the 1998 household survey showed that the average Yellowknife household paid \$3,000 to meet their utility costs. The average Canadian household only paid \$1,521 to meet their energy needs. All of the jobs in the world, Mr. Speaker, will not help if the cost of energy is so prohibitive that Northerners cannot afford to keep their homes, businesses and vehicles running comfortably with reliable, affordable fuel and electricity.

The Premier also outlined his plan to form the Energy Secretariat to develop and present an energy strategy to Cabinet within one year. This is a positive step. I have been advocating a coordinated approach to how energy is developed and managed in the Northwest Territories since I was elected in 1999.

The Premier also stated "Energy development must result in clean, affordable and accessible energy to our residents, our people." The key word here, Mr. Speaker, is affordability. I would certainly expect that the Northwest Territories energy strategy would also look at the issue of long-term stability in the supply and cost of energy to Northerners. It is our gas, our oil and our hydroelectricity.

Mr. Speaker, we have a major responsibility to manage this energy with a "Northerners first" strategic direction. I will be following up on this with the Premier during question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Relief From Rising Energy Costs

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the wallets of all the Northwest Territories residents have been hit hard by the rising cost of energy. Over the past year, we have watched as the cost of heating fuel for our homes goes up over 30 percent. The price of gasoline for our vehicles, snowmobiles and boats has skyrocketed as well. The cost for transporting food, clothing and other items into our communities has increased. The cost of a family to travel by airplane, or by other means of transportation from our communities, has become unaffordable.

Mr. Speaker, these high costs of living do not discriminate. It is affecting all residents of the Northwest Territories equally. It is time for something to be done to get relief to the citizens of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. Presently, the GNWT has a hodgepodge of subsidy programs in place to give some relief to Northerners. However, given the drastic increase in costs of energy over the past year, the subsidy programs have not kept pace with the soaring energy costs.

The low-income people have been hit the hardest. Rising costs have driven more and more families into poverty. Mr. Speaker, the government needs to take immediate action and develop a comprehensive energy program to supply relief to our residents. This program should not focus on just heating fuel. It should address the high cost of transportation of goods and tackle the costs for a family to travel to and from communities. Mr. Speaker, the program should deal with the cost of gasoline.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that this program should be a rebate program, a rebate that is given directly to the consumer. The money should go into the pockets of all of our residents. If the program is set up in such a way that the rebate or subsidy is given to a supplier, I am not so confident that benefits will flow down to the consumer. The money would just remain in the pockets of the supplier. Further, we should have a program where there is no clawback.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. The Member should just wait until the time has expired. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there should be a second part to the energy program that assists residents in reducing their energy consumption. Many low-income earners live in housing that is not energy-efficient. Being low-income earners, they do not have the disposable money to make improvements to their homes to reduce energy costs. They do not have the money to buy energy-efficient appliances. They do not have the money to improve insulation to reduce heat loss. They do not have the money to change from one type of heat to another, should that type of heating be more cost-effective.

Mr. Speaker, we desperately need a program that assists our residents in reducing their energy consumption and costs.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, we need an energy assistance program that is twofold in nature. We need to give a rebate to the residents. A rebate will lessen the impacts of cost of energy in the Northwest Territories. We also need to assist residents in reducing their energy consumption. We need to do this soon, Mr. Speaker, our people are hurting. Mahsi cho.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Key Components of an Energy Strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well would like to speak on the issue of energy, specifically the energy strategy, a strategy whose time has come and is, in fact, overdue.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think the people of the Northwest Territories realize the hundreds of millions of dollars that are spent and put towards the provision of energy in all its forms. What we have developed is a fragmented service system, supply system of power, fuel, natural gas, wood, oil, electricity, all scattered all over under different legislation and different authorities.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to bring the whole issue of energy under one strategy and to look at the very many component parts of what we need for an effective energy strategy.

Mr. Speaker, we have to address issues like import replacement, as we are burdened almost daily with price

increases on imported, expensive carbon-based fuels. We have to look at all energy sources, hydro, fuel, solar, wind, hydrogen and any other viable alternative source. We have to look at our supply and distribution systems and programs that we have and how we are going to make them more efficient and effective and link them.

We have to come up with a way to stabilize prices for energy so that our constituents are not burdened and beggared by the sheer cost of this particular form of energy.

We have to look at the regulations and the regulatory regime. We have hydro rate zones. We have fuel price regimes. We have to look at coordinating those and integrating those in an effective, careful way to provide the necessary checks and balances.

We have to address issues of the environment, the Kyoto Accord, greenhouse gas emissions. We cannot forget that very critical factor as we seek to preserve that very important part of northern heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that this panel and secretariat the Premier is setting up will have and be led by those with northern expertise, of which there are some in the North that I am aware of. There has to be a commitment to consultation, Mr. Speaker, so that people can have an idea of what we are buying into. The plan has to be comprehensive and long-term enough so that it will take us into the 21st century in a careful, measured way to bring together all these very many threads of what is necessary for an effective energy strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Energy Issues in Small Communities

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have heard the Premier speak of the development of an energy strategy and the formation of an Energy Secretariat.

Whenever I hear the word strategy, or hear about new branches of the bureaucracy, I have to wonder whether there will be any benefit to the people that I represent in the North Slave.

The people in the communities try and do their part to save energy. They would like to be able to use the power of the sun and the wind to dry their clothes. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this simple action is often contaminated by the diesel fumes and exhaust from generators located in the centre of most communities.

As well as tainting clothes, I have no doubt that these diesel fumes and exhaust also affect the health of elders and youth. We also watch new mines open, and there is little doubt that we need economic activity. However, as we open our Territory to development, I think we can do things to ensure that we do not add to the greenhouse gases already being produced by our dependence on fossil fuels.

Greenhouse gases lead to climate change; climate change affects all areas of life and could mean that the caribou may change their migration patterns. It is a vicious cycle, Mr. Speaker, one that can have serious implications on the lives of the people I represent.

Any energy strategy developed by the government must take into account the needs of people who do not live on the highway system who do not have access to clean, cheap hydro power and who depend on the land to sustain them.

All of the government studies I have seen so far have excluded my region. The studies are short-sighted and they do not show departments working together. Cabinet votes as a block. They should work as a block to establish infrastructure and develop long-range plans to meet the needs of all residents equally and fairly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Seniors' Fuel Subsidy Program

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in keeping with today's theme of energy costs to Northerners, I would like to address the needs of our elders. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, in response to my colleague for Great Slave, indicated he hoped to be making a statement on changes to the Income Support Program.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister will be addressing a seniors' fuel subsidy as part of the changes to the Income Support Program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

MR. MCLEOD: We are all aware that the vast majority of our seniors live on a fixed income. Some are lucky and have indexed pensions from working for the government. Others do not. Whatever the seniors' situation, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that their purchasing power has not kept pace with their cost. My problem with the way the seniors' fuel subsidy works is its eligibility requirements. To be eligible, you must have an income of a set amount. For the communities I represent, the figure is set at \$31,000 per household per year. If you make more than that, you do not qualify for the fuel subsidy.

The seniors' fuel subsidy is a great program, but the requirements have not been adjusted lately and consequently, have not kept pace with inflation. Mr. Speaker, this means that there are senior households grossing \$31,000 in income that are facing crippling price increases in the cost of energy. The cost of heating fuel has increased by over 50 percent. The cost of electricity will be going up in the near future.

I challenge the Minister to explain how a man and wife can maintain a house, meet the rising costs of energy and put food on the table on a pre-tax income of \$31,000. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that for a couple, a figure of \$50,000 in pre-tax income would be more appropriate as a minimum access threshold to the fuel subsidy.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, to evaluate the seniors' fuel subsidy to make sure it is meeting the needs of our elders to make sure

that there are no seniors who are being forced into poverty because of decreases in their purchasing power. I will be following up on the Minister on this important matter during question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Impacts of Rising Fuel Costs

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The rising cost of energy is having an adverse impact on the people of the Northwest Territories. Stats Canada produces information on the cost of living in the publication, The Consumer Price Index. According to this, the cost of heating fuel went from 32 and a half cents per litre in March, 1999, to 52.3 cents per litre in March, 2001, in Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, this is an increase of 19.8 cents per litre, or 61 percent over two years.

Over that same period, the cost of gasoline went from 69.9 cents to 87.5 cents, an increase of 17.6 cents per litre, or 25 percent.

Mr. Speaker, there have also been drastic increases in the price of propane. In January 2000, the plant price for propane in Edmonton was \$130.98 per cubic metre. In January of this year, the price had increased over two-and-a-half times.

While increases in the price of fuel have had an affect on our southern neighbours, the impact is even greater in the Northwest Territories. We have longer winters, less daylight and require our staples to be transported greater distances, Mr. Speaker.

The cost to run our vehicles has increased and has become a burden for some families. As well, the cost of air travel has become out of reach for an increasing number of our citizens. Compounding these costs will be the cost to travel on NWT highways coming from the user toll on commercial trucking proposed by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the fuel rebate this spring was a good start, but it disqualified too many people. The Minister thinks that the price of oil is on its way down, and as he said yesterday "It is predicted to go down even lower", so he is not looking at a rebate at this time.

However, I wish he would have told the Power Corporation this, Mr. Speaker. They have submitted a general rate application asking to raise the cost of power to our homes by \$20 to \$25 a household on average, due in large part to the cost of fuel going forward. Other experts are also predicting higher fuel prices.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to start talking about another fuel rebate, but this time, let us do it right. Base it on usage. Do not discriminate on income. Find some relief for small business. Mr. Speaker, let us start discussions about another fuel rebate. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Hay River Propane Costs

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The rising price of propane is severely impacting my constituents and my community of Hay River. Many businesses and residents in Hay River converted to propane several years ago, at a time when the price of propane was advantageous. At the time, propane was not only abundant, reliable and cleaner than other fossil fuels, but it was also affordable.

Mr. Speaker, using Edmonton as a benchmark, the plant price for propane per cubic metre was \$130 in January 2000. This January, however, that same cubic metre of propane was \$346, an increase of 266 percent over one year. The price of propane is continuing to increase.

This price spike is accompanied by similar increases in other forms of fuel. It now costs more to drive our vehicles, heat our homes or businesses, ship our goods and deliver services.

This government has introduced subsidies for diesel fuel, for power and other fossil fuels, but not all rebate subsidies or other forms of relief have been adopted or considered for small businesses or residential users that rely on propane. The high cost of propane has a significant adverse impact on businesses and residents in my constituency in Hay River and in the North.

Mr. Speaker, it could be said that Hay River has a great advantage over other communities in the North when it comes to propane due to the fact that most of the town is connected by means of an underground piping system. I agree. We look forward to the day when we can access natural gas in our area. The conversion would be quite easy. This may help down the road in the future, Mr. Speaker, but at present, there is no indication that is about to take place in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time today, I will ask the Minister responsible regarding subsidies for propane users in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on High Cost of Living in Small and Remote Communities

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Living in small and remote communities within the Northwest Territories is a unique experience. It is becoming even more of a unique experience as we watch the cost of living rise, far outstripping increases in income. Over the last two years, there has been a drastic increase in the cost of fuels used to heat our homes, run our vehicles and supply electricity.

We have heard from my colleague for Yellowknife South that through the Consumer Price Index, he has learned that the cost of heating fuel in Yellowknife increased by 61 percent over two years. Gasoline increased by 25 percent and propane increased by over two and a half times.

Whatever the effects of rising costs of energy are in the large centres, Mr. Speaker, the effects on remote and smaller communities are even more adverse.

The NWT Bureau of Statistics uses the term 'living cost differential' to give an idea of the cost of living in northern communities as compared to the city of Edmonton. Mr. Speaker, the city of Edmonton is given the base number of 100. For 1997, the living cost differential for Inuvik was 155 to 160. This can be simplified to indicate that what costs \$100 in Edmonton costs \$155 to \$160 in Inuvik. An example, auto fuel price in Inuvik is \$1.04 per litre, and that was just before travelling down here to Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, when I had the opportunity of filling up my vehicle.

Further, the more remote the community is, the greater the cost of living is. For example, the living cost differential for Colville Lake was \$210, Holman was \$175 and Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour both came in at \$180. The highest cost of living differentials in the Fort Smith region were Lutselk'e and Rae Lakes at \$150. Looking at larger centres, we find Yellowknife was \$120, Hay River was \$125, and Fort Smith \$130.

Mr. Speaker, the general trend is that the smaller and more remote communities, the higher the cost of living. What further compounds the situation is that using... Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. ROLAND: What further compounds the situation is that using information collected by the NWT for 1997, we find that the average income for the smaller isolated communities overall is lower than the average income in the larger centres. When we look at this in relation to the increase in fuel costs, the people in remote communities like Inuvik and smaller communities are going to be hit harder. It will cost more to heat our homes, drive our vehicles and obtain goods and services, and all this with less income to cover these higher costs.

Mr. Speaker, this disparity must be addressed when we deal with subsidies and rebates. I will pursue this later in question period. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Realizing Benefits From Energy Resource Development

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently, there is great excitement in the Northwest Territories. We have tremendous potential for new revenue to be generated from the development and transport of northern hydroelectricity and oil and gas to southern markets. We see a future where we move from being dependent upon funding from the Government of Canada to independence and a future where Northerners control our lands and resources.

Mr. Speaker, Minister Handley spoke eloquently earlier today about the potential economic benefits and the number of jobs on the horizon in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, hand

in hand with independence goes responsibility -- a responsibility to ensure that the people of the Northwest Territories benefit from the development of our resources.

Today we are focusing on energy and continuing along this line, it is only reasonable that the people of the Northwest Territories benefit directly from the development of our energy reserves. People of the North should pay lower rates for energy resources that are produced in the North.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories will never be able to control the North American price for heating oil, gasoline, electricity, oil or natural gas. However, Mr. Speaker, we can use the development of our resources to make the lives of northern people better. Through an energy strategy, we can ensure that the development of our energy resources will result in a reduced price for these commodities for our people.

Further, Mr. Speaker, most good things come to an end. This is also applicable to non-renewable resources. There will be a time when our oil and gas supplies will run out, and our energy strategy must also plan for this eventuality.

We must also be careful that as we help to keep prices low for essential energy, we are not encouraging the overuse of our resources. There needs to be a balanced approach that recognizes how important it is to our northern environment that we look for alternative forms of energy for our residents. I was pleased to hear Minister Handley talk about this in his statement earlier today.

Throughout the North, elders are raising alarm over the visible signs of global warming and the affect that greenhouse gases are having on the Northwest Territories. Yet even though Minister Handley spoke of the need to protect the environment today, we have done little as a government to encourage reduced production of greenhouse gases. We do not have an energy strategy yet that sets out this as the direction in which we want to head.

Mr. Speaker, we need an energy strategy that will allow our residents to benefit from the reduced costs of energy that originates in the North, whether it be directly through rebate or through a rate stabilization fund.

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. Dent, you may conclude.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, we need a strategy that plans for the time when we will no longer have oil and gas reserves. At the same time, we need to address our greenhouse gas emissions and encourage the use of alternative forms of energy. We need to plan for the future today.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for a comprehensive energy strategy to be developed. I hope the government will move quickly to complete one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Recognition of Special Olympian Clara Tutcho

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree more with what my colleagues here have had to say, but I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a very talented member of our community with us in the gallery today, an excellent ambassador of our Territory and a wonderful person.

Clara Tutcho is a Special Olympian who is a member of the Yellowknife Figure Skating Club and also of Team NWT. She competed in the provincial championships in Calgary four years ago and then went on to compete in the Canadian National Special Olympic Winter Games 2000 in Ottawa. From this competition, she was selected to be a Member of Team Canada to compete in the Special Olympic World Winter Games in Anchorage, Alaska this past winter.

On April 24th, Clara was recognized in the House of Commons for her contribution to sport. At this year's Sport North awards banquet, Clara was awarded the first Mary Beth Miller Memorial Award for the top senior female athlete in the Northwest Territories for excelling in figure skating and for her commitment to other sport training. To be chosen for this award is an honour indeed, and well deserved, for Clara demonstrates so many of the attributes that characterize Mary Beth, hard work, perseverance, sportsmanship, fair play and respect for others.

Clara represents sportsmanship at all levels. She is what athletes in all organizations strive to be. She shows good conduct to everyone. She never complains about training and is a devoted and focused athlete. She has trained and improved constantly, never giving up and never stopping. She just smiles and keeps on going.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that it is not just in figure skating that Clara excels in. She is also a great bowler. She has recently come back from a competition in Calgary and was a member of the gold-winning team. This will provide the possibility for her to be a candidate for the Canadian National Summer Special Olympic Games in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan next year.

Clara is a role model to all athletes in the Territory and the country, and I am glad she is here with us today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Indeed, she is a remarkable person. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Member's Statement on Paulatuk High School Graduation Ceremonies

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on May 15, 2001, the residents of Paulatuk held graduation ceremonies in Angik School in Paulatuk. Although there was only one grade 12 graduate, what was significant about this graduation ceremony was the fact it was the first ever in Paulatuk since the high school programs were moved to the communities from the larger centres such as Inuvik. My congratulations to Justin Ruben, the graduate, his parents,

James and Elizabeth Ruben, and the principal and staff of Angik School for their determination and perseverance in achieving this accomplishment.

Mr. Speaker, I know this community is looking forward to many more graduates in future years. I encourage Mr. Justin Ruben to continue with his education and wish him luck in whatever field he chooses as a career. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on D-Day Anniversary

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday was a very significant day, Mr. Speaker. It marked the anniversary, June 6th, of D-Day 57 years ago. Today was the day that a beachhead was established and eventually lead to the liberation by the Allies of Europe.

I want to mention, Mr. Speaker, that my family and I will always be very, very grateful to the Canadians who served in Europe. They are very much admired in my home country of Holland. Today, of course, I am very proud to be a Canadian, but I think yesterday and today are very significant days for many people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Opening Ceremonies of the NWT Track and Field Championships

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take this opportunity to briefly thank my colleagues who accompanied me to Hay River last night for the opening ceremonies of the 11th Annual Track and Field Championships. There were 1152 athletes present and they each marched in under the flags of their schools.

Before the students and athletes proceeded in, I had the honour of entering the arena with my colleague from Hay River North. We carried a flag with a polar bear on it and we all had polar bear jackets on. Accompanying us were the Honourable Roger Allen, the Honourable Vince Steen, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. McLeod and Mr. Nitah. I know that the students appreciated it very much. I also thank my colleagues for joining us. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Good luck to all of the athletes. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize three constituents in the gallery today, Christine Tanner, along with her sons Michael and Mark Simpson. I would like to welcome them today.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent, and welcome to the Legislative Assembly. It is nice to see younger members of our community visiting us. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to recognize a fine constituent, local craftsman and trapper of some renown, and his very fine daughter, Mr. Karl Hoffmann and Ingrid Hoffmann. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would like to take a moment to introduce a Yellowknife businessman, Mr. Jerome Babyn. He is manager of Northland Utilities here in the city.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is not often that I can stand in this House and recognize a relative of mine. I would like to recognize Jean Marc Arseneault. He is a cadet paging here this week in the Legislative Assembly. I would like to welcome all of the cadets. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize you. In my Member's statement, I failed to mention that the Honourable Tony Whitford was with us. I am sorry. I would like to recognize Tony today.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: I would almost be moved to move that out of order, because we are supposed to recognize visitors in the gallery. I hope that I can remain in this chair for a considerable length of time before returning to the gallery. Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues for taking the time I needed to have my guests get back into the gallery so I can introduce them. Clara Tutcho is sitting in the gallery, the Special Olympian, and the president of NWT Special Olympics Association, Kim Holter.

-- Applause

Any my assistant, Stephen Dunbar. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to say to all the visitors who have come here, welcome. It is always nice to see members of the public watching the events. I would like to take a little bit of Speaker's licence as well to recognize my uncle. He was in Normandy in 1943 when the Allies landed there. Today is sort of a special day for recognition of the Canadians who went to Europe and never returned, but my uncle is in Fort Smith and is probably watching on television as we speak, Mr. Eugene Mercredi.

-- Applause

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 23-14(4): Energy Subsidy Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my Member's statement earlier today, I have concerns about the affordability and stability of the cost of energy for Northerners. For example, many of our residents and businesses will not be able to afford the cost of electricity without the Power Support Program that has been in place for a number of years.

My question is for the Premier. I would like to know if the Premier could inform this Assembly whether this government accepts the principle that it should assist residents and businesses in subsidizing their access to affordable energy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 23-14(4): Energy Subsidy Programs

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe this government has continued the practice and it has continued to commit to providing a subsidy so that power and fuel is available and provided to citizens as economically as possible. Beyond the principle, there are actual programs that support that principle. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 23-14(4): Energy Subsidy Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, the Premier has reflected what is going on. We have the Power Subsidy Program. We get assistance through things like the Seniors' Fuel Program. Our income support clients receive assistance and some communities already on the petroleum products division system also receive assistance. Would the Premier inform this Assembly whether the energy strategy, to be developed by the soon-to-be-created Energy Secretariat, will examine our energy subsidy programs and offer recommendations on their continuation and, preferably their improvement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 23-14(4): Energy Subsidy Programs

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members are aware, the initiative that we announced in the Sessional Statement earlier this week has come from the Towards a Better Tomorrow agenda that all Members of the Legislature developed together. In response to many of the suggestions made by Ordinary Members of this Legislature, this government has started to focus on the need for a comprehensive approach and view towards energy resources and how people at the community, regional, territorial level may want these resources managed and provided to them, in regard to fuel, heating, electrical consumption and how these may be best provided to the citizens of the Northwest Territories.

I believe the many statements the Members have made in previous sessions, as well as the ones made today and in the coming days, will be the basis for which we will begin to decide how an energy policy will be best formulated. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 23-14(4): Energy Subsidy Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a lot of our attention in the past weeks and months has been focused on major energy development production, largely related to exporting. My concern, and I reflected this in my statement, is that I believe we should be developing an energy strategy that has a Northerners-first direction. Would the Premier agree with that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 23-14(4): Energy Subsidy Programs

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am looking forward to finding a way to involve all Members of the Legislature in setting down the basic direction and parameters under which this Energy Secretariat will begin initiating its work towards developing an energy policy. I would not be endorsing any particular statements at this time. Rather, I welcome them so they can be included and a collective consensus on how to proceed can be used. I would welcome the statement the Member made and be quite happy to see that being one of the many elements that would guide the work needed to develop an energy policy. Thank you.

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

Question 24-14(4): Programs to Provide Relief From Rising Energy Costs

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Premier as the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation and the front man on energy.

Mr. Speaker, in my statement, I brought forward the issue of the difficulty low income earners have in making their homes more energy efficient. I understand the Housing Corporation

did some work in the late 1990s whereby they replaced old appliances with new, energy-efficient appliances in many of their subsidized housing units. My question is, did this government ever explore the option of offering this program to low-income earners who do not live in social housing? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 24-14(4): Programs to Provide Relief From Rising Energy Costs

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although that would fall under the responsibility of the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, it is my belief that we do not have a specific program for low-income private homeowners to develop more energy-efficient homes. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 24-14(4): Programs to Provide Relief From Rising Energy Costs

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Maybe it is time we come up with a program for low-income earners that would assist them. Mr. Speaker, many low-income people who own their own homes are hurting financially due to the soaring costs of heating fuel. I note that the Government of the Northwest Territories assisted the residents of Inuvik in changing from fuel to gas heating oil when the Ikhil gas pipeline was built through the Inuvik. As the cost of heating fuel skyrockets, will the government consider supplying similar assistance to other communities in the conversion to other forms of heat that may be more cost-efficient? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 24-14(4): Programs to Provide Relief From Rising Energy Costs

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is true that there is a gas pipeline that was built by the Inuvialuit to provide natural gas to the town of Inuvik. This government has, as a partner, assisted in helping them to recover the costs of converting the many homes in Inuvik so that they can move from diesel heat to natural gas heating.

I believe that when and if other communities, for instance Fort Simpson, should find gas and agree to a pipeline being constructed, they may very well want to convert to natural gas. We would be more than happy to consider such a request if it is made. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 24-14(4): Programs to Provide Relief From Rising Energy Costs

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no natural gas in my area of the country, but there is a lot of firewood. The government can help them in getting it. Mr. Speaker, there are programs whereby there is money given to assist people to

adapt their homes for people with handicaps. There should be a similar program to assist people to make their homes more energy efficient.

As the price of energy continues to climb, what does this government plan to do to offset all energy costs for residents who own their own homes? Can we expect anything in the near future, Mr. Speaker? Mahsi.

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

Further Return to Question 24-14(4): Programs to Provide Relief From Rising Energy Costs

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do not have anything specific that we plan to announce in the next while, but we believe that the setting up of an Energy Secretariat would look at all of the suggestions the Members have made and are making: the operations of the [Power Corporation](#) and its role in providing power to the residents of the Northwest Territories; the hydro potential and the hydro operations currently underway; the supply of natural gas; oil potential; projects regarding those resources, as well as the work of the Arctic Energy Alliance and other agencies; and the Greenhouse Gas Strategy.

There would be a number of other initiatives that this secretariat would look at as well as broad consultation with communities up and down the Mackenzie Valley so that this secretariat would provide this government, as well as residents of the Northwest Territories, with a very comprehensive basis on which to start working towards the development of an energy strategy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Final short supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 24-14(4): Programs to Provide Relief From Rising Energy Costs

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister responsible for Finance mentioned a tax credit of a maximum of \$177 for Northerners. Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, that is kind of discriminatory. Tax rebates benefit only those people who are filing tax returns. There are a number of people in the Northwest Territories who do not file taxes.

MR. SPEAKER: A short question, please. A short question.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tax credits are discriminatory. Not all people will benefit. Will the government reconsider and have a rebate that all people in the Northwest Territories would qualify under, and not discriminate against wage earners?

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, the question would go to the Minister responsible for Finance. I will leave it for the Minister of Finance to answer that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Is the Premier using his prerogative to pass it on to the Minister of Finance?

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 24-14(4): Programs to Provide Relief From Rising Energy Costs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While we are certainly open to considering any proposal that Members or the public want to put forward to us, this particular proposal would be incredibly expensive for us and very difficult to administer.

We will look at it, but we do not have the addresses of everyone to mail things to. We would have to take applications. We would then have to confirm that these were actual residents of the Northwest Territories, not someone just passing through town. It would be very expensive to do. Thank you.

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

Question 25-14(4): Key Components of an energy strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Premier in regard to his energy strategy. I would like to follow up to some of the questions already asked. If he could just highlight in his own way what he sees as some of the key components that need to be covered and addressed by an energy strategy? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 25-14(4): Key Components of an energy strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The idea of the Energy Strategy is to look at the resources of the Northwest Territories -- oil, gas and hydro potential -- and the needs that we have both domestically and in the business and industrial sectors; as well as the export potential of these resources and the environmental aspect of the development of energy, the transmission, the generation and the consumption of it.

As well as the cost of those in the different forms that are available in the different communities we have, and how the people of the Northwest Territories would like to see these used at the local level, the regional level, the territorial, and as one Member said, the potential for domestic purposes.

The secretariat would do an assessment of what has been done to date, a state of affairs in our communities, nationally and internationally in the context of the United States, in the context of the energy market that is out there; and develop some suggestions on how we should develop an energy policy that can meet the needs and interests of our people at the community level, and the regional interests that we have that are sometimes different from one another, meet the needs of our business sector, the industrial sector as well as provide for some benefits to government in terms of revenue. As well as the aboriginal governments, who we would likely want to partner with. Also, the environmental aspect of energy in the exploration, development, production and possible export of it. The ways in which we can provide for the consumption of

energy in a way that is environmentally friendly, affordable and fair for all people of the Northwest Territories.

Also, provide for returns to government and more importantly, a policy that could then be used to assure people that this government and perhaps even the partnership governments we have, will commit to using this hopefully broad, comprehensive, well-thought out, credible, realistic, affordable and simple policy to be used by all of us for generations to come. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 25-14(4): Key Components of an energy strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Premier for that succinct and focused response. The question I would now ask is more in terms of process. He has indicated that he is going to start a secretariat. Could he indicate when he expects to have the secretariat operational, when their terms of reference will be ready, and when they will start generating some work and a paper that can be the topic of discussion?

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

Further Return to Question 25-14(4): Key Components of an energy strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have announced that we will put together a secretariat. Officials have been asked to provide an initial draft paper that would give myself some suggestions along the Minister of Finance's idea of how we can proceed. We will probably receive these next week.

Once we receive them, we will review them. If they are anywhere near what we think we need in order to proceed, we will probably go to Cabinet for some approval in principle, and perhaps then go to the committee and seek assurance and some indication from the Ordinary Members that what we are putting together is in fact in line with their thinking as well.

In the next couple of weeks, we hope to have some idea of the structure and put together some paper that will give Members an idea of what it is we are thinking about, some preliminary process as well as start looking for the people to head up the secretariat. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 25-14(4): Key Components of an energy strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on one part of the Premier's response, and that is the issue of how this secretariat will be staffed. Could the Premier elaborate on that particular issue as much as he is able? The concern being, will it be existing staff that are going to be transferred and reallocated? Will he be attempting to bring in northern expertise and talent as well as a mix of outside expertise in this area? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 25-14(4): Key Components of an energy strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The thinking right now is to look at engaging some members of the community here in the Northwest Territories, people who have some interest and commitment to the whole issue of energy, and to look for a team approach to setting up the secretariat. It may include existing staff within the government or agencies of the government, but at this time no firm commitments have been made. There have been some exploratory talks with different individuals, but very little discussion with my Cabinet colleagues. That is about the extent to which I can comment on this at this time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 25-14(4): Key Components of an energy strategy

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The staffing of the secretariat is going to be critical to carrying out the very complex mandate that it appears is going to be before this committee. Could the Premier indicate what time frames he is anticipating in terms of getting the staff in place to in fact start carrying out the work that is going to be approved by Cabinet, this House and the committees? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 25-14(4): Key Components of an energy strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an exciting issue. A lot of work has to be done and there is some sense of urgency to it. Coupled with that, there is still a naivete about how quickly things could be done. I would say that I would like to see a secretariat in place, operating with at least the main staff in place, by the end of July. Thank you.

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

Question 26-14(4): Linking Small Communities to Hydro Power

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi. As I have stated before, one of the major concerns I have with the report is that it made no mention of linking the smaller communities with hydropower. The Minister committed to look at this issue. I would like to ask the Minister what steps he has taken so far. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 26-14(4): Linking Small Communities to Hydro Power

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The report that the Member is referring to, which was the power review report, is a report that was given to us in December. I believe we circulated it as quickly as possible. It has gone out for comment and consultation.

The report itself has not yet been dealt with by Cabinet. We hope to deal with that some time this month. There are no particular dates in mind at this time, but there is a sense of urgency to move on with it.

However, I do agree that there is nothing specific in the recommendations that look at providing hydropower to communities within the vicinity of those potential hydro sites.

I believe that in the development of an energy policy, those types of suggestions will be made because there was a very strong sense that we get so far from the communities that if we have clean, affordable and cheap sources of power, then we should develop them and our communities should be the first to benefit from them. We will wait for more specific suggestions to be made through the course of the consultation that the secretariat will undertake. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 26-14(4): Linking Small Communities to Hydro Power

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if he can commit to working with other departments regarding installing these hydro lines into the smaller communities and to offset the costs, maybe a road could be connected to installing hydro power lines? Thank you.

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

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is an area of work underway presently with the people who have done the power review report. This team of officials is, for instance, working with myself and the Minister of Finance to look at the potential of developing the Taltson power potential.

As well, there have been some preliminary discussions with the Dogrib officials and the Power Corporation to look at the potential to expand on the power generation in the Snare Cascades -- I am not sure if I have that right -- but the discussions will engage Dogrib communities on whether or not they are interested in looking at pre-feasibility studies to see if these are in fact potentially economical to proceed with. If so, under what terms and conditions these may be worked on in partnership.

The Member has an avenue there, if work is going to be done, to look at terms and conditions under which these may proceed. All the actual hydro projects that we may look at researching or doing pre-feasibility studies on for their economic potential, will require partnership with the aboriginal people in the vicinity. The Dogrib will definitely be engaged in that specific issue. I will ensure that the Member is fully apprised of it, if that begins. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 26-14(4): Linking Small Communities to Hydro Power

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A final question for the Premier. When these consultations are happening with the communities, can they also have public consultation, not just with the leaders? Sometimes the public are not aware of what happens behind closed doors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 26-14(4): Linking Small Communities to Hydro Power

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that any type of policy development, as well as project development, will require a variety of meetings, discussion forums and consultation processes, which will engage leaders and the general public in a number of instances.

I think we can assure the Member that we will certainly ensure that the public is well informed. That is the mandate of this government. It would be a requirement to make sure that people are aware of what it is that we are doing. Thank you.

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

Question 27-14(4): Potential Fuel Rebate

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question goes to the Minister of Finance regarding the fuel rebate we had in March. Before the end of the last session, we had a very hardy debate in the House about the unfairness of the rebate the Minister introduced, in terms of how many people were included and also the fact that a lot of small businesses, who are suffering from the high cost of fuel, were not able to benefit at all.

I have had discussions with the Minister. I was hoping I could talk to him about possibly coming up with a new rebate. That was until this morning, when I heard on the radio that the Minister said he was not interested in contemplating another rebate.

I would like to know from the Minister whether or not there is any possibility to convince him otherwise? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 27-14(4): Potential Fuel Rebate

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear that particular announcement. I do not know if I said that. If I said that, that is not exactly what I meant because I will...

-- Interjection

I do not know if it is a quote or a radio announcement, but I am always open to considering a rebate. I had said in the House a

couple of days ago that we are monitoring the price of fuel and depending what happens, then I am open to it.

We continue to monitor the price. If we continue to monitor the price, if there is a need for another rebate, then I intend that we should look at that and we should try to improve on what we had the last time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 27-14(4): Potential Fuel Rebate

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will take that answer as being yes. Then my next challenge is to convince the Minister to listen to the people, MLAs here, rather than listening to someone who is working at the New York Merchant Exchange, or whatever that was he was answering yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that he is looking at the international gas price that might be on the downward trend, but our power bill, electricity bill and the price of the gas at the pump is showing no sign of going down.

Would you not agree that we have a problem with the high cost of energy in general and that he should look at introducing a rebate? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 27-14(4): Potential Fuel Rebate

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I will keep that in mind. I have the same information. I know that the price of gas at the pump has not gone down. In fact, it has gone up since January. It has gone up by about four cents. Recently, I noticed that propane has gone down by almost four cents. It is moving around, and we have to watch what the longer-term trends are. We do have to look at what is happening at world markets because they have a trend here.

Yes, I will listen to the recommendations of the Members. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 27-14(4): Potential Fuel Rebate

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that my job here is to make sure that the Minister does more than just listen, he has to act on it.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that Ministers should be looking at long-term trends on this high cost of fuel. He was the one who urged us to accept the rebate program that he introduced last time because of the fact that everybody was suffering so much.

I want to tell him that so many of my constituents were not able to take advantage of the last one. Would he not just reintroduce that one for those who did not qualify, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 27-14(4): Potential Fuel Rebate

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think I heard the Member say that she wanted to me reintroduce the old program for people who did not qualify, and I am not quite sure what was meant by that, if I heard the question correctly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 27-14(4): Potential Fuel Rebate

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I meant to say was he would not have reintroduced that rebate if he did not agree that we had a serious problem with the high cost of fuel and energy, except that he narrowed it to such a degree that so many people who should have qualified did not get it.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame.

MS. LEE: He does not have to consider any other factors other than the fact that prices still remain high. Would he not introduce the program to cover those who did not qualify the last time around? Does he understand that? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 27-14(4): Potential Fuel Rebate

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we took the program last year. We tried to make it as inclusive as we could and be reasonable, in terms of assisting people most in need. We raised it up to anyone who made up to \$85,000 a year and was not already collecting another fuel subsidy of some sort. However, in spite of that, some people did not qualify. I think there were some who missed because of other reasons and so on.

If there is a need for another rebate, then certainly we need to look at the old one and figure out how to do it better. I am open to doing that. Thank you.

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

Question 28-14(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Keeping on the line of my comments earlier today on the seniors' fuel subsidy, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment.

It has been a few years since the program was looked at. I think the last time changes were made was 1995. The last time I asked questions on this issue, the Minister indicated there are definite thresholds in different zones. I believe there are three zones. I would like to ask him, what are the factors that are taken into consideration in determining the thresholds of different zones?

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

Return to Question 28-14(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The policy was established some time ago and divisions were made in certain areas. They had zone one, zone two and zone three.

I am not familiar with the methodology by which these zones were established, Mr. Speaker, but there is a differentiation of dollars between them. Zone One, for example, is \$30,000, and zone three is \$39,000. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 28-14(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe the Minister answered my question. I asked him what the factors were. However, I would like to also ask if he could tell me why a mechanism was not built in for automatic review when the cost of living increases?

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

Further Return to Question 28-14(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to refer to the other question, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I do not know the criteria as to why those zones were established. I think that was the question that was asked.

With regard to an automatic review, Mr. Speaker, again, I inherited this particular program and as such, it was never developed with a review process put in place.

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

Supplementary to Question 28-14(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I asked whether there would be a review approximately ten months ago. His answer was this House would certainly have a look at seeing how applicable this amount is today, regarding the threshold limits. I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell the people, seniors especially, what he has done to date on this issue?

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

Further Return to Question 28-14(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that one of the issues was a concern about the rising cost of fuel for those who received the fuel subsidy. Mr. Speaker, we paid for a certain quantity of fuel. No matter what the price of fuel goes to, we continue to provide that at no additional cost to the senior.

Now, there are other issues -- and I think the Member was referring to that earlier in his statement -- issues such as zone areas and volume amounts of criteria to qualify.

In the other item that occurred, Mr. Speaker, with regard to changes in this, we also provided the Fuel Subsidy Rebate Program, for which seniors qualified. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 28-14(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question was regarding threshold limits and if he had done any work in this area. I do not believe the Minister has answered that. My final question is if he has met with any of the seniors groups to talk about this very issue, because they are certainly coming to me as the MLA for the Deh Cho regarding the threshold limits and how it is creating hardships for them. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 28-14(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not familiar with whether my officials have, but I certainly would be quite interested in dealing with this issue on the thresholds. There are several other areas as well that could perhaps be addressed. Thank you.

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

Question 29-14(4): Pupil-Teacher Ratio and Student Support Funding

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are also for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. I, like many in the public, Mr. Speaker, was happy to see the Minister of Education step forward and put an additional \$1.3 million into PTR and special needs funding, but I am wondering, will the Minister be bringing forward a supplementary appropriation to get the money? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 29-14(4): Pupil-Teacher Ratio and Student Support Funding

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the funding that was used for that was because of a decrease in enrolments that we encountered this particular year. That was extra funding that we reallocated to the PTR. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 29-14(4): Pupil-Teacher Ratio and Student Support Funding

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not clear. I am wondering if we look, or if the Minister were to look, at the Main Estimates we passed, the some \$90 million in program delivery, could we then not logically think that it would be \$90 million plus \$1.3 million? Is there not an additional \$1.3 million in program funding? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 29-14(4): Pupil-Teacher Ratio and Student Support Funding

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, that is not the way it worked, Mr. Speaker. The fact that the enrolments were down gave us extra funding from the \$90 million, which was reprofiled. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 29-14(4): Pupil-Teacher Ratio and Student Support Funding

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just so I am clear, Mr. Speaker, it seems that the Minister is telling us that the \$1.3 million is not new money. It is actually money this House had already approved for spending on PTR and special needs. Is that correct?

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

Further Return to Question 29-14(4): Pupil-Teacher Ratio and Student Support Funding

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that is correct. It allowed us to advance the lowering of the PTR by one year by reinvesting in that area. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 29-14(4): Pupil-Teacher Ratio and Student Support Funding

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So in year one, we said we would spend \$4.6 million, but we only spent \$2.8 million. This year, it seems we have under spent again, but at the eleventh hour, come forward and said here is \$1.3 million back into the formula. Will the Minister revisit the legislated PTR? It seems like we have placed the bar so low we cannot help but achieve it. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 29-14(4): Pupil-Teacher Ratio and Student Support Funding

HON. JAKE OOTES: No, Mr. Speaker, we did spend \$4.6 million as we had put in the MOA with the NWT Teachers

Association. Two point some million was dedicated to the PTR. The other funding that made up the rest of the \$4.6 million was identified as money that would go to forced growth, increased areas of cost and enrolments that were predicted at that time. Thank you.

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

Question 30-14(4): High Cost of Propane

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is probably better answered today by the Minister of Finance. As I stated in my Member's statement, the price of propane is of interest to many residents in my community. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister please advise if there are any initiatives to address the high cost of propane for businesses and resident users in the North?

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

Return to Question 30-14(4): High Cost of Propane

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are no specific initiatives to compensate businesses or homeowners specifically for propane. In the case of businesses, as I said last March, we are monitoring the situation. We are trying to determine to what extent businesses would pass the increased cost on to consumers, their clients and customers. We are trying to figure out how a program would work if we had one. For individual homeowners, we are simply monitoring what is happening with the price of propane. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 30-14(4): High Cost of Propane

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the price of fuel has gone up in all areas. The price of propane has increased considerably. I was wondering if there was any kind of survey done to take in the impact of the increasing price of propane on small northern businesses and residents. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 30-14(4): High Cost of Propane

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we are doing an assessment of that. We do know that some businesses have already passed that on to their customers. The airline industry, for example, has done that. Apartment owners have done it, but we do not know the full extent of it yet. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 30-14(4): High Cost of Propane

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there have been subsidies in the past to cover the cost of fuel. Even

with the last one, there was some question as to whether it applied to propane. Could the Minister ensure that any rebates to fuel that are put out there will include residents who are on propane?

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

Further Return to Question 30-14(4): High Cost of Propane

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes. With the last program, we tried to make it clear that it applied to all the fossil fuels, including propane. Certainly any program in the future would do the same thing. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 30-14(4): High Cost of Propane

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I also mentioned that Hay River is on a piped propane system for most of the town. One way of bringing down the cost is converting that propane to natural gas. Is there any indication from the Minister of any sources of natural gas within the area that Hay River could access? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 30-14(4): High Cost of Propane

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of some very general discussions that have taken place about piping gas in the Cameron Hills, for example, to Hay River. I am sure at some point that will become a good possibility, but as far as I know right now, there is nothing certain. I welcome any proposals that people would be putting forward. Thank you.

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

Question 31-14(4): Hydro Power Rate Zones

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following on my Member's statement in the area of cost of energy and the impacts of the cost of living in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, I have a question directed to the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation. It is in line, Mr. Speaker, with a report that was commissioned by the government on the future of power generation in the Northwest Territories. I believe the report has been dubbed the Robertson report.

The report touches on many aspects of power generation in the Northwest Territories, regulatory rate zones and those kinds of things. My concern, Mr. Speaker, is if some of these things are implemented without more discussion on the impact felt in the Northwest Territories.

One of the items specifically, Mr. Speaker, is the area of rate zones. We have a number of rate zones across the Northwest Territories. We are looking at this area. If we change rate

zones, that has an impact on the subsidies given to residents of the Northwest Territories.

My question to the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation is, has there been any further work done in this area of rate zones and changes? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 31-14(4): Hydro Power Rate Zones

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Robertson report, or the power review report as I was calling it, has been sent out for public review. There has been some consultation with communities and stakeholders since January, and the results of the consultation are still being compiled by officials and a paper is being prepared for Cabinet consideration. Cabinet will look at the different parts of the report as well as the recommendations some time in the next few weeks, definitely before the fall.

As to how much work is being done, the aspect of rate zones, I am not able to provide that to the Member. If there is some being done and it is in a basic information format, I would be pleased to find that out for the Member and perhaps provide it to the Members. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 31-14(4): Hydro Power Rate Zones

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform us, as this consultation is going out and a paper is going to be prepared for Cabinet, does this include rate zones and subsidies and the impact on residents? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 31-14(4): Hydro Power Rate Zones

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not certain of that, but in the course of our discussions, I am of the view that rate zones should be discussed by Cabinet. We do have provisions for something like 26 different rate zones that the [Power Corporation](#) has to administer. As well, we have an almost territorial-wide subsidy program. Although there are 26 different rate zones, we in fact have two. One is the rate zone provided to Fort Smith, Hay River, and Fort Resolution, because of the low cost of hydro energy that is provided from Taltson to these communities. For all of the other communities, which generally have diesel power supplied to them, we have a subsidy program that provides for all communities to have power provided to them at the rate provided here in Yellowknife for the first 700 kilowatts. While we have a whole range of different rate zones, the subsidy program that we provide changes that somewhat. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 31-14(4): Hydro Power Rate Zones

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My concern in that specific area is if we change the rate zones, it will have an impact on the subsidy to residents. In communities that have some lower costs, Inuvik is quite different. Its power is generated at the plant, but it is through natural gas. If you change the rate zones and put it in a larger zone, the general cost of power will go up. I am concerned and want to ensure that the subsidy program, even though it is designed on the first 700 kilowatt hours of Yellowknife, will be developed; or if the rate zones are going to be changed, that this subsidy also is looked at to ensure that residents are not negatively impacted by those changes. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 31-14(4): Hydro Power Rate Zones

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure the issue of rate zones will be discussed. As to what we decide, it will be determined later. The Public Utilities Board is going to look at general rate applications made by the [Power Corporation](#). It was filed recently. The Public Utilities Board will have some say about the rate zones that are established here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 31-14(4): Hydro Power Rate Zones

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the Premier's last response in the area of rate zones and subsidies and the PUB, he referred to the fact that the PUB would be part of a review on that. Is he confirming that the PUB is going to be involved in this process? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 31-14(4): Hydro Power Rate Zones

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Public Utilities Board governs the rates that can be charged by the [Power Corporation](#) in supplying power to the communities. They do have some say in the rates and the number of rate zones that are established for that purpose.

The Power Corporation simply applies to increase their rates when the cost of providing the power or other elements that are involved in the operation causes them to seek a change in the rate that they charge. Rate zones, the rates that are charged, are all discussed and considered by the Public Utilities Board. Thank you.

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

Question 32-14(4): Comprehensive Energy Strategy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a comprehensive energy strategy for the Northwest Territories is an issue my fellow MLAs and I have been urging the government to adopt, an energy strategy that would tie all of the government's obligations and plans together to give us all direction.

The United States recently released their energy strategy and pressure is on for a continental energy strategy. With the energy crisis in the south, we must act before we are forced to react to external pressures.

The government has said that it is moving to develop an energy strategy and we have been trying to urge the government to develop a comprehensive strategy more quickly. My question for the Premier is, when will this comprehensive energy strategy be concluded and presented in this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 32-14(4): Comprehensive Energy Strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Cabinet and I have agreed to initiate work to establish a secretariat for the purpose of developing a comprehensive energy strategy. We know it is urgent, but because we say it should be comprehensive, it will take time and an intensive amount of work.

Once we put a team together and get them to assess the state of affairs here in the Northwest Territories, across this country and on a continental basis, they should, as one of the first orders of business, assess what it is that needs to be done, what is there and how long it would take them to deliver some sort of an assessment on the scope of work that needs to be undertaken and the approach that they would like to take in developing a process to arrive at a comprehensive energy policy.

I understand that it is urgent. It is needed as quickly as possible, but we also need to make a commitment to ensure that everyone is involved and due consideration is given to all of the different elements that would help us to put together this comprehensive energy policy.

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

Supplementary to Question 32-14(4): Comprehensive Energy Strategy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from that answer, I would have to surmise that the timetable is being left up to the people appointed to the Energy Secretariat. Is this government not going to challenge the people who are appointed to meet a certain timetable to try and achieve the recommendations on a strategy in a very short order? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 32-14(4): Comprehensive Energy Strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have said the secretariat should be in existence for two years. So from the initiation of the work until the work is done, whether that includes in the front end, the development of a draft strategy or a process to develop a draft strategy and then following it through until the completion of it, plus the adoption of such a strategy, will remain to be seen. However, I hope that by following the blueprint we used to develop the Protected Areas Strategy, we could do it within a year or two. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 32-14(4): Comprehensive energy strategy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it still seems to be a rather loose timetable. Will the Premier commit to try to have an energy strategy in place within the next six to 12 months? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 32-14(4): Comprehensive energy strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I could commit to providing to Members is a fairly good assessment of how much work would be required to engage in a multi-party process, much the same way we did with the Protected Areas Strategy. Using that, how long it would take to develop a draft energy policy. If we can get the secretariat staffed and operational by the end of July, then it may take anywhere from two to four months to get that initial assessment.

So probably if there is a session in the fall. If not, then I would look for providing some report to the Members in writing or reported through the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight of what work we have done to date and what we hope to do in the fall. That is the commitment that I can make. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Final supplementary, Mr. Dent. Thank you. The time for question period has ended.

Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address, Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 3-14(4): First Report of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On May 11, 2000 the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly referred, by letter, a number of issues to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures for consideration. These

issues had been brought to the Speaker's attention by Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Specifically, these issues were:

1. The perceived need for a mechanism allowing for committees to make statements in the House related to the business of the committee;
2. Members' access to confidential internal documents of standing committees of previous Legislative Assemblies;
3. The possibility of imposing time limits on Members' questions and Ministers' answers during oral question period in the House; and
4. The question of why it must be for an hour's duration when unanimous consent is granted to return to, or extend question period.

In addition to these items, the committee received a referral from the Speaker on October 13, 2000 to consider a process for the Legislative Assembly's consideration of a number of statutory reports that are tabled regularly in the Assembly. This item is designated as "item 5".

This report will address the committee's consideration of each item in turn and conclude with recommendations where appropriate.

Item 1: Committee Statements

This issue remains under consideration by the committee at this time.

Item 2: Access to Previous Committee Documents

The committee directed its staff to prepare a brief discussion paper outlining the issues respecting Members' access to the confidential records of committees of previous Assemblies. An examination of legislative authorities and the practices in other jurisdictions was included.

This issue was deferred at the Rules Committee meeting of November 1, 2000 and considered at the committee's meeting of March 1, 2001.

The committee documents referred to do not include committee reports, transcripts of public proceedings, or any other material published under the authority of a standing or special committee of the Legislative Assembly. Access to these materials is not restricted as they form the public record.

In its deliberations, the Rules Committee examined firstly the Rules of the Legislative Assembly, specifically Rule 95(1) which states:

"All documents which come into the possession of a committee or which come into existence in the course of the conduct of committee business belong to that committee before it reports to the Assembly and belong to the Assembly after the committee reports to the Assembly, subject to any direction of the

Speaker acting on an order of the Assembly.”

Rule 95(2) qualifies the first part of the rule as follows:

“Notwithstanding Rule 95(1), where a committee does not report to the Assembly before dissolution of the Legislature, all committee documents belong to the Assembly upon its dissolution subject to:

- (a) any direction of the committee as to their disposal;
- (b) any direction by order of the Assembly as to their disposal; or
- (c) in the absence of any other direction, the direction of the Speaker.

In the instance which precipitated a Member's raising the question of access to committee documents, the Speaker's direction was sought in the absence of clear direction -- in essence, Rule 95(2)(c) was applied.

However, there are a number of considerations and questions that the committee addressed to clarify the right of access to confidential committee documents from previous Assemblies. In assessing the issues, a number of long-standing parliamentary authorities are consulted.

The application of Rule 95 suggests that all unpublished committee documents from a previous Assembly are the property of the current Assembly. What is not clear however, is what that means for current individual Members or committees. Does this mean that all current Members, including Ministers, have the right of access to all confidential documents from a committee of a former legislature? Should this access be restricted to Members of the respective committees?

It had been suggested that committee work and issues do not end with the dissolution of an Assembly and that there needs to be some continuity in committee information available to the same committee of the next Assembly.

With respect to committee documents, such as in-camera transcripts, or other material which has not been published or reported, Beauchesne's 6th edition offers the following:

- c. 851 “When a committee chooses to meet incamera, all matters are confidential. Any departure from strict confidentiality should be by explicit committee decision, which should deal with what matters should be published, in which form and by whom. Committees should make clear decisions about the circulation of draft reports, the disposition of evidence and the publication of their minutes.”

In support of this position, yet taking it a step farther, Marleau and Montpetit, on pages 850 and 865 of their *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, make the case for clear committee decisions about the destruction of records,

suggesting that what is not destroyed will be available to all Members and will form part of the permanent record of the committee, available to the public after a specified period.

“While no public record is produced of what is said during incamera proceedings, committees often find it useful to have a transcript produced for the private consultation of the members and staff of the committee. In addition to deciding whether or not to keep a transcript of an incamera meeting, the committee must also decide how such transcripts will be disposed of at the end of the session (i.e., whether they will be made part of the committee's permanent record for historical purposes, or destroyed).”

“Where concerns about confidentiality exist, a committee may agree to have documents tabled at an in-camera meeting. Transcripts of in-camera meetings and other confidential documents of committees are to be classed as secret records by the National Archives for a period of 30 years from the end of the session in which they were created. The documents remain available to Members of the House during that time.”

In consideration of these factors, the Rules Committee concluded that both the Rules of the Legislative Assembly and the parliamentary authorities indicate that in the absence of any committee direction, or House direction after the committee has reported or been dissolved, respecting the disposition of committee records, that they would be made available to all Members upon request. This would include current committees and Members of the Executive Council as no distinction is made in any reference.

It has not been common practice in this jurisdiction for committees to make explicit decisions about the disposition of committee documents in accordance with the rules and conventions. It may be advisable that more attention be paid by standing and special committees of the Legislature to the disposition of documents, particularly confidential materials of a sensitive nature.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends:

That standing and special committees of the Legislative Assembly pay particularly close attention to Rule 95(2) at the time of their reporting to the House on any issue, or prior to the dissolution of the Assembly in which they were constituted.

Item 3: Time Limits on Questions and Answers

This issue dealt with the possibility of establishing time limits on Members' questions and Ministers' answers during oral questions in an effort to maximize the benefits of an hour-long question period. The committee considered this issue at its meeting of June 6, 2000.

In addressing this issue the committee decided that the implications and complications of timekeeping each question and response would be counterproductive and that requests for unanimous consent to conclude both questions and answers would likely proliferate the Chamber, not to mention take up a considerable amount of time.

It was decided that the present rules and guidelines governing oral questions and question period would suffice, particularly if they are stringently enforced by the Speaker. A letter to this effect was sent to the Speaker by the chair on June 19, 2000, requesting stringent application of the rules and guidelines for oral questions on behalf of all Members.

Item 4: Returning to, or Extending Oral Question Period

The committee considered this issue at its meetings of June 6 and November 1, 2000. Specifically, the issue deals with the question raised by a Member as to whether it is possible to "extend" or "return" to oral question period after being granted unanimous consent for a specified time period less than one hour.

In its consideration of this matter, the Rules Committee noted that Rule 38(5) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly prescribes oral question period to be one hour. However, as in all jurisdictions, any rule may be waived with the unanimous consent of the Members in attendance. Therefore it has become an accepted practice to seek unanimous consent to either "extend" question period before it ends or "return" to question period if it has concluded. In most instances, unanimous consent is sought in the interest of allowing the completion of a Member's, or some Members', lines of questioning. In rare instances it may be related to a matter of some import or urgency, where it may not be in the public interest to wait another day to ask certain questions.

However, upon being granted unanimous consent, the question period clock is reset in both cases for one hour, in accordance with Rule 38(5).

With regard to the possibility of returning to, or extending question period for a shorter duration, the committee agreed that a time limit or a condition cannot be placed on a request for unanimous consent. Setting aside or waiving a rule by the unanimous consent of Members must be unconditional. The rule or procedure is either set aside or "waived", or it is not. There can exist no middle ground, or "qualified waiving" of a rule.

It is therefore the position of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures that no change to this provision be contemplated, and that current rules and procedures in this regard continue.

Item 5: Referral of Statutory Reports

On October 13, 2000 the Speaker, by letter, charged the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures with the task of reviewing the process for the Legislative Assembly's consideration of certain statutory reports. The Speaker, in his letter, pointed out that:

"There are a large number of reports tabled in the Legislative Assembly, some of which are required to be tabled by

legislation. There are a number of these reports that require no review by the Assembly or a committee, but there are those which have to be reviewed and actioned."

The issue to be addressed by the committee was to recommend a mechanism that would serve to automatically refer specific statutory reports to the appropriate standing committee for review after they have been tabled. Such a mechanism would then preclude the House from having to pass a motion of referral to a standing committee each time a specific report was tabled.

In addition, the timely public review of the Report of the Auditor General on Other Matters arising from their examination of the government's public accounts had been hindered because the report could not be tabled as the House was not sitting at the time. In this particular case, a mechanism was required to allow for the Report of the Auditor General and the government's public accounts to be transmitted to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for public review prior to tabling in the Assembly.

In initiating its consideration of these issues the committee first identified the following reports as those that required review on an annual basis and should be referred automatically:

- Annual Report of the Official Languages Commissioner;
- Annual Report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner;
- Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner; and
- The Report of the Chief Electoral Officer.

All other reports, annual or otherwise, currently fall under the broad mandates of the current standing committees in accordance with the rules, which state that the committees may "review departmental performance, including that of boards and agencies."

On the matter of statutory reports, the committee agreed that the annual reports of the Languages Commissioner, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner should be referred automatically to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and that an amendment to the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be proposed to implement this decision.

The committee also agreed that the appropriate committee to be charged with the review of Reports of the Chief Electoral Officer is the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, and that a further amendment to the rules be proposed to implement this decision.

On the matter of Auditor General's Report and the GNWT Public Accounts, the Rules Committee agreed to propose an amendment to the rules to allow the Speaker and the Minister of Finance to transmit the Auditor General's Report and the GNWT Public Accounts respectively, to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight when the

Legislature is not in session. This will allow for public review prior to tabling in the House.

Recommendation 2

Therefore, the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends:

That the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended to specify that, when the Assembly is not in session, the Speaker and the Minister of Finance may provide the Auditor General's Report and the Public Accounts to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for public review in advance of tabling in the House;

And further, that the rules be amended to specify that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight shall review the annual and other reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner;

And furthermore, that the rules be amended to specify that the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures shall review the reports of the Chief Electoral Officer on the conduct of elections, plebiscites, or votes conducted in the Northwest Territories in accordance with statute.

Committee Update

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is currently seeking input by way of written submissions on the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Conduct of the 1999 General Election. Copies of the report can be obtained from the Legislative Library or on the Elections NWT website at www.electionsnwt.com.

The standing committee will conduct a public meeting with the Chief Electoral Officer on Tuesday, October 9, 2001 to review the report and any written submissions or comments we receive from northern residents. The committee will then report its findings and recommendations to the House during the fall sitting.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Committee Report 3-14(4) be received by the Assembly and adopted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Committee Report 3-14(4) is received and adopted. 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 South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 9-14(4): May 10, 2001 Deh Cho Drum Newspaper Article Entitled "MLAs Told Power Belongs in Regions"

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table an article published in the Deh Cho Drum on Thursday, May 10, 2001, in relation to highway tolls. I should indicate that the highlighting is mine. I have highlighted a quote of Mr. Handley's saying, "the net should be no increase for average citizens in the North." Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 1-14(4): Appointment of Sole Adjudicators

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 11, 2001, I will move the following motion.

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that in accordance with section 103 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the Legislative Assembly approves the following for appointment as Sole Adjudicators:

- Claude Bisson -- Jurisconsult of the National Assembly, Quebec
- Robert C. Clark -- Ethics Commissioner, Alberta
- Hon. Gregory Evans, Q.C. -- Integrity Commissioner, Ontario
- Gerald L. Gerrand, Q.C. -- Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Saskatchewan
- Wayne Green -- Commissioner of Members' Interests, Newfoundland and Labrador
- Hon. Ted Hughes -- Commissioner of Conflict of Interest, Yukon
- Hon. H.A.D. Oliver, Q.C. -- Commissioner of Conflict of Interest, British Columbia
- Hon. Robert Stanbury, Q.C. -- Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Nunavut

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Motion 2-14(4): Affordable Access to Energy

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 11, 2001, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the Premier and Cabinet bring forward a

comprehensive energy assistance program that will serve to offset the high cost of energy to all northern residents regardless of income.

And further, that the benefits from this program be received by Northerners by October 31, 2001.

And furthermore, that the Premier and Cabinet bring forward a comprehensive energy strategy for the Northwest Territories that includes the development of alternative energy initiatives such as residual heat recovery programs, and encourages and promotes energy conservation.

And furthermore, that the energy strategy include a stabilization fund to benefit northern residents and businesses.

At the appropriate time, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion today, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Motion 3-14(4): Amendments to the Rules of the Legislative Assembly to Facilitate Referral of Statutory Reports

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 11th, 2001, I will move the following motion.

Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Rule 85(2)d of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by adding after "Auditor General";

- (i) in the event that the Assembly is not in Session, the Speaker may provide the Auditor General's Report and the Minister of Finance may provide the Public Accounts to the committee for review, which may include public hearings, in advance of tabling.

And further, that new Rule 85(2)(f) be added as follows:

- 85(2)(f) Review, as necessary or appropriate, the annual and other Reports of Statutory Officers of the Legislative Assembly, including the Commissioner of Official Languages, Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the Information and Privacy Commissioner;

And furthermore, that Rule 85(2)(f) be renumbered as 85(2)(g) and Rule 85(2)(g) be renumbered as 85(2)(h);

And furthermore, that Rule 85(4) be rescinded and the following be adopted:

- 85(4) The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures shall:

- (a) Review the reports of the Chief Electoral Officer on the conduct of elections, plebiscites or votes conducted in the Northwest Territories in accordance with statute; and
- (b) Inquire into such matters as may be referred to it by the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker or the Board of Management.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion. Are there any nays?

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: There has been a nay. You do not have unanimous consent. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to go back to item 17, first reading of bills.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 17, first reading of bills. Are there any nays? There have been no nays. Mr. Handley, you may return to item 17, first reading of bills.

REVERT TO ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 2: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 2 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 3: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 3 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters, Minister's Statement 1-14(4), Sessional Statement; Minister's Statement 3-14(4), Fiscal and Economic Update; Minister's Statement 414(4), Update on the Social Agenda; Committee Report 2-14(4): Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's Report, 1999-2000, with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will call the committee of the whole to order. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend the committee consider Committee Report 2-14(4), with an eye to concluding that report before we rise today.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will take a short break and then come back and deal with Committee Report 2-14(4).

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call committee of the whole back to order. We are considering Committee Report 2-14(4). I will open the floor to general comments. General comments? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if there are no general comments, the committee did make some recommendations in the report that we would like to have considered as motions in committee of the whole. Perhaps I will present those as committee motions now. There were five recommendations resulting from the report. Mr. Chairman,

Committee Motion 614(4): To Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act to Address Instances Where the Head of a Public Body Fails to Respond to the Commissioner's Recommendations (Carried)

I MOVE this committee recommends the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act be amended to clarify that if the head of a public body fails to respond to the Commissioner's recommendations within the legislated time period, the head of the public body is deemed to have refused to follow the recommendation of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 7-14(4): To Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act to Authorize the Commissioner to Investigate Breaches of Privacy Provisions (Carried)

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The second committee recommendation, in the form of a motion:

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act be amended to give the Commissioner the authority to investigate and make recommendations in the event of a breach of privacy provisions in the act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. It has been circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 8-14(4): To Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act to Incorporate Section 21 of Alberta's Access Legislation (Carried)

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another recommendation in the form of a motion:

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act be amended to make our legislation read the same as section 21 of Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 9-14(4): To Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act to Grant the Commissioner Subpoena Powers for Access Issues (Carried)

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A further motion regarding a recommendation from a committee:

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act be amended to grant the Information and Privacy Commissioner subpoena powers when dealing with access to information issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 10-14(4): To Review the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act Respecting Penalties for Willful Obstruction, Violation or Disregard (Carried)

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The final motion the committee has as a recommendation:

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act be reviewed

respecting the penalties for willful obstruction, violation or disregard of the legislation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 11-14(4): To Explore Whether There Should be Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation for Municipalities (Carried)

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was mistaken. There is one more committee recommendation.

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Department of Justice and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, along with the Northwest Territories Association of Municipalities, bands and other forms of community governments, explore whether or not there should be access to information and protection of privacy legislation for municipalities;

AND FURTHER, whether municipalities should be included in the current legislation or whether separate legislation should be developed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Does the committee agree the review of Committee Report 2-14(4) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Miltenberger.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of the committee of the whole. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 214(4) and would like to report progress with six motions being adopted. Committee Report 2-14(4) is concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. Also at 9:00 a.m. of the Cabinet House Strategy.

Orders of the day for Friday, June 8, 2001:

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 Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2001-2002
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 2-14(4), An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
 - Bill 3-14(4), An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 1-14(4), Sessional Statement

- Minister's Statement 3-14(4), Fiscal and Economic Update
 - Minister's Statement 4-14(4), Update on the Social Agenda
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
 21. Third Reading of Bills
 22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, June 8, 2001, at 10:00 a.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

