



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 25

14th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, June 19, 2002

Pages 911 – 946

The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Sahtu)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, June 19, 2002****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you. Mr. Nitah. Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 62-14(5): Appointments to the Status of Women Council Board**

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the latest appointments to the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories.

However, before I do that, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the board members who have served us during these last four years. These women are:

- President Viola Beck, Yellowknife;
- Vice-President Harriet Geddes, Fort Providence;
- Tessie Gonzales, Hay River;
- Theresa Etchinelle, Tulita; and
- Jean Ekpakohak, Holman.

Mr. Speaker, these members were the first to represent the Northwest Territories after the creation of Nunavut. Their challenges have been difficult, yet with dignity and determination they have strategically charted a new path for all northern women. During their time, the Status of Women Council focussed a major part of their efforts on the strengthening of women by addressing obstacles such as family violence and by promoting awareness of women in new roles within the work place.

Mr. Speaker, this path has taken us through a period of unprecedented change and growth. I thank all these women, Mr. Speaker, for their work, their sacrifice and their commitment to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Today I have the great pleasure to announce the new Status of Women Council board members who will chart a course that builds on the accomplishments to date and that reflects our commitment to economic, social, cultural and political equality. The new members of the Status of Women Council are:

- Lorayne Moses, Fort Simpson;
- Betty Tsetso, Deline;

- Therese Dolly Lafferty, Fort Resolution; and
- Geraldine Sharpe-Staples, Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, I am especially proud to announce for the first time a youth representative, Natasha McCagg, Yellowknife. These new appointees, Mr. Speaker, will join Ms. Lynn Brooks of Yellowknife who continues her term until 2004. Thank you very much.

-- Applause

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

Minister's Statement 63-14(5): Signing of Salt River First Nation Agreement and Beaufort-Delta Agreement-In-Principle

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to inform Members of two historic events that will occur this week in Fort Smith and Inuvik.

On January 22, 2002, I had the pleasure of signing the Salt River First Nation Treaty Settlement Agreement on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories. On Saturday in Fort Smith, the Salt River First Nation will host a ceremony to commemorate the signing of this agreement. Premier Kakfwi, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger and myself will join Commissioner Glenna Hansen, the Honourable Robert Nault, the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, the Honourable Nick Sibbeston and other leaders in celebrating this great occasion with Chief Jim Schaeffer, his council and the members of the Salt River First Nation.

This Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement represents the fulfillment of Canada's obligations to the Salt River First Nation based on Treaty 8 signed over 100 years ago. Finalizing this agreement is an historic event for the members of the Salt River First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this Sunday in Inuvik, the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit will celebrate the signing of the Beaufort-Delta Agreement-in-Principle. I will be pleased to sign this document on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

This agreement-in-principle is an example of the potential that self-government holds in the Northwest Territories. It serves as an example to other regions across Canada that a new relationship can be forged between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people to realize political change. This process is unique. It is the first time that two distinct aboriginal peoples are working together. It is the first stand-alone self-government agreement, and it is the first example of a partnership government that will represent all residents.

Final agreement negotiations will lead to new and restructured governments for the Beaufort-Delta region that will serve and represent all residents while respecting the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit inherent right of self-government. These negotiations are aimed at ensuring that the people of the Beaufort-Delta region will have greater control, authority and responsibility over decisions in their communities and their region.

The settlement and successful implementation of all land, resources and self-government agreements across the Northwest Territories is an important commitment by this government and this Legislative Assembly to the development of our territory. In differing ways, the Salt River First Nation agreement and the Beaufort-Delta are examples of this commitment.

Before I end today, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the negotiating teams for all parties at both of these tables. Many dedicated and committed people have been involved in the negotiations at these tables. As Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, I know how hard the negotiators for the GNWT work. I also know that the same is true for the negotiators representing the other parties. So on behalf of the GNWT, I would like to publicly thank these people today.

Mr. Speaker, once again, congratulations to the Salt River First Nation and to the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit on their historic agreements. Mahsi cho. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 64-14(5): Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I would like to call the Assembly's attention to the award of a Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal to Mr. Pat Fowler, an employee of the Department of Transportation.

Mr. Fowler is a veteran fire fighter with over 20 years of service at the Yellowknife Airport. The Honours Directorate Chancellery of the Office of the Governor General of Canada issues this medal as part of the Canadian Honours system. The Department of Transportation, on behalf of the Office of the Governor General, presented Mr. Fowler with his award at a ceremony earlier this month with his fellow firefighters and colleagues at the Yellowknife Airport.

Airport firefighters are the most important element in the department's response capabilities for aircraft fire emergencies. Air passengers can travel confidently in the knowledge that these fire-fighting professionals are dedicated to their safety.

Mr. Speaker, with the Office of the Governor General, I extend my congratulations to Mr. Fowler on receiving his award in recognition of his professional contribution and service to the Yellowknife Airport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the

Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 65-14(5): Update on Traditional Economy

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to advise that in the midst of the many developments related to the mineral and oil and gas sectors, the traditional economy sector is also witnessing a substantial increase in interest and activity. This is being seen in all parts of this sector from hunting, fishing and trapping to craft production and agricultural ventures.

For the past year, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has embarked on a process designed to rebuild capacity in the traditional economy. Training programs targeting youth, both in and outside of the school system, have been developed to teach trapping and traditional life skills. Many of us know it is one thing to teach a person to trap, but if that person cannot survive in the bush, the knowledge learned is useless.

Mr. Speaker, the commercial fishery is working towards the modernization of the industry so it can better compete in a global economy. We are working with the commercial fishing industry to reduce costs, increase production and generate higher returns while ensuring the stock is not depleted.

A new program, the Industry Support Program, which was offered last year, was set up to help fishermen with start-up costs to get out on the lake at the start of the season without going deep into debt. This performance-based program also provides for funding to assist fishermen with capital acquisitions. The NWT Fishermen's Federation administers this program. It is just one way we can work together to find ways to better equip people and enable them to participate in the commercial fishery.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories does have a small but growing agricultural industry based primarily in Hay River. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has undertaken a number of initiatives to support this industry. In addition to funding from the Canadian Agricultural Rural Development Program, entry has recently been negotiated into the National Agriculture Risk Management Program. This program is designed to defer a portion of costs related to export product development, research and marketing. The department, on behalf of the government, is fully engaged with other provinces and the federal government in developing a national agricultural policy. This policy is consistent with work already completed as part of the economic framework.

Finally, the department is also working with the Hay River Town Council on the drafting of a municipal agriculture by-law in support of the emerging agriculture sector in the community. This is critical for the orderly development of the agriculture sector.

Mr. Speaker, work was also undertaken this past winter to deal with an ongoing problem raised by arts and crafts producers, a shortage of traditionally tanned and smoked hides. RWED and the NWT Development Corporation invested \$200,000 in two pilot projects designed to encourage and improve the production of traditionally tanned and smoked hides.

Demand for these programs was instantaneous and nothing short of incredible. All regions reported substantial interest and demand, and a total of 85 projects were supported. As a direct result of this demand, I am pleased to announce that similar support will be provided again this year to this important sector of our economy.

Traditional pursuits are and will continue to be the backbone of our northern economy, especially in the smaller communities. We will continue to expand our efforts to ensure it remains a sustainable and viable sector of our economy. Mahsi cho.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Clawbacks to Income Support

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of our primary tasks as MLAs is to represent the needs and wants of our constituents. Sometimes we get messages and letters that in their words, do this far more eloquently than we as MLAs do.

In that respect, as my statement today, I would like to read a letter addressed to the Honourable Joe Handley as acting Minister of Education, Culture and Employment from a constituent, Anne Marie Giroux. The subject of the letter is clawbacks to income support:

Dear Mr. Handley,

I am writing to draw your attention to the hardships that result from the clawback policies relating to income support in the Northwest Territories. This is negatively affecting the health and well-being of many children, and action is urgently needed to change current policies.

I will use my situation as an example. I am a single mother of three preschool children. I have chosen to raise my children myself until they are in school full-time. Because of current clawback policies, I am not even able to provide basic nutrition for my family this month.

Under current Northwest Territories income support policies, our family is eligible for \$635 a month for food and clothing. From this, the Income Support Program claws back the National Child Benefit Supplement, or NCBS, of \$274.16. They also deduct \$25 per month for reimbursement of an overpayment made by income support several months ago, their mistake. This is for NCBS not deducted at the outset of applying for income support.

Last month, I received a \$230.88 income tax refund for 2001. This is considered unearned income by the IS program and has also been deducted from this month's food and clothing amount.

Finally, I exceeded the \$400 earned income limit last month by \$4.50, which is also deducted. Note that

two-thirds of what I earned went to pay childcare while I was working. However, this was not taken into account under the Income Support Program, which I believe constitutes discrimination based on family status.

The result is that my children and I received an income support amount of \$100.46 for the month of June.

Mr. Speaker, I request 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. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker,

Under income support, it is a constant struggle to provide the basic standard of living for a family. I would like to be able to provide proper nutrition for my children with basic items such as fresh fruit, which are normally beyond our means for part of each month, and for this month of June it will be out of the question entirely, as will milk, cheese, diapers, training pants, sanitary napkins, et cetera.

Bills which are now on automatic payment will create havoc in my bank account because funds are not there. Phone and transportation are a regular part of income earning families, but we on this very backward income support system are not allowed to live as regular people.

One hundred dollars for a family of four is not acceptable and I consider this to be government abuse of its residents. Why does the government of the NWT talk about investing in children and yet not address the very real poverty of families?

Five jurisdictions in Canada have now stopped clawing back the NCBS and two jurisdictions allow a parent on income support to keep a portion of child maintenance payments. In the Northwest Territories, we have the highest GDP growth rate in Canada and the highest average incomes. Surely it is time to alleviate poverty and assist the poorest families and children by ending the current clawback policies.

Please consider this an urgent issue now.

Signed a very unrespected resident of the Northwest Territories,

Anne Marie Giroux

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on National Aboriginal Day

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as today is probably the last day of our session, I would like to send my

warm greetings to everyone who will be celebrating Aboriginal Day. I want to state that I am very proud of the fact that we, the people of the Northwest Territories, are the first to recognize and give honour to the many achievements of the Dene, the Metis and the Inuit people by declaring June 21st an official statutory holiday.

In 1996, the Government of Canada proclaimed June 21st as National Aboriginal Day, a day to celebrate and reflect on the uniqueness of the culture which is prevalent throughout Canada. We the people of the Northwest Territories are distinct by way of our own culture and traditions that are very much alive and still remain the basis of our government, a consensus government, although some of my colleagues might not agree with that statement.

Mr. Speaker, many communities throughout the nation will be celebrating Aboriginal Day with culture and tradition being the key components of the festivities planned. In my riding, the K'atloodèche First Nation kicked off a week-long celebration yesterday, in recognition of the 100th year of Treaty 8. Due to session, I was not able to join them. I wanted to send my apologies to Chief Pat Martel and the people of the community for not being there.

Some of the activities that are planned for this week on the reserve are talent shows, hand games, and Mr. Don Burnstick will facilitate a youth workshop and a comedy show. In Fort Providence, they will host a three day celebration beginning on Thursday with the official opening of the Leon Sambele Youth Centre, followed by traditional events such as canoe races, drum dances, and a talent show.

The community of Enterprise is combining Aboriginal Day and the Gateway Jamboree by delaying their celebrations to July the 6th, and they are expecting some well-known musicians to attend. Since Kakisa will be hosting the 10th Annual Deh Cho Assembly on June 25th to the 28th, they have planned to celebrate National Aboriginal Day after the assembly, after all the dust has settled and when they are able to focus on their own community.

Mr. Speaker, with this schedule of events, this promises to be a week full of festivities and entertainment for people of all ages. I want to commend all of the organizers for the hard work they have contributed to make these events happen. June 21st has been long celebrated by aboriginal people for generations. It is the longest day of the year...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. McLeod, your time is up. Mr. McLeod.

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

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, June 21st has been long celebrated by aboriginal people. It is the longest day of the year and ends the season of spring and marks the beginning of the summer harvest. Since first contact, non-aboriginals have sought the assistance of aboriginal people for survival and adjustment to an environment that can be unforgiving. With the recognition of

aboriginal contributions and achievements, cultural discrimination is on the decline. Aboriginal lifestyles and heritage is on the road to renewal and with the rejuvenation of aboriginal languages, future generations will forever have a culture they can be proud of. We take June 21st as a day to recognize and pay tribute to the traditional ways that are preserved through the richness of our elders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Beaufort-Delta Agreement-In-Principle

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, the 23rd of June, a very important event will be taking place in Inuvik that will have a long-term political impact for the future of the Inuvialuit in my riding. The Inuvialuit, along with the Gwich'in in the Mackenzie Delta, will be signing an agreement-in-principle pertaining to the establishment of a self-government regime in the Beaufort-Delta region. Many residents in my riding consider this as an important waypoint on their way to self-determination.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Inuvialuit leadership for reaching this important goal and compliment them on their determination and perseverance they have demonstrated to date. As MLA for Nunakput, I, along with many others in my riding, look forward to the day when the final agreement applicable to self-government in the Beaufort-Delta is signed and finalized.

I plan to attend the signing ceremonies presently scheduled for Sunday, the 23rd of June in Inuvik, and urge other Members of this House to do so as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Thebacha Graduates of the Fire Core Training Certification Program

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening in the Great Hall, I attended the ceremony to recognize the achievement of community firefighters in getting their certification as National Fire Protection Association of Professional Firefighters and Fire Service Instructors. Mr. Speaker, this is a three-year process requiring considerable personal time and commitment and requires the support of the government.

Thebacha has the benefit of two of their people being recognized; Mr. Bill Reimer and Mr. Bernie Minute. Mr. Speaker, they are part of the Fort Smith volunteer fire department. This is an organization that allows the people of Fort Smith to sleep easy in their beds at night knowing that, God forbid, should the need arise, they will have some very dedicated, well-trained volunteers who are going to come to their assistance in the event of a fire or the need of the services that the fire department provides.

It is a service that the community, like many communities in the Northwest Territories, would never be able to provide if it was not for the work, dedication and time dedicated by these volunteers. While recognizing the achievement of Mr. Reimer and Mr. Minute, I would also like to recognize that they are part of a large organization that the community is greatly indebted to, and whose services we greatly rely on and greatly enhances the quality of life and the safety of the people in Fort Smith and Thebacha. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Support for Students With Special Needs

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government is not adequately supporting children with special needs. In fact, we are failing them and failing their families. Many see special needs children as those affected with FAS or FAE, but there are many more conditions that affect some of our kids, for examples, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and autism. What are we doing to help them achieve their best?

Mr. Speaker, if these children make it through, it certainly is not because of the support they receive from government sources. It is largely because the families of these children are exhausting themselves physically and financially trying to help their child keep up. These parents are desperate for help.

Mr. Speaker, special needs children are not a family issue. These children are not indicative of a dysfunctional home. They have medical conditions that mean they need special assistance to flourish.

In a student needs survey two years ago, teachers responded that 27 percent of students needed assessments. That is one-third of our children in school in the whole Northwest Territories. Once the few who do get an assessment are diagnosed, we continue to fail them.

For instance, Mr. Speaker, in Yellowknife, we have one visiting child psychologist who travels here once a month for three days. Mr. Speaker, in that same student needs survey, teachers responded overwhelmingly that their first concern was to get more trained classroom assistants.

Our Education Act says that students with special needs are entitled to inclusive education. In fact, a department directive specifies that inclusion is "...not simply placing students with exceptional needs into the regular classroom without essential supports and services." Mr. Speaker, without adequate support, these children fall behind, become labelled, are passed to the next grade and end up with very serious problems.

We cannot have one teacher assistant with an unworkable number of special needs children in the classroom. We should not have principals being forced to make decisions about who gets assistance and who does not.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Northwest Territories do not even have clear definitions and specifications as to what special needs

require what level of assistance. It is time that this government moves to do that. This is already done both nationally and in other provinces and it would not be difficult to do here.

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. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, I urge this government to make it a priority to address the needs of these children and their families. It must start now so that they have a fighting chance of being successful, productive adults. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Beaufort-Delta Agreement-in-Principle

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Gwich'in, the Inuvialuit, the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories for the next big step towards concluding self-government, which is the signing of the agreement-in-principle in Inuvik this Sunday.

Mr. Speaker, the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit have asked Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories to negotiate self-government agreements and because of those provisions, self-government is possible through the Gwich'in Land Claim Agreement and the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. The Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories have recognized aboriginal people have that so-called inherent right to self-government, which is guaranteed in the Canadian constitution. That means that they agree that aboriginal people have the legal right to govern themselves.

I have been involved in the land claims process for many years and have seen the Mackenzie Delta and Beaufort Sea evolve over time to where we are ready for self-government. We have the institutions. We have the economic base and we have the people to take it on.

Mr. Speaker, it is an important day and time, not only for the Gwich'in, the Inuvialuit and our governments, but it is an important time in history for Canada to recognize the First Nations people who had government institutions long before the contact with the Europeans. I for one feel that it is time that we took that next step and gave the people of the regions, the people of our communities, the tools and the ability to govern themselves and have a say in how programs and services are run not only here in Yellowknife or with the government institution that is here, but it has to be closer to the communities and closer to our regions in ensuring that those agreements-in-principle for self-government are implemented and lived up to.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be in Inuvik on Sunday for this celebration and I hope that all Ministers and Members who are

able to be there attend, because this is an important time in our history, to strive for self-government and the conclusion of our land claims for the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Recognition of Respected Northwest Territories Elders

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last night the national symposium we had on the living history of the Northwest Territories had a banquet. All of us were not fortunate enough to take the time to attend, but I did go over for an hour. What happened last night was after the banquet, they honoured some 35 people from across the Territories, some of whom are no longer alive. They have passed away. They were honoured.

They also honoured a number of very, very distinguished leaders who are now very much becoming our elders of today. I wanted to mention that I was not there for all of them, but the short time I was there, about an hour, it was incredibly moving. I was there when Bertha Allen from the Delta, in Inuvik, was recognized and honoured by the symposium. She is very much an elder now, but she still has more energy than most people today.

Charlie Snowshoe, who has served the people of the Delta in Fort McPherson all his life, was there. He is now very much an elder, but still very determined, very focused and looking very distinguished with his very long, white hair.

Sara Hardisty, from the Deh Cho, who has contributed significantly to the enrichment of our culture through her sewing and traditional work and the teaching she has done over the years.

Father Pochat, of Fort Rae, who has been given credit for the way that Grandin College had turned out a great number of very significant leaders who have served the Northwest Territories over the years, was honoured.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable Member, you still have a few seconds left. The honourable Member, in anticipation, is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that at some point or other, we need to give a more comprehensive statement about all of the people who were recognized.

Also recognized was someone who has been largely overlooked in our history, and it is Leon Sambele of Fort Providence, who passed away in the early 70s. Leon Sambele was a supervisor at Grandin College in the early years and he served as a role model for many of us. I was 12 years old when I met Leon. He was a very tall, incredibly striking young man who demonstrated a lot of confidence and determination. He taught us how to play as a team, study, work hard, stand up for

ourselves, and how to stand straight and be confident in the face of discrimination and difficulties. He was involved in the early years leading up to the Organization of the Indian Brotherhood and did some work in the community of Fort Providence. He helped build the original community lot facility there, apparently. Just recently, the chief had announced that the refurbished, renovated old community hall there was named the Leon Sambele Community Hall in his honour.

All of these people were there. There were more than those I have mentioned, but it gives you an idea of what it was we were missing yesterday when we were doing our very important work here in this House. As the MLA for the Sahtu, I thought it important for me to let the people of the Sahtu know that I am duty bound to be here when the session is here, but as well, there is compelling reason to show up at symposiums and conferences when our people are there.

Last night the Gwich'in were there, the Inuvialuit people of the Deh Cho, the Akaitcho people were there, along with the Dogrib and the Metis. They sat there for over six hours celebrating our history, our leaders, those who are serving and those who have passed on. Former Commissioner Stu Hodgson, John Parker, many of the former Premiers and leaders of our governments today. Today Governor General...

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, Mr. Kakfwi, your extension is up. Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I will be there today to close at the end of the session, which I expect will be no later than 6 o'clock. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on National Aboriginal Day

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am looking forward to celebrating National Aboriginal Day on June 21st, 2002. It will indeed be a special day for all of the people of the Northwest Territories. All the people have the opportunity of joining our celebration and reflect on the many cultures that surround us. The communities across the North are hard at work, preparing and organizing events to commemorate this historic event.

Mr. Speaker, my home town of Inuvik is busy planning, like all other communities in the Northwest Territories. The Town of Inuvik will be holding a community barbecue, many cultural events, northern and Dene games, the community feast, the jigging contest and the old time fiddle dance to help celebrate National Aboriginal Day.

Mr. Speaker, with so many different ethnicities in our home town, I am very pleased to see that the whole town is coming together to share what is important to the aboriginal community. It is, simply put, an important community celebration. Mr. Speaker, I will be joining my constituents and my fellow community members in these celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to draw the Members of this Assembly's attention to the jacket I am wearing. The significance of this jacket exemplifies the uniqueness of our common heritage. I would like to thank my honourable

colleague from North Slave for allowing me to showcase such a beautiful jacket from his home community. To show that, I wear it proudly in recognition of our cultural identity. So, Mr. Speaker, before I close, I would just like to say, happy National Aboriginal Day to all. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Difficulties in Accessing Mammography Testing

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to an area of health care delivery that affects a great number of my constituents and indeed a large number of women throughout the Northwest Territories. The issue at hand, Mr. Speaker, is the delivery of mammograms within the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard from several constituents lately about the problems they are encountering in having mammograms performed. There are instances, Mr. Speaker where Hay River women have been referred by a doctor for a mammogram in Yellowknife. When they arrive here, there is no technician on duty to perform the mammogram and they are being sent home.

Mr. Speaker, some of these women are without health care coverage and are having to pay the \$250 deductible for their airfare to Yellowknife. In addition, they are having to take a day off work without pay, and they are being refused a mammogram once they get to Yellowknife. These women are having a further expense for a return trip to Yellowknife through no fault of their own.

I am appalled, Mr. Speaker. The medical community talks at length about the advantages of early detection and we cannot even get our Hay River women tested to rule out the horrible and often-times deadly disease called breast cancer.

Mr. Speaker, by returning these women to Hay River without a mammogram, it further delays the possible detection of breast cancer, never mind the prolonged emotional roller coaster that these ladies are on.

Mr. Speaker, I have also recently received information from my constituents that the mammogram van will not be travelling to Hay River this year. Last year, there were 175 Hay River women who received mammograms and breast cancer screenings through this program. Now, they are told that the money cannot be raised to bring this badly needed service to Hay River. I am told that the maximum cost for this service would be \$15,000.

Mr. Speaker, I would think that surely, this Department of Health and Social Services could find this money somewhere within their budget to accommodate the women of Hay River.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, we have just recently lost some very fine women to breast cancer in Hay River. Surely my colleagues would agree with me that this government cannot put a price on human life.

Mr. Speaker, if mammograms turn up even one instance of breast cancer and a life is saved, then this is surely worth the relatively small cost involved in mammography. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will have further questions for the Minister responsible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on National Aboriginal Day

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is our last day in the House for this session. Today, I would like to share some thoughts on our newest holiday, Aboriginal Day.

Mr. Speaker, Aboriginal Day is a day to celebrate our heritage. It is also a way of recognizing the homeland of the aboriginal people. Here in the North, many aboriginal people state that they have always been here. Artifacts found on the land date back 10,000 to 15,000 years.

Mr. Speaker, European explorers arrived a couple of hundred years ago and the shape of the North was changed forever. It continues to evolve. Mr. Speaker, for many years, we have celebrated Canada Day, Victoria Day, and now, to have a day established as Aboriginal Day helps us to appreciate the context from which Canada is evolving.

Mr. Speaker, we have holidays to highlight significant events. Celebrating Aboriginal Day is important. It is a day that recognizes that aboriginal culture is the foundation that houses our common Canadian heritage. I would like to wish everyone throughout the Territories a safe and happy Aboriginal Day as they participate in the many activities that are planned in each community.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that every day is an aboriginal day for me, and it is good to know that at least one of these days is recognized as a holiday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. As a Metis, I sometimes have aboriginal days.

-- Laughter

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement on Dene National Assembly

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member of the Legislative Assembly representing Nahendeh and the communities in that region, I am pleased to inform Members of this Legislative Assembly about the Annual Dene National Assembly. The 32nd Annual Dene National Assembly will be held in Fort Simpson on July 8th to the 15th. It is a big event for the community. Of course, there are spin-offs, like the economic boom to the businesses in the preparation. There are also a lot of traditional celebrations that are going to go on, along with the business of the assembly itself.

Much of the assembly will be held on the historic Papal ground and the delegates will be there, participants and observers

from all regions of the Northwest Territories. An event of this magnitude requires a great deal of work by many people. I would like to commend the leadership of the Liidlii Kue First Nation and their staff, as well as the staff of the Dene Nation, for all the work they have done and are doing in preparation of this assembly.

Mr. Speaker, as the MLA for Fort Simpson and Nahendeh, I am also pleased to be able to host the first Annual Nahendeh Classic Golf Tournament to be held the afternoon of Monday, July 8th, at the scenic and world-renowned Seven Spruce Golf Course.

This fun tournament will be open to all of the delegates and participants and observers to the Dene National Assembly, as well as the residents of Fort Simpson. Many people in the community are helping us out and getting ready for this. I would like to thank them. Hopefully, the tournament will help raise some funds to assist with continuing to develop the golf course. As you know, we currently only have six holes and we are working to make it up to nine holes.

I would like to invite Members of this House to join us at this golf course. I just want to let the people of Yellowknife know that we have grass in Fort Simpson.

-- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I would ask Members of the House and everybody to go out on the land in Simpson for six holes on Monday. I would like to ask the Members of this House to wish the people who are going to the Dene National Assembly to have a successful and productive assembly. Since this is the last day, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish each and every one of you here a good and safe summer. Mahsi.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Member's Statement on Support for Students With Special Needs

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the educational system in the Northwest Territories is not meeting the requirements of special needs students. By not meeting these requirements, the education system is also short-changing those students who do not need any extra help to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that inclusive schooling is here for many of our students with special needs. I heard an explanation on The National the other night that illustrates how inclusive schooling does not work for some children with FAS/FAE.

Mr. Speaker, if you can imagine being so sensitive to noise that even the sound of fluorescent lights would distract you, imagine that you are so sensitive to visual stimuli that the posters on the walls distract you. Finally, imagine you are wearing the itchiest sweater you own at all times. Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like you to consider whether this child would have a hope of being able to function and learn in a normal classroom. I would say not.

Regardless of whether FAS/FAE students have a special needs assistant assigned to them or not, they would not be able to function or learn in that environment. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in all likelihood, this student would disturb other students and interfere with their learning experience.

I am also aware, Mr. Speaker, that we do not have enough special needs assistants for those students with behavioural or physical disabilities that can function in an inclusive schooling situation, so we are also failing those students.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has increased funding for special needs to the education authorities over the past couple of years. The important question that needs to be asked is how does that increase in funding translate into the classroom?

I have looked at the 2000 Student Support Needs Assessment and I must say that it contains many disturbing facts and figures that cause me to question whether the funding increases can even hope to meet the needs of NWT students. Over half of the students who were identified as needing to have a special needs assessment had not had one completed. There was a gap between the number of students receiving supports and the number of students who had been identified as requiring those supports. I would suggest that some of those children who are falling through the...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Nitah, your time is up. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. 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. Nitah. You may conclude.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that some of those children who are falling through the cracks will have the opportunity in later years to be the guests of our newly renovated correctional centre. Some will develop substance abuse problems and some may find the ultimate way out and commit suicide.

Mr. Speaker, there are students graduating from grade 9 across the NWT over the next couple of weeks who are in for a rude awakening when they start grade 10. They are going to find out that inclusive schooling and social passing have let them down and that they cannot function at the literacy level expected of them in grade 10. Some will quit in frustration. Others may find the help they need in future years through upgrading or just plain hard work.

Student support services that these kids could have used when they were younger were not available. A simple reading problem, if not addressed, has serious consequences as a child moves through the school system. As my friend wrote yesterday, it takes a community to solve a community's problem. The Northwest Territories is a community, and we as a government have to solve the problem that is inclusive schooling.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish my constituents in Lutsel'k'e and Fort Resolution happy Aboriginal Day and our

leaders in Fort Smith who are meeting. Happy Aboriginal Day to the people of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Corporate and Small Business Tax Reductions

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, occasionally, we do have to stand up on this side of the House and give the government a little credit for some of the things they do, although it pains us greatly to do it.

Mr. Speaker, I had not had a chance to speak to the tax issue yet, so I wanted to say that I am very pleased with the recent announcement by the Minister of Finance that he was introducing legislation to change the NWT corporate tax regime. It is important that we as a territory remain competitive with other Canadian jurisdictions by setting our corporate tax rate. We have benefited from large tax filings in the past and hopefully we can experience more tax filing windfalls that we can use for the benefit of our residents in the future.

However, Mr. Speaker, as pleased as I am about the potential of reducing our corporate tax rate, I am also very pleased that the Minister decided to reduce the small business tax rate on the first \$200,000 that a small company earns by 20 percent. I am proud to represent Hay River in this Legislature, a community with a long history of entrepreneurship, and a community where the majority of residents are employed by the private sector. Allowing businesses to retain a greater portion of their pre-tax earnings will in some cases allow the expansion and for the hiring of new employees.

The Northwest Territories is on the cusp of many exciting opportunities in the resource development field. Anything we can do as a government to encourage the development of sustainable business opportunities for our residents or for those people who choose to come to the North is a laudable goal.

If we want a strong business sector, reduced dependence on government and increased employment, then we need to, as a government, look at every opportunity possible to encourage the private sector to grow. Reducing corporate and small business taxes in the Northwest Territories does do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on National Recognition of Efforts of Yellowknife Residents

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, on the last day of session -- at least on the last scheduled day of session, I guess we will see what happens -- I would like to recognize some local residents who have recently received national recognition.

Last night, with all the rest of the Members in this House, we took part in a ceremony in our Great Hall to pay tribute to 15 territorial firefighters. Two of my constituents, Stephen Moss and Dennis MacAskill, just completed training and received certification by the National Fire Protection Association. Mr. Miltenberger referred to the three years of hard work these folks have put in, and I think the key is that they will now be able to train others in our communities and make our communities safer.

I would also like to recognize Pat Fowler, who the Minister of Transportation spoke of earlier. He was recently awarded a Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal for his work with our Department of Transportation out at the Yellowknife Airport.

Mr. Speaker, I think after September 11th, we all have a better understanding of both the contribution firefighters make and the risks that they take every time they suit up. Also, speaking of September 11th, Mr. Speaker, Brent Pushkarenko recently received the Gordon Sinclair Award on behalf of Mix 100 for his newsroom coverage of local events on that day. This Sinclair award is very prestigious and is handed out every year to radio and TV stations for best local coverage in areas of populations of less than 50,000 people.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of all these local award winners, and I hope my colleagues here today will join me in recognizing their efforts. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on NorthwTel Job Action

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this being the last day of session, we will be joining our families and constituents in celebration of the summer and special celebrations, starting with National Aboriginal Day this week and Canada Day the week after.

There are people in our midst who are not able to enjoy this time as much. They are members of Union Local 1574, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, who work for NorthwTel, who have now been off the job for more than a month with apparently no end in sight.

Mr. Speaker, I respect the role of collective bargaining and the need for both parties to negotiate as much as possible to arrive at the most favourable package possible for their side. I am also aware of the fact that there is very little we can do as a Legislature to influence this process. This is a very difficult situation all around, given turbulent international and national telecommunication markets and the challenges they pose for employers such as NorthwTel.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I sympathize with the striking employees who feel that they must be able to keep their wages and benefits package at a level that would keep them competitive with the rising cost of living in the North for both current and new employees. To be frank, Mr. Speaker, it is very frustrating for me not to be able to do much more in this position.

I would just like to take this opportunity to let them know that I am thinking about them. I am sure that many Members are also

thinking about them, and I would urge both sides to keep on meeting and talking to come up with a position that is agreeable to them.

I would also like to take this opportunity to call on this government and the federal government, because as I understand it, the federal government is in charge of the labour telecommunications market. I would urge both levels of government to pay attention to this process and assist in any way possible and appropriate to bring this dispute to a close as soon as possible. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Members a safe journey and our constituents a happy National Aboriginal Day and Canada Day.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Oral Question 275-14(5): Hay River Highway Study

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Hay River North on June 17, 2002. Mr. Delorey asked me, "Who is responsible for the condition of the railway tracks on the sections of highway just approaching the railway tracks?"

Regarding the level crossing of highways and railways, the highway authority is responsible for the highway up to the railway crossing. The railroad is responsible for maintaining the highway across its tracks. The highway authority does not work on the railway's tracks. Keeping in mind the possibility of derailment, this arrangement preserves the railroad's responsibility for the integrity and continuity of its track.

At the railway crossing on Highway No. 2 in his constituency that the Member referred to, the timbers that carry Highway No. 2 traffic across the tracks are replaced by the Mackenzie Northern Railway every year. The Department of Transportation maintains Highway No. 2 up to the timbers on either side of the track. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 283-14(5): Water and Sewer Operation Agreements

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by Mr. Krutko on June 17, 2002, regarding water and sewer operations agreements.

As suggested by the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development, Public Works and Services had updated the standard memorandum of understanding for water and sewer services. In order to comply with the Financial Administration Manual directive 901, section 4.1.1, on charges for a service to the public, the changes from the previous agreement include:

- Recalculating the administration fee and clarifying the tasks covered. The administration fee is now 5 percent. Tasks include payroll, leave and attendance, office

equipment and supplies, duplication, processing and storage of records, cost of invoicing and reconciliation of invoices and system support.

- Calculating a planning and management fee to cover management and supervision. This fee is 11 percent and covers costs incurred by Public Works and Services to provide services such as planning and budgeting, supervision of on-site staff, management of contracted services, procurement of supplies and materials and troubleshooting.
- Setting charges at the hourly rate for provision of administrative services to make additional support documentation available to the community when requested.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Pat Fowler. I think he is still up there. I think he is joined by his daughters, Andrea and Melanie. Members may recognize Andrea. I believe she has worked here on a couple of occasions as a receptionist. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Yellowknife resident Lynn Brooks, a local person who is always interested in politics. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my summer student, Bret Talbot, who I believe is in the gallery, though I cannot see him. He is working for me for the summer and he has been working diligently on a database for me. He will be attending Fairview Community College in the fall. I would like to recognize him and thank him for a good job.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to draw your attention to the visitors gallery and the presence of Ms. Hannah Edwards, from Perth, Australia, a visitor of the Whitfords on what I think the Australians call a walk-about. Ms. Edwards.

-- Applause

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**Question 308-14(5): Clawback of Income Support Programs**

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question this afternoon is for Mr. Handley, the acting Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. It is a follow-up to a letter from a constituent, Anne-Marie Giroux. I am a supporter of the Income Support Program. I am on record as being behind the principles of the program. However, Mr. Speaker, there are some people who fall very hard through the cracks.

My question for the Minister regards the National Child Benefit Supplement. Five jurisdictions in Canada no longer deduct it, and two no longer deduct the whole payment on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Why does the GNWT clawback the National Child Benefit Supplement from income support recipients? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The question is directed to the honourable Minister now responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 308-14(5): Clawback of Income Support Programs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently, the National Child Benefit Supplement is taken back by the department. It is used to reinvest in programs and services for all low-income families, so we take it back and we put the money back into the support of low-income families. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 308-14(5): Clawback of Income Support Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess on that point, I would like to explore the opportunity that families across the NWT have. Could the Minister give me some idea of just how accessible those early childhood benefit programs are in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 308-14(5): Clawback of Income Support Programs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that as notice because I am not really familiar with exactly how accessible each of the programs are in Yellowknife, or in the other areas. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 309-14(5): Funding for Special Needs Students

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, a chart I received from the Minister of Education a month ago indicated Saskatchewan puts as much as 24 percent of their education budget into classroom support. The classroom support budget includes funds to support kids with special needs.

Mr. Speaker, we are striving for 15 percent of our budget, way less than Saskatchewan, yet we probably have more kids in need in our classrooms than they do. Mr. Speaker, how does the Minister justify the current level of funding for classroom support in the Northwest Territories?

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

Return to Question 309-14(5): Funding for Special Needs Students

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me say that I am quite pleased that we have been able to move the amount of money dedicated to inclusive schooling from 12 percent up to 15 percent for this coming year.

Mr. Speaker, as well, it is very difficult to compare jurisdictions because we include different ways of funding our schools, different other kinds of support programs. I do not want to say that 15 percent is adequate in all cases, but I would say that it is a big improvement over what was the case when this government took office. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 309-14(5): Funding for Special Needs Students

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would agree with the Minister that we have improved the situation, but not enough. Mr. Speaker, for years, boards have asked that we identify funding according to the challenge that a child faces. This is a common approach across Canada. Will the Minister bring in a policy to do that now in the Northwest Territories?

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

Further Return to Question 309-14(5): Funding for Special Needs Students

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, we fund our schools largely through a formula that is based on the pupil/teacher ratios, as well as extra money for things like inclusive schooling. Right now, the policy of the department is to give the boards the flexibility to be able to move a lot of the grant money we give them to serve their purposes. I think for us to set a policy, as the Member refers to, right across the department would in many ways be taking back some of the authority we have given to the boards and some of the flexibility they currently have. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 309-14(5): Funding for Special Needs Students

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, then let's be sure we are doing it the right way. Will the Minister agree to meet with the chairs of the education councils and authorities to discuss the manner in which funding for special needs is identified in the funding formula? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 309-14(5): Funding for Special Needs Students

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, certainly I would be willing to meet with the chairs of any of the boards who want to meet with me as soon as we have time and to discuss, not just our inclusive schooling, but all of our funding for schools and hear any of the concerns they might have. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 309-14(5): Funding for Special Needs in Schools

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister take it upon himself to ensure better access to professional assessment in our schools within the next year?

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

Further Return to Question 309-14(5): Funding for Special Needs in Schools

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to meet with the boards and discuss what services they currently provide, what is available from Health and Social Services and how they might suggest we improve the services.

I think one of the challenges we face as a territory is that some regions, some communities, do not have the same access as do others. We would have to look at how we can ensure that everybody has fair access. Thank you.

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

Question 310-14(5): Wage Increase for Mental Health Workers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. It is in regard to the mental health workers. I wrote a letter to the Minister back in March looking at a possible increase for these workers, but yet, Mr. Speaker, the NWT social services system action plan identified that there is core need in regard to ensuring the quality of health programs, especially the inadequacy of compensation and support for our workers.

I would like to ask the Minister, what is his department doing to raise the salaries of our mental health workers to bring them in line with our other health professionals?

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

Return to Question 310-14(5): Wage Increase for Mental Health Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that particular issue is part of the work that is being done with the combined addictions and mental health and family violence strategy. The addictions component I have on my desk. The mental health strategy is still in the development stage.

I am aware of the Member's concern. I will be going to his communities in August. It is also an issue I want to speak to as we look at the socio-economic impact of major resource development, because I know it has been identified in his communities by some of the leaders as an issue. Thank you

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

Supplementary to Question 310-14(5): Wage Increase for Mental Health Workers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the key areas that has been identified in regard to the Health and Social Services System Action Plan for 2002-2005. I think it is crucial that we act on some of these recommendations. I would like to ask the Minister, how soon can you act in regard to trying to find the resources to bring these people in line with our other professionals?

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

Further Return to Question 310-14(5): Wage Increase for Mental Health Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the first step is going to be to conclude the part of the strategy, the mental health component of that strategy, which I just referred to, the Alcohol and Drug and Mental Health and Family Violence Strategy. We are going to have to quantify the amount of money we are going to acquire to address that particular priority. We are going to have to put it on our list and we are going to have to go back through committees and then back to Cabinet. Hopefully by the fall, we will have a very clear idea as to how we can proceed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 310-14(5): Wage Increase for Mental Health Workers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that our mental health workers in our communities would like an answer to see exactly what the direction of this government is and how soon can they see fruition to finding solutions to

these problems. I would like to ask the Minister again, do you have any idea how we are going to be able to see it within the next six months? Or are we talking about a year? How soon can we see this change take place?

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

Further Return to Question 310-14(5): Wage Increase for Mental Health Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have outlined the projected time lines to the best of my ability at this point. Whether or not the required resources will be made accessible is going to be a decision that has to be made. I would have to make a presentation to both committees, as I indicated, and to Cabinet and the Legislature. It is going to be on the list with many other very critical issues that require additional funding. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 310-14(5): Wage Increase for Mental Health Workers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to nail down the time here but it seemed like we were going in circles. I would like to ask the Minister, do you see it in the fall session or are we going to hopefully have something come back to the House next February? When will you have something to come back to the House?

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

Further Return to Question 310-14(5): Wage Increase for Mental Health Workers

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my plan and intention to come forward in the fall with the results of a number of strategies; the Continuing Care Strategy, the Addictions and Mental Health and Family Violence Strategy, the one relating to the disabled as well. They are very critical pieces. There are many components, as the Member has indicated, that are of importance to all the people. By this fall, I would hope to be able to come forward with those particular documents.

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

Question 311-14(5): Mammography Service in Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stated earlier in my Member's statement that the mammogram van has come to Hay River for a number of years and travelled to Hay River in September of last year and screened 175 women. Now I have received information that the mammogram van will not be coming to Hay River this year due to a lack of funding. This is very upsetting to the women of Hay River who rely on this service. Would the Minister of Health and Social Services please confirm if that is a fact, that the mammogram van will

not be coming to Hay River due to a lack of funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 311-14(5): Mammography Service in Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue raised by my colleague is one I have noted. I have already gone to my office and asked them to check. The information I have before me indicates that for 2002-2003, we have put in about \$270,000 of new investments into that area of breast cancer screening and access to mammography. The issue that my colleague raises is one that I am not aware of.

Given the number I have just quoted and the number he has quoted, I want to check, because it is obviously not only going to apply to the women of Hay River but the women of the South Slave, where that test was made available. I am in the process of checking that particular issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 311-14(5): Mammography Service in Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to working with the community health board in Hay River to address the financial solution in order to bring this mammogram van to Hay River? Again, will you ensure that the funding is made available so that this can happen? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 311-14(5): Mammography Service in Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I meant to work with the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority on this issue. I have indicated there is an amount of money that I have quoted, \$270,000. The Member has indicated that he has heard that for an amount of \$15,000, this particular screening test has been eliminated. I want to find out what the facts are. I will work with the authority and I will keep the Members informed as to what happens. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 311-14(5): Mammography Service in Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister please advise if he is aware of the problems encountered by women travelling to Yellowknife for mammograms who are being refused mammograms due to the fact that there are no technicians on duty when they get here? I am told there are some three technicians working here in Yellowknife, but in

many cases, Mr. Speaker, there is only one on duty because one could be on vacation and one on maternity leave, from what I gather. Is he aware of the situation that is taking place with women coming to Yellowknife for mammograms? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 311-14(5): Mammography Service in Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I am aware that this is a program area that is under considerable stress. In fact, over lunch, I met with about seven members of Local 11 from Stanton. One of them was the individual who does the mammographies. She indicated the pressures she is under right now. The waiting list and the fact that she, as I recollect, is the only one who is doing this particular function at present, so she is on call and under pressure from all quarters. I am aware of this particular issue and it is one that I am very interested in trying to resolve. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 311-14(5): Mammography Service in Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not quite hear what the Minister's last statement was. Can I get a commitment from the Minister that due to the fact that we are bringing women from outside of Yellowknife into Yellowknife to have mammograms, will he commit to addressing that situation? Will he commit to make sure that women are not spending these dollars to come to Yellowknife and then are being sent home without getting the service they came here for? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 311-14(5): Mammography Service in Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue that my colleague talks about is one of concern, not only with women coming up to address screening, but the whole issue of effective intake and discharge management is a critical one so that the issues that my colleague talks about do not in fact occur. We want to make the best use of our resources so we do not have people travelling needlessly and not being properly booked.

Yes, as part of our discussions with Hay River on this particular issue, I will discuss that. It is also one of the broader issues identified in the action plan from a systems approach. Thank you.

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

Question 312-14(5): Responsibilities of Education Boards

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, the Education Act states that every student is entitled to have access to the education program in a regular instructional setting in a public school in the community in which the student resides.

The act goes on to say that an educational body, which means the boards or authorities, shall -- and I note the word shall, Mr. Speaker -- provide a student with the support services necessary to ensure the student's participation and inclusive schooling.

Can the Minister tell me what the department does to ensure that the boards live up to this legislative responsibility? Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 312-14(5): Responsibilities of Education Boards

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, first of all, we provide all of the boards with funding through a formula. Part of that funding, as I mentioned earlier, is for inclusive schooling. It is 15 percent of the grant. The boards are expected and have to report back on their results, so we leave it to the boards to ensure that their superintendent or director and their staff are delivering the services that are required. If there is any reason to have concerns, then we would do an assessment of the board. As well, all of the boards have to report results to the Department of Education. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 312-14(5): Responsibilities of Education Boards

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, does the department have criteria or regulations that direct the boards' decisions in deciding which students need a teacher's assistant? Who decides if a student gets to keep a teacher's assistant? Can the Minister answer those questions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, two questions there.

Further Return to Question 312-14(5): Responsibilities of Education Boards

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, we do not, as a department, tell the teachers or the schools or direct them to which students need assistance. That is a decision we leave to the board and their staff. Generally, it is a decision that is made between the teachers and the principal and sometimes with the superintendent and other specialized staff they may have. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 312-14(5): Responsibilities of Education Boards

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how often does the board provide the department with an assessment and the number of students evaluated? How often does the department do an assessment with the boards in every community? I am aware there is a great deal of need for psychologists, and some students have been identified and it has been determined that there are many more who have not been identified or evaluated. How often does the department do an assessment on each school in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 312-14(5): Responsibilities of Education Boards

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, while we receive information from the schools on a regular basis, for example, student achievement results, we would only do a comprehensive assessment of a school or of an education authority on an as-needed basis. That would be where someone has brought it to our attention that they are feeling that the services being provided are inadequate in some way. Then we would assess the need to do it and they do that kind of comprehensive review.

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

Question 313-14(5): Stanton Hospital Deficit Recovery Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister of Health and Social Services and I want to continue on from the questioning that we had during the committee of the whole discussion last night.

Mr. Speaker, while debating our supplementary budget for health boards, I learned yesterday that Stanton has a deficit of \$1.7 million, and that while the government will provide \$700,000 for recovery, Stanton for next year will have a \$500,000 surplus. During debate, I suggested to require this board, when it is facing what it is facing with the shortage of health care workers and everything else that I have been talking about, to come up with a debt recovery plan has to amount to negligence on the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, may I have a question, please? A question for the Minister.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to suggest that it is the Minister who is negligent in forcing the health board to come up with this debt recovery plan. Could the Minister answer, what was his instruction to the board to come up with this plan?

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

Return to Question 313-14(5): Stanton Hospital Deficit Recovery Plan

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is twice now since yesterday that the Member has stated that I am negligent, that the Stanton board is negligent. Given her legal background, I would suggest these are not terms to be used lightly. This is a job I take very seriously and I do not really appreciate the imputation -- it is not an imputation, it is a direct assertion that I am somehow being negligent and not doing this job properly. If the Member is of that strong opinion, she has access to means to address that. I refute that allegation.

I will tell her that we have moved ahead, as I have in this House, very carefully to deal with the deficits and we are going to continue to do that. It is a shared responsibility. It has been accepted by the boards and the authorities. It is underway. I will share those deficit reduction plans, as I have indicated in this House, and I am prepared to stand on the work that I have done to date as Minister.

If the Member wishes to make that allegation and that kind of very serious accusation, this is a forum to do that. Let's debate it, whether I am negligent. I do not believe I am. We have initiated a host of very important initiatives and activities to improve the services to the people -- health and social services -- and that has been done with close collaboration of the communities, the authorities and the community leaders across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Before I go to the supplementary, I just want to caution Members about the phrases they use. The Chair did note that, however, it is not always the Chair's responsibility to act on it. However, the Minister did raise the point where there may be allegations made against a Member of the House of certain concerns. I just want to caution the Members to mind the language they use or the Speaker will make a ruling on it.

The honourable Member for Range Lake, your supplementary.

Supplementary to Question 313-14(5): Stanton Hospital Deficit Recovery Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I accept your advice. Mr. Speaker, I believe the situation at Stanton is so grave and so serious that we cannot be using light words or fighting with words, Mr. Speaker. It is grossly irresponsible for the Minister of Health to ask the board...

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, I am going to rule you out of order if you continue along that line. Would you ask a question of the Minister about your concerns? Do not make allegations. The Chair notes your concerns, but be careful of your language or I will rule you out of order. Your question, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister tell us exactly what his instructions were to the board to fight the deficit? What were his instructions to the board? What did he tell the board to do with the debt? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 313-14(5): Stanton Hospital Deficit Recovery Plan

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of the debt is one that has been through this House. There will be a third reading of a supplementary appropriation that has funds in there to deal with the financing arrangement. That arrangement was developed in conjunction with the authorities in the department. It is a 60/40 split. It is a shared responsibility of accumulated debt from 1997 up to 2000-2001, where there was a substantial rebasing done of about \$4 million. It was a process that I have laid out a number of times in this House since yesterday, and it is underway. The deficit reduction plans are all in and it is being dealt with by all the authorities and the department. It is part of having a system that is responsible.

Recognizing there are many pressures and forced growth issues, there is still a requirement upon boards and authorities to try to live within the budgets that have been agreed to, because we, like all other parts of the system, must compete for limited resources. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 313-14(5): Stanton Hospital Deficit Recovery Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in that long answer, I do not believe he answered my question as to exactly what his instructions were to the board in terms of coming up with a debt recovery plan. I ask again, Mr. Speaker, did the Minister tell the board that it was okay to close the ICU, close surgery and not hire anymore staff as long as they come up with a \$500,000 surplus? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 313-14(5): Stanton Hospital Deficit Recovery Plan

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: No, Mr. Speaker, that was not my instruction. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 313-14(5): Stanton Hospital Deficit Recovery Plan

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so I ask again, what exactly was his instruction to force this board to come up with a \$600,000 surplus under their dire circumstances? What was his instruction, Mr. Speaker?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, for the sake of clarity, given that there are 31 minutes left, I will read the terms of reference that were passed out.

The guidelines for the preparation of deficit recovery plans, health and social services authority:

1. Accumulated deficits -- several Health and Social Services boards have accumulated deficits that were incurred prior to April 1, 2001. While some have received initial funding and/or taken action to reduce the deficits, the amount of the outstanding remains over \$6 million. A proposal is under development that would result in the Department of Health and Social Services...

MR. SPEAKER: Excuse me, I am going to ask the honourable Minister if he has a very lengthy report to read, that he table that information, give a short answer, as per the House's rules. A short answer, Mr. Minister.

Further Return to Question 313-14(5): Stanton Hospital Deficit Recovery Plan

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two pages. If the Speaker is of the opinion that it is too lengthy, I would be happy to table that. Let me just say that I will table this. That this was done in a careful, measured way, and hopefully it will go some small way to alleviate the overwhelming concern of the Member opposite. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Just for clarity, it is not the Speaker's ruling. It is the Speaker's advice. They are your rules about lengthy questions, lengthy answers in the effort to use as much of the question period as possible. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 314-14(5): Waiting Lists for Southern Treatment

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also for the Minister of Health. I am wondering, given the closure of our ICU, it is conceivable that we will have to send folks south for emergency treatment, and likely have to get them into Alberta facilities. I am wondering, what happens when we do send our residents south? Do they end up being on the same waiting list as everybody else or are they at the back of the bus behind Alberta residents? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 314-14(5): Waiting Lists for Southern Treatment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member attended a visit with me to the Capital Health Authority, and all the information I have indicates that in our contractual arrangements with the Capital Health Authority, we have a very good, almost immediate access, in many cases, to the services that we are contracted for. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 314-14(5): Waiting Lists for Southern Treatment

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would concur with that. I think we have excellent access to Capital Health facilities. What about other Alberta provincial facilities that do not come under the auspices of capital health? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 314-14(5): Waiting Lists for Southern Treatment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware of one instance, as is the Member, where we intended to access a resource outside of the Capital Health Authority. In fact, the reality was that the Alberta residents were given priority and we had to get in line and apply to access the program, but always at the risk of being bumped. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 314-14(5): Waiting Lists for Southern Treatment

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if this Minister would open up a dialogue with his counterpart in Alberta to see if we can have access to other Alberta facilities the same way we do with Capital Health facilities? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 314-14(5): Waiting Lists for Southern Treatment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be prepared to make that contact to see what is possible outside of our specific contractual arrangement with the Capital Health Authority. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 314-14(5): Waiting Lists for Southern Treatment

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to request that the Minister send me some confirmation that he has in fact set up these meetings, so that I can see that it is being done in a timely manner? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 314-14(5): Waiting Lists for Southern Treatment

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to that as well. It is a matter of practice for myself to stay in very close contact with the chair of Social Programs. They are an integral part of any process to move changes ahead. Thank you.

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

Question 315-14(5): GNWT Income Support Policies

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to resume my line of questioning with the Acting Minister for Education, Culture and Employment. I would phrase my questions to the Minister exactly as my constituent has put them. I will ask the Minister, why is it that income support policies do not allow families to meet even the most basic needs of their children? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 315-14(5): GNWT Income Support Policies

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Income Support Programs in the Northwest Territories are designed to be support programs of last resort. As such, they are designed and continually reassessed in order to ensure that they are meeting minimum requirements. If particular families are having difficulties, then they should go back and have a reassessment done of their situation. It may be that there is information missing or something has not been understood. Clearly they are meant as sufficient to meet the basic needs of all families using this program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 315-14(5): GNWT Income Support Policies

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later on today I will be tabling the financial case report dated this month for this constituent. It will obviously demonstrate that our system does not respond to these kinds of needs.

My second question in the same light, Mr. Speaker, why does the Government of the Northwest Territories talk about investing in children and yet not address the very real poverty of families? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 315-14(5): GNWT Income Support Policies

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the government does provide support for families in need through the Income Support Program. As well, through our early childhood and other programs, we are investing up to \$4 million per year in support of young children.

I think the amounts we are providing in income support are meant to be sufficient. On top of that, we have, over the last couple of years, undergone two major initiatives to support children. I think the government is doing a lot and as much as we can, given our resources. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 315-14(5): GNWT Income Support Policies

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will restate again my support for the principles of the program. For cases such as my constituent, the program is just not sufficient to cover even their most basic needs and the system is not at all sensitive to these anomalies, which, in fact, the system itself creates.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask very plainly, what kind of backup can our income support system provide when a family of four ends up, after clawbacks, with only \$100 to buy food and clothing for the month? What can we do?

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

Further Return to Question 315-14(5): GNWT Income Support Policies

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, our Income Support Program is designed as a last resort program to help people meet their basic needs. We do allow people a lot of latitude on unearned income. In fact, there is a whole number of areas where we do not take back or deduct unearned income.

We also allow a single person up to \$200 in earned income and a family up to \$400 in earned income. Those are meant to encourage people to go back to work as well as to give them enough to meet their basic needs. If, in some cases, we want to allow people to keep all of those earnings, then we are really talking about a guaranteed annual income program, which is philosophically quite different than what we have now.

As I said before, if families are having difficulties, then I would suggest they go back and get a reassessment of their situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 315-14(5): GNWT Income Support Policies

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess this shows, Mr. Speaker, the dilemma, the endless cycle that our system has built into it now. I know you are going to be tough with timing here, so I will just get right to the next question, Mr. Speaker. Will this government follow the lead of a number of other Canadian jurisdictions and finally see the benefit and the merit of restoring the National Child Benefit Supplement to families in the Northwest Territories?

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

Further Return to Question 315-14(5): GNWT Income Support Policies

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly I am willing to have a look at that. I am willing to talk to Mr. Ootes, when he returns, about it but that is a major shift if we were to do that. It would mean dropping some other programs we have to assist families who are getting back into the workforce. We are taking

back, deducting that money, and using it to support programs to help families get back into the workforce.

I am certainly open to discussing it further with the committee, with the Member, and I will discuss it with Mr. Ootes when he returns. Thank you.

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

Question 316-14(5): Repatriation of Northerners in Southern Institutions

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Michael Miltenberger. Upon doing our tour of the Alberta facilities, we saw a few of our people from the North being taken care of through long-term care. Some are physically and mentally disabled.

I would like to ask the Minister, what is he going to be doing with his department and Finance to see that we can bring some of these people back to the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 316-14(5): Repatriation of Northerners in Southern Institutions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a result of our tour of the facilities that my colleague just referenced, we are following up on some specific cases where we toured facilities that had northern residents, where there were some initial thoughts based on what we saw that the service could be provided in the North.

As a broader matter of practice, as I indicated yesterday in this House to Mr. Krutko, this is an issue that we constantly try to assess so we can plan to try and repatriate whenever possible, either for supported living or some kind of facility for children and adults that we can sustain and provide in the North. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 316-14(5): Repatriation of Northerners in Southern Institutions

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister, what kind of timeline is he looking at and when will he be reporting back to the House? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 316-14(5): Repatriation of Northerners in Southern Institutions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is going to be an ongoing process. In some cases, we may be able to repatriate individual clients. In some cases, if it looks like there is a sustainable, long-term need,

then it makes good sense, as my colleagues have indicated, to look at a service delivery structure in the North that employs Northerners and is in the North for northern people. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 316-14(5): Repatriation of Northerners in Southern Institutions

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Upon our tour, we noticed some of our people down there who can get the same help they are getting in the south in the North. The only thing is the facilities are not there. I understand there are some facilities in the North Slave for temporary use. If possible, can the Minister start making plans so we can start bringing some of these patients back immediately? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 316-14(5): Repatriation of Northerners in Southern Institutions

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take the Member's comments under consideration. I know the facility of which he speaks. There have been some changes in circumstances. I agree, if there are facilities here, we should be looking at trying to use them.

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

Question 317-14(5): Establishing a Viable NWT Diamond Industry

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the Minister made an important speech to the World Diamond Congress. I know he shared copies of his speaking notes with Members. I think he set out the story in the Northwest Territories fairly well, in making the argument that we are working towards providing the infrastructure necessary to have a strong diamond industry in the North.

I wonder if the Minister could, for the record in this House, outline what he sees as the important next steps in setting this industry up and making it viable in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 317-14(5): Establishing a Viable NWT Diamond Industry

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the diamond industry in the Northwest Territories is fairly new, less than four years. We have three manufacturing companies and there is interest on how they evolve. There are partners that are going to be buying into the existing manufacturers. We are working on these as we speak. The interest that they have in the current way rough diamonds are acquired is one area we need to concentrate on with the producing mine.

I think there is openness on the part of the diamond mines to work to try and achieve this at this point in time. There is considerable interest at the national level. We have been talking with our Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, in regard to our concern about the definition of diamonds through the Competition Bureau. We need to do some work at that level.

With the interest and the possibility of diamond mines in Ontario and Quebec, Canada is going to be a major diamond producer in the future. With this developing on all these fronts, we need to work with the federal government to try to come up with a national diamond approach. I think there is work being done. I understand that DIAND had commissioned a diamond expert to come up with an approach on what steps to take.

At the same time, we here in the Northwest Territories have been working towards a Northwest Territories Diamond Manufacturers Licensing Act. I think this is something that we have to do. We have to do consultation on a discussion paper and the next step for RWED would be to proceed towards a legislative proposal to see if there is support from my colleagues in Cabinet. We will then take it forward and share it with the Members. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 317-14(5): Establishing a Viable NWT Diamond Industry

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister talked about the supply of rough diamonds, skilled labour, attracting investment and assistance in setting up viable businesses while looking for equity participation. He also talked about a legislative framework and Competition Bureau guidelines.

Mr. Speaker, these are businesses that are coming here. They need to see profits to make them work. The one thing I think is missing from the Minister's comments was something to do with the 10 percent excise tax. We have to do something to provide more margin for these companies if we want them to be sustainable. Will the Minister commit to work towards getting rid of that 10 percent excise tax on manufactured diamonds in Canada?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 317-14(5): Establishing a Viable NWT Diamond Industry

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through the Department of RWED and through my predecessors, there has been a lot of work done with regard to the excise tax. We are very concerned about it and if we got our way, we would not have that 10 percent excise tax. However, the federal Minister of Finance is responsible for this, and our Finance Minister has been raising this with the federal Finance Minister. Now we have a new federal Finance Minister, so we will also have to approach Minister Manley and try to ensure that he understands where we are coming from in this area. The Jewellery Association has also been pushing this and there has been lobbying by all fronts with the federal government to try to address this whole issue.

We will continue to pursue this 10 percent excise tax because it does not make any sense when we are producing diamonds, polishing and cutting them. We are not importing them from any other place. We are developing them right here and I think we should be able to make our case heard. Hopefully, there will be federal action on that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 317-14(5): Establishing a Viable NWT Diamond Industry

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I met this morning with a representative from a company involved in the diamond industry and heard again that it is far more important to them that the excise tax issue be addressed than a legislative framework. The consumer does not care much about the legislative framework for the most part, but they do care about the quality of the diamonds and the price that they pay. Will the Minister take some energy away from developing a legislative framework and put more effort into addressing the 10 percent excise tax in Canada?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 317-14(5): Establishing a Viable NWT Diamond Industry

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very good suggestion. I think we have to turn more of our attention in this regard. At the same time, we have not really been pursuing the proposed Diamond Manufacturers Licensing Act very vigorously. However, we will turn more of our attention to this 10 percent excise tax. Thank you.

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

Question 318-14(5): Water and Sewer Operations Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works, Mr. Steen, with regard to his Return to Oral Question concerning the water and sewage operations agreements. He made reference to the Financial Manual Directive 901, section 4.1.1, that charges for services to the public. They made provisions where there is a 5 percent administration charge and an 11 percent management fee, which is attached. To me, that means a 16 percent fee. I would like to ask the Minister whether DPW is required to recover full costs of those services or are there other options that could be looked at with respect to those agreements?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 318-14(5): Water and Sewer Operations Agreements

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that Public Works is required to recover full costs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 318-14(5): Water and Sewer Operations Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can understand if someone is paying you the full costs for the work that you do, but why is there a need for a 16 percent administration cost on top of the costs that you are already invoicing for, and then you add a 16 percent charge on top? As far as I can see, that is a cost over and above carrying out that responsibility. Why is there a need for a 16 percent charge?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 318-14(5): Water and Sewer Operations Agreements

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that this cost, as I explained earlier in my Return to Oral Question, covers the cost of administration as well as the other costs Public Works incurs in order to supply the service. Public Works is required to recover costs because if the community chooses, they may undertake the service themselves and therefore, there would be no cost on the part of the community as far as either a contractor or Public Works are concerned. However, if a community takes on the work themselves and hires a contractor to do the job, they would still have to pay administrative costs one way or the other.

For Public Works to actually do the service for some communities free and not charge would be unfair to those communities that take on the job themselves and therefore bear the costs themselves. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 318-14(5): Water and Sewer Operations Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Minister's response, it says that in order to comply with the Financial Administration Act, you had to make these changes. In order to do that, Public Works was required to do that, so does that mean that the agreements prior to this are illegal because those agreements are not complying with the Financial Administration Act?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 318-14(5): Water and Sewer Operations Agreements

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the previous agreements were in contravention of the Financial Administration Act or not, but in the previous agreements, we identified 9 percent and it was assumed that those would cover the costs at that time. Since then, we have had to recalculate this and that is where the new figures come from, 5 percent for the administration and 11 percent for the other services. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 318-14(5): Water and Sewer Operations Agreements

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a really hard time figuring how a department of this government can be gouging our municipalities a 16 percent administration fee over and above the cost of doing business. The money that goes to our municipalities comes from this government, so on top of what the municipalities have to pay for you delivering that service, there is a 16 percent administration fee on top of it. Has the Minister looked at the legality of previous agreements and this agreement to see which agreements have standing in this House? If so, has the Financial Administration Act been breached?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 318-14(5): Water and Sewer Operations Agreements

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have the department do a review as the Member requests. We will get back to the Member with the information. Thank you.

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

Question 319-14(5): Psychological Assessments of South Slave Students

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Education. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, in the Northwest Territories through the residential schools and the churches, there is a high consumption of alcohol resulting in FAS/FAE and dysfunction in the family circle. For that, we need psychologists in schools to deal with students who are problematic.

I am aware that the Yellowknife school boards share one psychologist. Can the Minister tell me, with the South Slave, in particular, the communities of Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution, where do they get their psychologist and how often do they go into those communities to do an assessment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 319-14(5): Psychological Assessments of South Slave Students

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, I am not sure where the South Slave Divisional Board gets its psychologists, or some of the other specialized services they may need. Some of those services are available through the Department of Education. Some are available through the Department of Health and Social Services. There are some private psychologists. They may have arrangements with any of those. As well, I want to point out again that we do provide 15 percent of our total contribution as inclusive schooling. That

is meant largely to enable them to hire specialists, including psychologists, if that is their priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 319-14(5): Psychological Assessments of South Slave Students

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the lack of housing and other infrastructure in our communities, it is hard to get teachers, let alone psychologists. What the department needs to do in the Northwest Territories is an entire assessment of all the schools so that the boards can be properly tooled to deliver educational programs and services in our schools. Would the Minister commit his department to do a total assessment for all schools in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 319-14(5): Psychological Assessments of South Slave Students

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do assessments on a random and an as-needed basis, but this is an item that I will ensure is put on the agenda the next time the directors of education for all of our boards meet, and let them decide how they might undertake something like this. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 319-14(5): Psychological Assessments of South Slave Students

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, without mentioning names, I know of organizations that have been contracted by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to do assessments in the schools. They have determined that there is a large number of students in most communities that have FAS/FAE and have only assessed a few. More assessments are needed.

The commitment made by the Minister is not strong enough. There is more that is needed. If we are going to take advantage of the economic opportunities and prepare our students for the economy of the day, we need to do more. Can I get a stronger commitment from the department that they will do an assessment this summer so we can start planning for next season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 319-14(5): Psychological Assessments of South Slave Students

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will make a firm commitment that we will look at this issue. I will ask the department to include this concern in the business planning, as we begin that process. It is a serious issue, Mr. Speaker. We take seriously our need to ensure that our young

people get a good education and are able to take the jobs that our strong economy will bring to them. So yes, we will include it in our initial business plans at least, and let the committees deal with this issue in more detail. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 319-14(5): Psychological Assessments of South Slave Students

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I am looking forward to seeing those in the business plans this fall, but I would like to see what can be done this summer so they could go to the communities and speak to the parents and speak to the students, so we can use proper information to include in the business plans.

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

Further Return to Question 319-14(5): Psychological Assessments of South Slave Students

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have to recognize the rights and the responsibilities of the boards. I have to work through them. As I mentioned, I will ensure it is on the agenda when our directors and superintendents of education get together, but I cannot commit to doing something in other people's backyard without talking to them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time allocated for question period has ended. Colleagues, before we proceed to the next item, I would like to direct your attention to those present in the visitors gallery of the military attachés and individuals from the different parts of the world who are serving as attachés in Canada. They are currently on their way across the three territories. They are on their way to Whitehorse, and then I believe on their way to Iqaluit. Please welcome them to our Legislative Assembly.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, and welcome attachés. Item 7, written questions. I have the attention of the honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 6. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: We have several nays. You do not have unanimous consent. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 6.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, but we are on written questions.

-- Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, please restate your request.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 6.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. There are some nays. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 7-14(5): Clawback of Income Support Payments

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question is for the Acting Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. It concerns the Income Support Program. My questions are:

- For the Minister to review the practice of other jurisdictions regarding the clawback of child maintenance payments with a view to ending or reducing this clawback in the Northwest Territories;
- For the Minister to review how income tax refunds are included in income support calculations with the view to lessening the hardship this creates; and
- Finally, for the Minister to look at child care costs as allowable expenses for income support clients. These payments may be offset against income for the purpose of income support calculations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Written Question 814(5): Application of Payroll Taxes on Non-Resident NorthwesTel Employees

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, I would like him to provide me with the information as to whether or not the employees of NorthwesTel residing outside of the Northwest Territories who are filling in for the workers on strike in the Northwest Territories are required to pay payroll tax or not? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have some nays. Item 7, written questions. Are there any further written questions? The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 6.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Written Question 9-14(5): Stanton Hospital Deficit Position

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a written question for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I would like to know from the Minister whether or not the closure of ICU, surgery and six-months of waiting lists for physiotherapy, months of waiting lists for mammography at Stanton have anything to do with the debt recovery plan to come up with a \$700,000 deficit and \$500,000 surplus for this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek the kind indulgence of the House to go back to item 6, oral questions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The House has expressed its will already on that item. I will try one more time. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Nays have been expressed. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 49-14(5): GNWT 2001 Public Service Annual Report

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories 2001 Public Service Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Tabled Document 50-14(5): Letter From Anne Marie Giroux to Minister of ECE Regarding Clawbacks to Income Support

Tabled Document 51-14(5): Income Support Program Financial Case Report for Anne Marie Giroux, June 2002

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table two documents: one is a letter dated June 17th from Anne Marie Giroux to the Honourable Joe Handley regarding income support issues; the second document is an income support program financial case report of June, 2002, for the client, my constituent, Anne Marie Giroux. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabled Document 52-14(5): Guidelines for the Preparation of Deficit Recovery Plans – Health and Social Services Authority

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Guidelines for the Preparation of Deficit Recovery Plans – Health and Social Services Authority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 23: Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2002

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 23, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2002, be read for the first time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 23 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek consent to proceed with the second reading of Bill 23, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2002. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The honourable Member is seeking consent to proceed with the second reading of Bill 23. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes more than one. You do not have consent. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 23, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2002. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking consent to proceed with the second reading of Bill 23. Are there any nays?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chair hears more than one. You do not have consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 23. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 46-14(5), Minister's Statement 47-14(5), and Tabled Document 35-14(5), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee to order. We have a number of items to deal with: Minister's Statement 46-14(5), Minister's Statement 47-14(5), and Tabled Document 35-14(5). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that the committee consider Minister's Statement 46-14(5) and Minister's Statement 47-14(5), concurrently with Tabled Document 35-14(5), with a view to concluding the Ministers' statements and perhaps leaving the tabled document on the table until the fall, so we can consider it with the government's response to the social agenda.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, we will take a short break and begin with Ministers' statements 46-14(5) and 47-14(5).

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call the Committee of the Whole back to order. We have Minister's Statement 46-14(5), Minister's Statement 47-14(5) and Tabled Document 35-14(5). At this time, I would like to open the floor for general comments on the statements and tabled document.

I would like to recognize in the gallery the health workers who work at Stanton Hospital and I would like to welcome you here this afternoon, and all the other people in the gallery. I hope we will have an interesting debate.

-- Applause

With that, the floor is open for general comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that this is how I wanted to start the discussion of the Social Agenda, which I know everyone here feels is a very important issue. I think what transpired in the House makes it difficult for us to believe that we are working together.

Mr. Chairman, I must say that I am really glad to see everyone in the gallery to remind us what it is and who we are working for

in this House. It is their needs and their demands that we are supposed to serve here.

Mr. Chairman, I do not know what the format exactly should be for this report because it is not a government report and we have not had a whole lot of time to review it.

First of all, I want to say that if I say anything that may attribute any negative attributions to the group that reported this report, I never meant to do that. I think that if I say anything negative, it is because of my frustration at the inability and lack of action on the part of not only this government, but all of us as leaders to address some of the very serious social issues that face our Territory.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could just start with the GNWT response to the social agenda report by the Minister of Health and Social Services. On page 1 of 3, he stated that the social agenda report recognizes the need to develop a long-term plan to improve social conditions and to support healthy, self-reliant Northerners who can fully participate in the opportunities the North provides.

One has to wonder, Mr. Chairman, given the fact that the Minister seems to think that the main part of his agenda, or the main part of his task as a Minister, is to take well-considered, measured steps -- it seems to be his favourite word -- to say "We have to be very measured about our response. Everything is sort of a long-term. I have everything under control, just wait."

I have been told in this House by Cabinet Members to "Just be patient, just trust us. This Cabinet is going to take care of things." Yet I have no words, I do not know how to respond to the people who say, "Well, we do not have a whole lot of time. We do not have time to come up."

I mean a long-term plan is important, but we need to put out the fires that are around us. How are we able to come up with the condition that supports healthy families and people who are self-reliant, who are able to maximize their potential, who are able to access the health care facilities or social support that they need, whether they need counselling or alcohol and drug addiction programs, or just being able to cope with every day challenges at different level of our stages?

I find it very ironic that the Minister seems to think that "I am doing my job, everything is okay, just take it easy. I will take care of you." Mr. Speaker, I was browsing through the social agenda report and I note that on recommendation 9, I believe, Mr. Chairman -- it is really hard to think very clearly when there is fire happening all around us -- I believe it is recommendation 9, which says:

Every person, including leaders, should make a personal commitment to contribute to improving social conditions in the Northwest Territories. We should work together to better support our leaders.

I must say, Mr. Chairman, what I have seen happening in this House, I have to be very sceptical about what exactly is the government's intention and the Minister's intention in responding not only to the social agenda action group report, but just general social conditions, because after all, the objective and goal of this report is so that it will advise and

guide Cabinet in coming up with the social agenda action plan for this Assembly.

I have to really seriously question whether or not the Minister of Health and Social Services is able to even reply to this sort of recommendation when it seems to be that he is not interested in hearing from other leaders about what is going on out there.

All 19 of us here have to rely on each other to be the eyes and ears to the people whom we serve. All 19 of us have people in our communities who come and tell us what is happening at their workplace, what is happening if they are in the health care services or service providers, whether they are teachers, or in any place of work or in their personal environments where they are in a position to help others. They come and tell us about what is going on out there.

Our children are not learning as well as they should because the schools are too crowded. Like the Member for Hay River North stated earlier, he has mothers in his riding that are not able to get a mammography on time because there is such a long waiting list that there is potential, perhaps, that a malignant lump can go unnoticed. With those things, timing is of the essence.

I do not know how a Minister could, with full grounding, respond to that sort of recommendation with any authority when it appears to me, Mr. Chairman, that he is not at all interested in working with other leaders or responding to other leaders who are, after all, responding to the concerns and information they have received from their own constituency and the people they serve.

I think there are nine recommendations in this report. It calls for every leader and every agency, and it calls for collaboration and cooperation of different programs. Recommendation 8, for example, says:

All government and non-government agencies should establish policies or legislation and minimum standards for programs and services. They should also review existing policies, legislation and standards to:

- protect the public;
- guide service providers;
- ensure people have access to care, no matter where they live; and
- ensure people receive an adequate and safe level of care.

I find it interesting to note that the Minister's response in the Minister's statement did not respond directly to these recommendations. I am assuming that he and the Cabinet will at some time respond to this. I would think that, given the circumstances that we have been experiencing and the things that we hear at Stanton, and not only Stanton but many places within the Territories, it would be pretty tough for the Minister to speak with any authority that he could even attempt to follow up that sort of recommendation.

I would not mind asking the Minister to see if he would like to answer to any of these points that I have made, or whether he has his position on the Social Agenda Working Group report,

which I am sure he has had a chance to review and think about, and tell us how he sees his plan of action is going to fit into this working group report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Ms. Lee, the Minister is willing to take questions in response to the report and also to the statement made in the House, so I would just like to ask for some direction from the House, what is the process? Would you like to have each Member make a statement around the report and then ask questions to the Minister and allow the Minister to respond? That way, each Member has an opportunity to respond to the report and ask questions to the Minister. Is that the process?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, I will recognize the Minister to respond. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MCHAE MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member has raised a number of issues. First, I would just like to speak briefly to the concern on the part of the Member, in her opinion, that I am not interested in working with others or talking to people or hearing what they have to say.

Mr. Chairman, since November, I have travelled extensively. I have managed to go to 23 communities, and many of them more than once. I met with the leadership in all of those regions. I met with all the boards, the board chairs. In every community I have been to, I have toured all of the facilities and met the staff and tried to spend time to talk about the issues.

This whole area is of critical interest. It is in this area that I have been paying very close attention to since I became a Minister. As the Member indicated, this social agenda document is not a government document. It is a document put forward by the people, the committee that was involved in doing it. We have indicated in this House that we will come up with a process in terms of how we intend to respond and by the fall, we want to be able to put a response on the table.

There is a clear area within our mandate in terms of programs and services that we deliver, like health and social services, education, housing, justice. In fact, if you look, all the programs the government delivers have a link to a social agenda, healthy communities and healthy families.

This document is a broad document for the whole Territory. It speaks to the responsibilities of aboriginal governments. It speaks to the responsibilities of the federal government, of NGOs, of individuals and of communities. So as a government we can speak to the areas within our mandate, but for other areas, given the principle of working together in collaboration and consensus, we have to consult and we have to talk about how we are going to look at this document and how we intend to proceed with the ten main recommendations.

I will be meeting next week briefly with the Intergovernmental Forum, which is made up of representatives of the federal government, aboriginal governments and the territorial government, to talk at the invitation of Minister Antoine about the social agenda and to get a sense from all the parties at the table as to how they intend to proceed. At the same time, work is proceeding as fast as possible in the area of the action plan for Health and Social Services and the 40-some action items identified.

Mr. Chairman, the action plan and all the work that has been done by all the consultants and all the visits to communities by people indicate very clearly that yes, we have a system under stress and under pressure. We have the folks at Stanton whose work conditions are not what they should be. We have staff shortages. We have mental health and alcohol and drug workers who work for very low wages. We have many needs in the small communities. We have issues related to medical travel and issues related to just about every program area we are responsible for, such as housing, education, special needs and inclusive schooling.

We have a problem with alcohol abuse in this Territory. It underlies just about every social problem we deal with. The issue of our own personal responsibility and the role models that leaders are supposed to be, those are all issues that cut across all organizations and governments.

Mr. Chairman, this document seeks to provide a broad frame. The Government of the Northwest Territories is one of the principals involved in having the document done, and now we are in the process of trying to come up with a careful, measured response that recognizes the complexity of the issues. It is consultative in its approach for those areas outside the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is a bit difficult to get into a detailed discussion about this report today, and I look forward to what will probably happen in the fall when we have this document and the government's response in front of us. Then I think we can have a much more meaningful discussion. The recommendations in this document are at such a high level that it is hard to understand how they are going to translate those into action by the government. I think it will be essential for us to have the two documents to really get into it.

These are all good recommendations but I think that the one that really caught me was recommendation 10, and that is the one on prevention. I think that we have a tremendous opportunity in the North to dramatically reduce the number of interventions on the health and social services side if we can get more people making healthy lifestyle choices. It is going to take a real investment by this government in order to get there, and that is part of the problem. In my years in government, I have not seen any willingness by the government to take the steps that are necessary to really get into a meaningful prevention program.

This ties into some of those issues that we have talked about in the last couple of days. For instance, when the whole system is in deficit and when we are arbitrarily saying that all of our health boards that are in deficit have to come up with funds to recover from them, it means that they are busy struggling to come up with adequate funds to deal with issues that they are presented with right now. They have to deal with people who are not well, both on the health side physically and mentally, and there is no room left for them to make these big investments that we need to make on the preventative side, which could save us an awful lot of money in the long run.

The issue that we talked about, for instance in deficit recoveries, makes it impossible for our boards currently to think about getting into the preventative side. There is no way that

health and social services authorities in the Northwest Territories, right now, can possibly take on more preventative work if most of them are now in the process of trying to recover from deficits. All they can do to recover from a deficit is take some of their approved funding and not spend it on people or services, but give it back to the department to pay for their deficit. Is it any wonder we have a shortage of people involved in providing physical therapy to northern residents? Is it any wonder that we are short of nurses and having to shut down facilities? I do not think so.

I am going to be interested to see how the Minister responds to these recommendations, particularly recommendation 10, which to me is one of the key ones, because 20 years from now, our entire budget is going to be eaten up by the demands of people requiring assistance if we do not find a better way to invest in prevention. I am really going to be watching to see how the Minister comes back with how he is going to deal with these recommendations and how he is actually going to channel something into prevention when we do not have the money right now to deal with our immediate problems. How is he going to deal with getting the money that we need to do this? That is going to be the challenge.

If we do not find it, we are not going to have any money left for any other programs in 20 years. I hope that he is going to sit down with his Cabinet colleagues over the summer and have a meaningful discussion about where we are going in the health and social services field and where we can go with the social agenda, and come back to us with some really good, concrete recommendations. I am hoping the Minister will address that issue when he has a chance to respond to my questions.

One other area I was struck by, in looking at his Minister's statement regarding his plans to respond to the social agenda report, has to do with the groups that he talked about meeting with in order to craft his recommendations. I would agree that the Minister should meet broadly to make sure he has a lot of public input when he is putting together his response. I think key players would include First Nations. I know First Nations people are very interested in assuming a much bigger role through self-government in the health and social services area.

I am trying to understand how dealing with the First Nations is tied to the Intergovernmental Forum. To my understanding, the Intergovernmental Forum has a mandate that deals only with resource ownership and resource revenue sharing among Northerners. I was not aware that its mandate was broader than that and that it was dealing with devolution in other areas. If it is, then I think that is something we have not been hearing an awful lot about and the public may not be aware of. I think we need to do a better job of making sure that people are aware of that as well.

With that, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really think we are going to have to have a detailed discussion in the fall when we see what the government's response is. These are very good recommendations, but they are at a very high level. Until we see what they are going to turn into on the ground, they are nothing more than theory. I am hoping that we are going to see some action, or plans for action, this fall that is meaningful. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will just briefly respond to the three areas. First, I would just like to point out that while the Member makes repeated references to myself doing this and providing all the answers, I am just one part of the process. I am the lead Minister for Cabinet, but this Legislature, the Social Programs committee, the other levels of government, the other departments in the territorial government, are all going to be playing a role in coming up with a response that at the end of the day we can hopefully support as a Legislature. I am going to be doing the work to put things on the table and to pull things together, but at the end of the day, it is going to be a collective issue. As the recommendations themselves indicate, this is not just one person's responsibility.

Mr. Chairman, the issue of money is of course going to be a critical one. We hear in this House every day the demands that things be a priority, be it special needs, be it health issues, be it issues with Alzheimer's patients, parity for mental health workers, and that is just part of the issue of demand in communities. Every community has a list of issues they are struggling with that require funding. The Members of this House are very clearly aware of the fiscal limitations we operate under. Where we are going to get the money and how much money is required to move ahead will be a question we will have to deal with as a Cabinet and as a Legislature. We will have to factor that in with a host of other requirements and other priorities.

The focus tends to be a lot on health and social services within the government, which is understandable, given that we consume almost 25 percent of the budget. As I indicated, this is a broad issue, tying in Housing, Education, Justice, Municipal and Community Affairs, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, all the program departments. It is going to take work to pull that together.

In the area of consulting the First Nations, it was thought this would be an opportunity to briefly touch base with the federal government, the territorial government, and the Aboriginal Summit, who gathered to deal with their specific mandate. This is a very important agenda item. It was thought that it would be an opportunity to quickly brief them and get a sense from them as a collective what their thoughts were in terms of how we intend to proceed and what they may see as their respective roles in trying to come up with a response to the broader recommendations that are not just germane to the NWT government. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me start off by first thanking the folks who got together to comprise the social agenda group for all of their hard work. I know there were many meetings involved, and it is a large group of people to have to bring together and there were a lot of hours put in of volunteer work, and I think that is very important.

As the Minister has indicated a number of times, it is not a government document. I think like other things that we have done in the economic development area, it was a government initiative to put together this group of people to come back with recommendations on how we could deal with some of the systemic issues we are facing in the social envelope. We were looking for recommendations that government could then take

and build on with partners, with other levels of government, with First Nations people, with NGOs.

I think that needs to be said. While the Minister has a lot of work on his plate and he is very consumed with his action plan, and certainly it will take a lot of resources and a lot of time to get that implemented, it would be a shame to see these two approaches and these two plans go down separate parallel roads and never converge. It makes sense to look at, in his response to the draft social agenda document, areas where there are obvious linkages.

Certainly it is not just the Department of Health and Social Services which will make it a little more difficult, because as everybody knows, we seem to have a hard time working across departments in responding to these kinds of things, so it will be a challenge. I think it will be up to this lead Minister to pull in the various other departments in his response.

I did want to talk to a few of the specific recommendations that have come out of this. As Mr. Dent has indicated, these are high-level recommendations. I would think we would have to look long and hard to find anybody who could disagree with these recommendations. I guess it will remain a fact that the success or failure of something like this will depend almost entirely on the implementation.

I remember sitting down with the Social Agenda Working Group a number of months ago -- we all did -- and one of the members, I cannot remember which one, but one of the members made the point that we spend an awful lot of time, money, resources and a lot of our efforts on economic development initiatives. I think this is true. I think these are the racy kind of issues we can really think that we can sink our teeth into. They are exciting and we are on the cusp of some great developments in that area. I do not want to diminish that, but I think it is incumbent upon us to take a balanced approach. I think the Premier has spoken to this a number of times. It is important that we do not forget why we are actually trying to raise significant resources from economic development. Really, we are trying to build a better Territory. Much of that has to do with the health and well-being of our people. We want them to have jobs. We want them to have adequate education. We want them to have the best level of health care they can get.

I think that while we are doing a lot of work to develop our economy, much of that is because we want those kinds of benefits to flow in this area.

When I look at some of the specific recommendations, I have to agree with Mr. Dent again that number 10 seems to really stand out, but I think it can be linked very closely with number 9 as well. I think it is going to be about making healthy lifestyle choices, and we have been talking about this continually, but unless we are able to somehow instill this sense in all of us, then it is really not going to do much to talk about prevention, which is recommendation number 10.

Recommendation 10(b) suggests that we need to invest more in prevention. I would entirely agree with this, but without taking funding away from treatment. We certainly cannot take funding away from treatment because I do not think we are there yet, in terms of putting enough funding into treating some of our problems. It may seem like this is continually piling band-aids on, but these things are going to require significant resources going forward, and treatments are getting more and more

expensive. I think many groups, including this government, made those points to the Romanow Commission.

If there were any easy answers here, I suppose we would have them by now, Mr. Chairman. There are not. I would agree that prevention is the key. I would agree that a lot of prevention has to do with making these healthy lifestyle choices. We look at FAS/FAE. It is summertime again and you start to think about the number of boating accidents we seem to see every summer. I think there are real links here with education. I think as our population becomes more and more educated and has a better sense, is more self-aware and has a higher level of self-esteem, I think this can start to build. It is not going to happen overnight and it is not going to be something that this government can try to impose. This is going to have to be a partnership approach with all governments and communities working together if we are going to be successful.

Clearly, something like recommendation number 8, which looks at policies and legislation, we can take a real front-line role in the development of those kinds of things, and the social envelope departments will have to be a part of that.

When we are talking about implementing, assessing, tracking, and communicating these recommendations, we always talk about having to assess and monitor much of what we are doing, and this is one of the biggest challenges in government. After we start programs and fund them, it seems to be another ten or so years before we end up really taking a good hard look to see if they are still doing what we set them up to do in the first place. Oftentimes, we find we are pumping money into programs that no longer have any reason for being. This will be a real challenge. We have to make sure that with limited funds, we really target the money that we are spending and ensure that we are able to achieve many of these recommendations.

Things like the suggestion for multi-year funding, something that we have been talking about for a long time. I think many of our NGOs spend much of their time writing proposals for these little bits and pieces of money that they hope to scrape together. If we could somehow get past that and allow these front-line people to actually do the kinds of front-line things they do best -- which I would suggest probably is not proposal writing, as this is not the business they are in -- then we will be farther ahead.

Again, many of these good thoughts are things that we have been talking about for some time and things we have not really managed to get a handle on yet. I am hopeful that this government will take a lead in trying to pull some of these things together, and we will make sure that the Department of Health and Social Services takes a real hard look at how we can link some of these activities with our action plan, because I think that is critical.

I think we do need, as the member of the working group expressed to us, to make sure we spend the kind of effort and money in this area that we do in economic development. If we at least get halfway there, I think we are taking a big step in the right direction.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will end my comments. I do look forward to seeing this document and the Minister's response come forward to committee. I think we will have quite a lively discussion about this and much debate, and I look forward to doing that good work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member for his comments. We will make note of his concerns. The issue of separate parallel paths that never converge is one that I would like to speak to. I agree. We have to link what we are doing. We cannot re-invent the wheel. There is a tremendous amount of work underway just within the territorial government that can tie into the broad recommendations of the social agenda. They cross departments and we are going to have to take steps to make sure that we provide those linkages.

We have done things, for example, just recently, as Minister Allen indicated, setting up that secretariat for youth to focus some attention there when you talk about healthy lifestyles and correct choices.

There is a general agreement as well that prevention is critical. I have made that statement myself. I recently met with the Minister of Health for Canada, and she indicated that was one of her key assessments in her new portfolio as well. The key is going to be to put resources there without, as the Member says, diminishing or eroding current treatment programs, but somehow make a shift so that we pay more proper, meaningful attention to the area of prevention.

As the Members have indicated, right now things are high level. We have laid out a process and the detail will be put into writing. The fall will be when we have the chance to have the detailed discussion the Members have talked about. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Chair will recognize Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in regard to the reports and the issue of health care and service, one of the things we hear a lot of, especially from a lot of our communities and for people in the communities, is allowing people to build capacity in the communities and also to work with the health providers, the people within the area of health and social services and education and deal with the whole area of community wellness and ensuring that people realize there are choices we can make as individuals.

For a lot of these lifestyle choices we make, a lot of people do not realize that just by doing the little things, the nutritional value of the type of food you eat, being able to deal with the social problems we have in a lot of our communities, a lot of it is in regard to alcoholism and drug abuse and smoking and other areas. I think we have to do more on the side of prevention. I think we have to ensure that we give people those tools and work with the health providers, so people do not realize that you only have to go...every time there is a problem, you run to the RCMP or you run to the nursing station. We have to work out a system so that each of these different areas accommodates the other area to simplify the different areas, especially when it comes to health care and prevention.

We spend a lot of money just trying to maintain the system we have. I think we have to somehow find a way to allow for people and people within our communities and organizations to work with them to find solutions in the communities, and also within the health care system, to find ways of prevention. I think

what we see is there are a lot of cases where you start seeing sugar diabetes, liver disease, cancers and different things like that. A lot of it has to do with those lifestyle choices that we make.

I think if you are not able to make those changes, we will continue to pay a lot of money into the institutions where we see the vast amount of money going, especially in regard to the health care system. The pressures that are on it now cannot continue to be burdened without having a means of changing what we are doing.

I think it is important that we find a way to work with the system, but also to find ways of changing the system so it is more user-friendly to communities, to the health care professions, and people within our social services system.

I think as a government, we have not done justice to that, where we seem to continue to say we are putting money into it, but I think we are putting money into it as a way of saying balance your budgets, watch your deficits and what not. We have to realize that there have been changes in the government as we know it.

We have done away with a lot. We only have the one alcohol and drug facility, for instance, and there is a strain on that program. We have people within our communities, especially people within the health care system, who seem to be responsible for all things relating to health care, from trying to be a counsellor to dealing with day-to-day illnesses, such as the flu, to giving people needles, people who are ill, dealing with the elders. Each one of those areas has a different type of responsibility, but we do have to find a way to streamline that system so we are not compounding the problem we already have.

One of the things you hear a lot of is that we have to allow the people to build capacity by getting the people who are needed to assist in the area of mental health, nutrition, and dealing with the elders in regard to allowing for programs to assist in those different areas, to take the strain off the system. You cannot expect people who are trained in one field to try to do something they are totally not qualified for or not responsible for that area.

We have to look at this problem as a community, a regional and a government problem, where we have to work in each of the different areas to find prevention.

As a government, we continue to do studies and strategies and try to find ways of working with the system that we have. It seems like the government, for some reason, is not taking that extra step to work with the people within the different areas, from health care to social services to education to community counsellors to mental health workers, to see exactly how can we make their jobs a lot easier but also work in conjunction with each other, so we know what the right hand is doing in regard to the left hand.

I think as a government, what we have done is we have basically developed a system where everything seems to be in tubes in regard to "You are responsible for this, and you are over there and you are responsible for that and you are over there" and no one seems to be coordinating what is going on within the system. I think that is what is lacking here.

We have to find a system where we have that connection and that coordination, especially when it comes to small communities. There are a lot of pressures on our health care providers in our small communities because they become the counsellors. They become the people who are responsible for the day-to-day things. If you are the one who is a front-line worker trying to make some of these decisions, never mind trying to do your job but also taking on other responsibilities or other pressures in most other cases because you do not have people with that expertise there to help you, such as someone with the counselling skills or mental health skills or nutrition skills.

To be able to work with these people to say that if you do not change the way you live your lives, or basically you want to realize that the constant pressures on us as a society, because we have an older population, we have a lot of people with sugar diabetes, those pressures are starting to catch up with us. Unless we change the whole idea of how we educate not only ourselves but our children in the schools and the people in our communities that they have to make these changes and adjustments to ensure we have a health care system that is healthy. We need healthy people. We also need healthy minds and healthy economies in communities in order to make this work.

As a government, we sometimes try to basically look at health care strictly as a hospital, a doctor and a nurse. It is more than that. We have to work towards improving that system so it works holistically in conjunction with the whole community, in regard to ensuring we find ways to take these pressures out of the health care system and the people in that system, but also finding a new system that works in conjunction with other areas.

To the Minister, in regard to the question, I think we have to find a system to build this capacity but also build it in such a way that it actually makes a difference to the way the system is running now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Any further comments? Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Member for his comments. He raises good issues once again in regard to the matter of lifestyle choices and how they are a very fundamental driver to the cost of our system, in not only health but education and social services.

His comments are well-taken in the area of the need to collaborate, of the difficulty of working across departments in government, let alone between the two different governments, be it aboriginal, federal and/or territorial, and the need for us to pay attention and to try to start remedying that matter. To look at, of course, always staying very attuned to the needs of communities and the workers in the communities. Those are good points, and points that we intend to reflect when we come forward in the fall. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. General comments. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, from a broad perspective, I think the draft agenda gives us a progressive and a positive place to start putting things together.

I have a brief statement or a message or comment on the approach. It is one I made before, but I think it is one worth repeating, and that is when people find themselves in trouble, the causes tend to be an accumulation of things. There are usually not individuals or families that simply have a problem with the courts or a problem with income support or a singular problem with education, or a singular problem with health. There is usually a basket. There is usually a collection of these things that have combined or gathered up over the course of time that drag people down, present so many barriers for them to get back up on their feet.

Within our system, we have so many different ways that government can help people. It provides so many opportunities for people to help themselves. Within the system itself, there are systemic problems. One illustration is this marvellous technical invention called voice-mail that when people do need help and they are seeking advice or guidance, there are so many different little pockets of resources within our system. We have set up a lot of what we tend to call stovepipes from one department to another department to another department.

As I have said, when people do get into a serious lifestyle problem, there is usually a range of things they need to get addressed and our system compels them to go from one place to another place to another place.

I was disappointed, along with just about everyone else in the Assembly, that the harmonization plan did not hit the streets on April 1st of this year when it was originally intended to. We had some implementation problems, I believe, and we are still trying to sort those out. However, I still remain optimistic that we are going to see some good, forward steps towards some harmonization as a beginning of flattening our system out, making it more accessible, more practical, more responsive.

We look at designing and implementing and delivering these services from the point of view of people and kids, and single moms, people with addiction problems and this kind of thing. If we try and look at how we can do a better job from their point of view, it might help to make a difference.

It is going to take a bit to shift some attitudes here in the Assembly, and I think in our own public service, there are a lot of people there who are doing the very best they can, but I think there is something in it, in a tone and a...

-- Power Outage

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will call committee of the whole back to order. Mr. Braden, would you like to continue with your general comments?

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the issue of harmonization, we are still hopeful that this program can be put into practice. It is going in the right direction between housing and income support clients and the delivery system. I hope it is going to be the start of what will be a combined service, not only for housing and income support, but also other issues that many people have to deal with on a daily and concurrent basis; education, health and justice being three of the other areas that seem to be chronic and continuing pressures.

That is about it, Mr. Chairman. It is a clue for looking at the social ills from the clients' points of view, from people's points

of view, and designing better services to better suit those needs. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to thank the Member for his well-thought comments. He again provides some good direction and emphasizing the fact that invariably, problems are not single-issue problems. They tend to be multi-disciplinary or multi-pronged issues that have brought a person into our system. We have to encourage that and design our systems to integrate and build our services. I just note those comments and I thank the Member. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some questions for Cabinet based on the Deputy Premier's response. I will just leave it to any Minister to answer this. I notice in reading from this response that these are pretty workable recommendations.

Somewhere in the statement, the government states that the ten recommendations are workable, that they can respond to this. It says here, at the end of the first page, it states, "Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to see that the working group developed a small and manageable set of ten recommendations." Those recommendations are clearly stated and laid out and I will not read further there. I have to wonder on what basis Cabinet can be confident about and write prior to that, just the previous paragraph there, it says in the same statement by the Deputy Premier, that through the guidance of the working group, the people of the Northwest Territories have a draft social plan that makes concrete and achievable recommendations about how to improve the overall system.

In reading the recommendations, I am not sure the government can say with confidence that these are achievable recommendations. I appreciate the government will not be the only actor in this regard, but recommendation 8 where it speaks to policies, legislation and standards, I think it is safe to assume it will be largely up to the government to implement these recommendations.

This document not only has recommendations, but it explains how the Social Agenda Working Group foresees these recommendations. They are very detailed in laying out how they think this should be done. For example, recommendation 8 where the policies and guidelines in legislation should be done in a way to meet minimum standards for programs and services. They should also review existing policies, legislation and standards to protect the public, guide service providers, ensure that people have access to care no matter where they live, ensure that people receive an adequate and safe level of care.

These are pretty huge demands. These are not simple, workable concrete recommendations. I would like to accept the government's position that they see these as workable, but given what I have been hearing in the House and the lack of money for health care and every other care provider, I would like to hear on what basis the government feels confident they can recommend implementing these things.

Before I hand over the floor, I want to refer to a section here for the benefit of the Minister of Health, in light of what I have been talking to him about. There is a quote here on that same page, page 32 of the Social Agenda Working Group report, which says, "Government should ask clients and front-line workers to sit down with government leaders to review directives, policies and legislation for relevancy." I would think that a debt recovery time for a hospital is a policy that the Minister would have to talk to the front-line workers about.

I also want to just make a note of the second paragraph under policies, legislation and standards on page 31. When I read this, I felt like these people were talking about me and what I had to go through. It says:

Other people we have talked to have wondered why people responded to questions with complicated answers. Their questions were about how to meet their basic needs, like having a roof over their heads or enough money to feed their children. Sometimes government workers quoted policies or legislation to provide information. This didn't help.

I must say, Mr. Chairman, that I could not have said it better. I can say that I have been getting very complicated answers to very simple questions, like what is the Minister planning on doing before he implements an action plan that is supposed to be done by 2003? What is he going to do now to address the shortage of health care workers that is making it difficult for women to get a mammogram or to get physiotherapy? They cannot get surgery that they need for the summer. They have to go elsewhere. Those are pretty simple questions like, how am I going to get a roof over my head and feed my children? It is as basic as that, and then I get a response from the government saying, "I am sticking with the plan, I am sticking with my policy, I am sticking with my debt recovery plan and my numbers jibe and I do not really care about your simple questions."

Perhaps the Minister and the government should take heed of that and appreciate and understand what it is they are promising. Based on the Minister's statement and the Deputy Premier's statement in response to this group, they have already promised a lot and I hope they are able to deliver on what they have already promised. I would like to get the government's position on what basis they are able to make that commitment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as has been noted by many of our colleagues in their general comments, the recommendations of the draft social agenda are good ones, but they are high level. As the Deputy Premier noted in his comments, we are moving now from the development phase to the implementation phase. I have been tasked by the Premier and Cabinet to be the lead and to pull together a response that will be two-fold. It is going to speak to things we can do as a government with the programs and services in our mandate, and it is going to speak to how we intend to proceed and how we think we can proceed after consulting with our other partners in this exercise, the aboriginal governments, the federal government and the other involved NGOs.

What we have put on the table is an update in terms of the process we intend to follow and a commitment to have a

response in the detail that the Members asked for, that will demonstrate we can respond in a meaningful way to the ten recommendations before us. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Are there any other comments with regard to Ministers' Statements 46-14(5) and 47-14(5)? Does the committee agree that Ministers' Statements 46-14(5) and 47-14(5) are concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): There is a motion on the floor to report progress. 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 now come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Minister's Statement 46-14(5), Minister's Statement 47-14(5) and Tabled Document 35-14(5), and would like to report that Ministers' Statements 46-14(5) and 47-14(5) are concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Hay River South seconds the motion. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and the Family Law Act

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and the Family Law Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave, that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following:

Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and the Family Law Act, not be read a third time, but be referred back to the Standing Committee on Social Programs for the purpose of conducting public hearings on the bill.

MR. SPEAKER: I am just going to pause a moment until the motion is circulated and all the Members have an opportunity to read the motion in its text.

I trust all the Members have the hard copy. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this motion is calling on the government and the Members of this House to allow for due process in allowing for public hearings to take place on this bill. I believe this bill is an important enough issue that we should have had public hearings when it went to second reading. I think it is crucial that with a bill of this type, that we conduct public hearings, that we go out to the public to see exactly what the public thinks in the whole Northwest Territories, and we have to take that time to do justice to this bill. We should have done that. Now, this is the only time we have to do so.

I am asking my colleagues that we allow that process to take place.

-- Power Outage

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now come back to order. Mr. Krutko, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, had the floor. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regard to Bill 5, this amendment that calls for Bill 5 to go back to the standing committee and go through the full public hearing process that allows for and used to take place in the different regions in the Northwest Territories. I think it is crucial that a bill of this nature, that has to be done. I think what we are asking for here is to have a fair system to allow for that public hearing process to take place, which did not happen after the second reading of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I would like to ask for a free vote and a recorded vote regarding this amendment.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for the record, I want to point out that this bill was referred to the Social Programs committee some time ago. It was the committee's decision not to go to conduct public hearings, and our government concurred with that decision.

In our view and in my view, there is nothing that has come forward since that time that would cause a change of mind that we know of. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. To the motion. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too concur with my colleague for Mackenzie Delta. This is something that should be brought back to the people for the people to decide. We were sworn in to represent everybody in the Northwest Territories, not just certain individuals. We have not heard the voices from everyone yet.

As for Mr. Handley's statement that it was brought to the Social Programs, yes, it was. I was part of the Social Programs

committee, but I was outnumbered three to one when it came to a decision to bring it back to the public.

I have to say that now, and saying that is not a breach of confidentiality, because this is something that is very much of importance to our future generations. I ask Cabinet on the other side and my colleagues here to think of the future generations of the people of the Northwest Territories and give them a chance to speak on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to address this issue of process. There has been some concern, and we have heard this for the last couple of weeks, about the lack of process some Members feel that the Social Programs committee and the government embarked on.

Members feel very strongly about this issue one way or another, Mr. Speaker, and I do not expect to be able to stand up here and change any of that, so I simply wanted to let Members and the public know how we went about the consultation process.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, on certain bills, there is not a public process. We wanted to gauge the level of interest in hearing from the committee on this bill, so we advertised across the Territories, asked people to write in, present us with written submissions on their views on this piece of legislation, and we sent them a package -- a plain language version of the legislation explaining exactly what this did do and what this did not do.

I think one of the questions that kept coming back to my office was this concern the people were somehow not aware that gay people currently do and can adopt, so that was one of the things that we had to straighten out, and this legislation was not going to do anything to change something of that nature, Mr. Speaker.

So after the plain language summaries went out, we received a number of submissions. As for concern about the fact that we did not go to public consultation outside of Yellowknife, we made the offer in the package that we sent to the many people who picked them up, suggesting to them that if they wanted to hear from us in their community, to let us know. That did not happen, Mr. Speaker.

I feel we have done what we needed to do to make that offer. There was a request from Yellowknife, a number of people asking us to host a public forum on issues to be debated. We felt that really was not the role of the committee in our system, but certainly we were not going to take away from the ability of any other interest groups in the community to host their own debate on this issue.

So after making that offer and not receiving a request, Mr. Speaker, we felt we had enough information from the submissions made -- they were very clear and well-articulated, the points were pretty much black and white. We felt we have enough to make a decision and enough to go on. That is why we did not end up going out to various other communities to host public hearings. Thank you.

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

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I represent a community that is 90 percent aboriginal. The Northwest Territories is 40 percent aboriginal people. Talking to elders in my constituency, they do not like the idea of same-sex couples being able to adopt children. They feel they have not been consulted. The invitations may have gone to the communities but the communication at the community level is problematic.

What we have here today is introducing legislation that is contradictory to religious belief. Most aboriginal people are...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Nitah, I just have to remind you that you are to speak to the motion, not to the content of the bill. This is to the motion and the motion is very specific; to refer the bill back to standing committee to conduct public hearings, not about the content of the bill. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize. I thought I included the word consultation, public hearings -- that is what my elders are saying. They have not been told. The committee may have sent out information to the communities requesting interest, but there are communication problems at the community level. People are busy. Consultation is important, especially on a bill of this nature. It is against aboriginal cultural beliefs. It is against Catholic and some types of Anglican beliefs. Consultation is important. Consultation was not done.

The morality of this issue should be considered. Government is pushing this on people when they should be asking the people "Can we do this?" or telling the people why we have to do this. That is important, Mr. Speaker.

The elders in my communities want to be told why this should be done. We are trying to react to the possible legal implications, but we should not be pushing issues of this level of morality onto people if they are not ready for it. If we are going to do it, let's tell them why we are going to do it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. To the motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seeing as this vote will be recorded, I feel that I should say how I am going to vote. I will vote against this motion on the basis of what I heard from Mr. Bell. I am satisfied the public hearings have taken place. Having conducted public hearings myself on other issues, we can only do so much to get the people interested and inform them. If there is no response, there is really not a lot we can do. I am satisfied that the public hearing process has taken place and I want my constituency to know that I believe the public hearings are important. The public input process is important and I am not ignoring that in any way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. Question has been called. The mover of the motion may speak to it again to close the debate on the motion. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a fundamental principle that we have in this House to allow us, as Members of this House, to get input from the public. The only avenue that the public has to influence this House is by way of petitions, and having input in regard to the public

hearing process when bills are submitted to committees for the 120-day review period. In this case, that did not happen.

I think it is crucial if we want to get input from the public, we have to ensure that opportunity is given during that public hearing process. We cannot rush bills through this House for the sake of passing a bill. The 120 days is there for a particular purpose. It is there to ensure that we take the time and think of exactly what the avenues are going to be used for public consultation, and make an attempt to get public input.

Making that attempt is key. I for one feel that any crucial legislation that has implications with regard to the rights of individuals, and also the rights of aboriginal peoples, have to be considered through a public process.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is crucial. I have been approached by members of the band council, the chiefs and Metis local presidents, that they wanted to know what was happening with this bill, where it was at. I think it is crucial that former Members of this House have asked the committee for public hearings, such as the former Speaker of this House. That did not happen.

I am asking here again that we allow due process to take place, have to allow for a public hearing to take place on this bill, and this is our last opportunity to do so. If not, I think we are doing injustice to not only the bill but to the people of the Northwest Territories. I think it is crucial that we take the time to have a public hearing.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier and Members of Cabinet to have a free vote on this. I would also like a recorded vote.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The debate on the motion is concluded. Is the House ready for the question? Question has been called. All those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Krutko, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Lafferty, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Nitah.

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

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Ms. Lee, Mr. Dent, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Steen, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Kakwi, Mr. Handley, Mr. Allen.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those abstaining, please stand. Thank you. The vote is concluded. The results of the vote on the amendment: those in favour, five; those opposed, ten, with no abstentions. The motion is defeated. We still have a motion on the floor. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed, please signify. Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 5 has had third reading.

-- Applause

Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Bill 8: An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act and the Pharmacy Act

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act and the Pharmacy Act, be read for the third time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. Is the House ready for the vote? All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed, please signify. Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 8 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 13: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2, be read for the third time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 13 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 17: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2002-2003

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 17, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2002-2003, be read for the third time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 17 has had third reading.

Item 21, third reading of bills. No further third reading of bills? I understand that Her Honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is required to assent to bills. Mr. Clerk, would you please attend to and escort the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories into the Chamber.

ASSENT TO BILLS

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Glenna Hansen): Please be seated. Mr. Speaker, Premier and Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is my pleasure once again to mark the conclusion of another busy session of your Legislative Assembly.

I would like to take the opportunity in this Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories to send our best wishes to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, Queen of Canada, on behalf of all

the residents in the Northwest Territories as she celebrates her Golden Jubilee.

During the past few months the Royal Family has suffered the loss of a very important family member, Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and as Commissioner on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories, I have sent our condolences to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth.

Today I welcome Her Excellency, The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, and His Excellency, John Ralston Saul, to Yellowknife. They will be sharing in the celebration of National Aboriginal Day with the people of the North.

I would also like to acknowledge the visit of three former Commissioners of the Northwest Territories to Yellowknife, former Commissioner Stuart Hodgson, former Commissioner John Parker, and former Commissioner Dan Norris. Their visit this week has been a reminder of days gone by and the growth of the Northwest Territories.

June 21st is National Aboriginal Day in Canada and for the first time we in the Northwest Territories will recognize this occasion as a statutory holiday. It is both fitting and a source of personal pride that you have chosen to acknowledge the contribution of aboriginal Canadians in this manner.

The June 21st celebrations will provide the opportunity for families to celebrate the values, traditions, languages and cultures of the Inuvialuit, Dene, Metis and people who help define us as a territory.

The NWT is a place that values healthy people and communities, a place where the system of governance reflects the rightful role of aboriginal governments and a place where economic partnerships are flourishing between southern, northern and especially aboriginal companies.

I encourage all people of the Northwest Territories to join in the many cultural events and celebrations that are scheduled to take place across the Northwest Territories.

After many long struggles and sacrifices, the Northwest Territories is now very much in control of its own destiny. As the original residents of the Northwest Territories, we have come full circle. Some of you were a part of the now famous stand against oil and gas development 25 years ago. Today you are ready to embrace this development and the future that it represents for our people.

We look forward to settling our land claims and self-government agreements, to better roads and healthier communities, more diamond mines and a pipeline. At the same time, however, we must not lose touch with our family, traditions, languages and rich cultural heritage. For that reason I hope you will take the time over the summer months to return to your communities and to participate in the many summer assemblies and cultural gatherings that will be held in our various regions.

In particular today, my best wishes are with the people of Norman Wells who will celebrate their first official town reunion, the people of the Beaufort-Delta who will sign their land claim agreement on Saturday, and members of the Salt River First

Nation who will sign their final agreement during the Akaicho Treaty 8 Assembly in Fort Smith this weekend.

I would like to share with Members of this Legislative Assembly my pleasure last week in awarding Mr. Clem Paul with a St. John Ambulance Award for Heroism. Twelve years ago, Mr. Paul risked his life to save that of his friend and hunting partner, Trevor Teed. After pulling his friend from the icy waters of Harding Lake, Mr. Paul carried Trevor to a nearby cabin where he was able to start a fire. I know that Mr. Teed and I share in the opinion that these actions were those of a genuine hero and I was proud and honoured to formally recognize Mr. Paul.

As we adjourn this session, we are all reminded of the difficult choices our decision-makers are faced with when they enter this House. I wish to thank all Members of the Legislative Assembly for their hard work.

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories I am pleased to assent to the following Bills:

- Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act;
- Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and Family Law Act;
- Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act;
- Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act and the Pharmacy Act;
- Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act;
- Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Elections Act;
- Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2; and
- Bill 17, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2002-2003.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated. Before I proceed to the next item, orders of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and say thank you to the pages who served us today, the final day of session. They were: Bjourn Balta, Jaimi Domes, Kendra Heibert, Nicole Krivan, Geraldine Maloney, Cheryl Martin, Keenan Miller, Ryan Pond, and Vital Manuel. Vital has been with us for quite some time now. Please stand up, young pages, and take your bows.

-- Applause

Thank you. Item 22, orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Orders of the day for Wednesday, October 16, 2002:

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 20, Legal Registries Statutes Amendment Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 23, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2002
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 35-14(5), Social Agenda: A Draft for People of the NWT
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Colleagues, enjoy yourselves over the summer. Be safe, and come back when we next meet. Therefore, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, October 16, 2002, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

