



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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## **HANSARD**

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**The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker**



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## YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 2001

### Members Present

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

### ITEM 1: PRAYER

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

**SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford):** Please be seated. Good afternoon. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

### ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

#### Minister's Statement 3-14(4): Fiscal and Economic Update

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Premier Kakfwi noted yesterday, it is timely that, as Minister of Finance, I provide Members with a brief fiscal and economic update of the Northwest Territories.

I want to begin by making a few observations about our current economic situation compared with only a few years ago:

- During the winter of 1999, the territorial unemployment rate stood at 13.7 percent. The most recent results from Statistics Canada's new monthly NWT Labour Force Survey show an unemployment rate of 8.5 percent.
- The number of income support beneficiaries in the Northwest Territories fell 14 percent in 2000 compared with 1999. For the first three months of 2001, the number of beneficiaries was 34 percent lower than the same period in 2000.
- The value of retail trade in the first three months of this year was more than 11 percent higher than in the same three months last year.
- The value of wholesale trade over the same period increased 30 percent.
- We anticipate that capital investment in the Northwest Territories this year will be about \$1.1 billion, compared with \$537 million in 2000.

As these figures illustrate, the Northwest Territories' economy is very healthy. Residents are working and business is growing. The prospects for continued growth are excellent. This is because the Northwest Territories is rich in natural resources -- in particular, oil and gas, hydro potential, diamonds and other minerals -- for which there is a strong demand.

We must develop these resources responsibly, ensuring sound environmental practices and sustainable development approaches. All NWT residents must realize real benefits from development, regardless of where it occurs. However, we must also recognize that without development of these resources, the economic growth that we are currently enjoying will slow dramatically. By working together we can create the right conditions for responsible development to proceed.

The regional and community impacts of development must also be anticipated, planned for, and managed. As development proceeds, there will be more than enough jobs available. There will be ample business opportunities for NWT firms. However, if we are to take advantage of these job and business opportunities, we must prepare now.

The first requirement in preparing for development is to make the investments needed to allow Northerners to receive the maximum benefits -- investments in training, in business development and management, and to minimize any negative social impacts. I am pleased to report that short-term improvements in our funding under the Formula Financing Agreement will allow us to make some of the more modest investments of this nature that were called for in Towards a Better Tomorrow and in the complementary strategies and plans we have developed since taking office. Bearing in mind that we are still waiting for confirmation of final numbers, and recognizing that other factors may impact both our revenue and expenditure estimates, we anticipate that our fiscal results from last year will show an increase in the reported annual surplus of about \$60 million, while the results for this year are anticipated to be \$10 million better than forecast.

These improvements in our short-term fiscal results are very welcome, and will help us address some short-term needs. However, they do not solve our long-term fiscal challenge -- the fact that this government does not have the long-term revenue capacity to meet either the growing needs of our population for essential programs and services, or the needs associated with resource development.

The February budget address outlined this government's overall fiscal strategy. We said then that the best way to control our future was to create it. We embarked on a strategy of making the investments required now to ensure our residents receive the maximum benefit from resource development. We felt that by making these investments now there would be a payback, both in terms of economic growth and social benefits. We were, and still are, prepared to borrow at reasonable and fiscally sustainable levels to finance these investments on the assumption that future development-related revenues will accrue to the government to allow it to pay this money back. However, this strategy depends on all of us working together to promote and manage responsible development, and on market conditions staying right to attract the billions of dollars of outside investment needed to make development happen.

Government departments are currently in the process of putting together the first drafts of next year's business plans based on this existing fiscal strategy. These plans will outline the continuing responses to the goals and strategies set out in *Towards a Better Tomorrow*, as well as the resources needed to carry them out. They will also outline the resources needed simply to keep pace with the growing demands on existing programs.

I anticipate that the needs identified will far outstrip the resources available and will even exceed what we may be prepared to finance through debt. This means that unless other sources of revenues are identified, choices must be made. These choices will be difficult, but the alternative is to hit the debt wall sooner rather than later. The simple reality is that governments need revenues to pay for programs and services. This is a fact of life for our government and will be a fact of life for future aboriginal governments when they take over a share of program and service delivery responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the obvious source of new revenues are those which will be generated from the development of the NWT's resources. Our projections indicate that with three diamond mines, existing oil and gas activity and a Mackenzie Valley pipeline accessing the Beaufort Delta's natural gas, royalty revenues alone will average \$340 million annually over the next 30 years. This forecast does not include the corporate income taxes that would also be generated.

However, northern governments have no access to royalties, and tax revenues are subject to offsets against our federal transfers, so our net fiscal benefit is limited. NWT governments must receive access to a fair share of royalties generated from the development of NWT resources.

However, there are two conditions which must be met if northern governments, both aboriginal and territorial, are to receive the fiscal benefits of development.

First, development needs to happen. No royalties or taxes will be generated in the absence of development.

Second, a transfer agreement on devolution and resource revenue sharing must be completed as soon as possible. This is the only way that Northwest Territories governments can directly access the dollars needed to deliver essential programs and services to our residents. The Memorandum of Intent endorsed in Inuvik last month at the Intergovernmental Forum is an important step in this process. The next step is for the parties to seek instructions, appoint negotiators and establish a formal negotiation process. We are optimistic that this can occur prior to the March 31, 2002 target set out in the Memorandum of Intent.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to provide an update on two tax initiatives I spoke about in February.

In the February budget address, I announced that effective the 2003 tax year, the GNWT intended to change its personal income tax regime from one based on tax on tax to one based on tax on income. Tax on income refers to the fact that territorial tax would be calculated as a percentage of taxable income rather than as a percentage of basic federal tax, as is now the case.

In allowing us to structure our own tax brackets, rates and credits, moving to tax on income will give the GNWT more flexibility to design our tax system to meet the needs of NWT residents. However, many of the characteristics of the existing system will not change. We will continue to use the federal definition of taxable income. The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency will still administer our income tax and NWT residents will still file only one income tax return.

In February, I also announced my intention to establish a Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Taxation, to consider options open to us under the new system and make recommendations to me by the fall.

As of the 2001 tax year, all provincial governments will have moved to tax on income. The federal government, for reasons of harmonization of the national tax system and administrative simplicity, would like the entire country to be on one system.

The Honourable Paul Martin, Minister of Finance for Canada, has requested that the Northwest Territories move to tax on income effective 2001. Recognizing the strain such a move would place on our resources, Minister Martin has offered to provide the necessary technical assistance and to reimburse us for our transition costs if we move to tax on income in 2001.

I am announcing, therefore, that the time frame for implementation of tax on income will be accelerated to 2001. I intend to introduce the necessary legislation in the fall session of this Assembly.

However, in proposing the change to tax on income for 2001, I am making a number of commitments.

First, there will be no change in income tax rates as a result of this change. In moving to tax on income in 2001, we will simply convert existing personal income tax rates. Individuals will pay no more tax in 2001 than they would under the current system. We will be providing information to NWT residents to explain the change to tax on income and what it will mean for them.

Second, if the federal government lowers its income tax rates for 2002, I will bring forward the legislation necessary to amend NWT tax rates to ensure that NWT residents pay no more in NWT income tax than they would under the current system.

Third, as I committed in February, the Minister's Advisory Committee will be established as previously outlined, and directed to come forward with recommendations for change to be implemented in 2003.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the formation of this committee. I have asked five northern residents with experience and expertise in this area to review our personal income tax system and provide me with recommendations by this fall. The committee members are Mr. Andy Wong, of Yellowknife; Mr. Barry Ashton, of Hay River; Mr. George Dimsdale, of Fort Smith; Mr. Danny Yakeleya, of Tulita; and Mr. Derek Lindsay, of Inuvik. Mr. Wong has agreed to serve as the chair of the committee. These individuals have taken on a daunting task -- to review our personal income tax system, given the flexibility provided by tax on income, and make recommendations for a made-in-the-NWT system.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will be tabling the terms of reference for the committee.

Mr. Speaker, this government is well aware that NWT residents face a higher cost of living than in southern Canada. Although inflation here has been slightly lower than in Canada as a whole for the last few years, we know that the cost of groceries, of fuel, of travel, and of many other services and commodities have been increasing, particularly those items affected by rising fuel costs. Experts are predicting that crude oil prices will moderate by next year, but the cost of fuel is expected to stay high in the near term. We also know that, over the next year, there will be further pressures on costs. The proposed new commercial vehicle toll will impact on transportation costs. Airline fuel surcharges will add to the cost of travel.

Since 1993, the GNWT has had a cost of living tax credit as part of its personal income tax system. The credit is based on individual net income and the maximum refundable tax credit available is \$645.

I am very pleased to announce that I will be introducing legislation during this session to amend the Income Tax Act to increase the cost of living tax credit. Effective the 2001 tax year, the credit will be increased at all income levels, with the maximum credit rising by \$177 to \$822.

We estimate that this change will reduce NWT residents' taxes by \$2.7 million in 2001.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, this government will be addressing rising living costs faced by those who may not be eligible to receive the credit. Later this session, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Jake Ootes, will announce some changes to income assistance benefits. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will also be undertaking, in conjunction with the NWT Bureau of Statistics, research into food basket prices in 2002 and will be making further recommendations based on that research.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate my optimism about the NWT economy. We have many advantages in this Territory that can provide meaningful, long-term benefits to northern residents in the form of job opportunities, business opportunities and fiscal dividends.

However, Northerners must take the steps necessary to ensure these benefits are realized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, I am not certain if I can finish my Minister's statement within the time allotment. I would like to seek unanimous consent to complete my statement and also, for the other two Ministers' statements on the order paper today, before I commence. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to extend the Ministers' statements allocated time. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mrs. Groenewegen, you may proceed.

#### **Minister's Statement 4-14(4): Update on the Social Agenda**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to provide an update on the Social agenda and the upcoming Social Agenda Conference to be held from June 18<sup>th</sup> to June 20<sup>th</sup> on the Hay River Reserve.

Today I speak to you as the chair of the Ministerial Committee on the Social Agenda. A commitment to address social issues was made by all of us through Towards A Better Tomorrow, and Cabinet has supported this commitment by initiating work on development of an overall Social agenda. This support is reflected not only by Cabinet's endorsement, but also by our commitment to attend and participate in the conference.

Last session, my statement about the Social agenda described the need to prepare for economic development. People must be ready to participate if they are to reap the benefits of a strong economy. Yesterday, you heard the Premier speak about the need to balance our economic agenda with a Social agenda. Since the last session, both the Premier and I have spoken to many audiences about the Social agenda. Non-government and government service providers have sent a loud and clear message that it is time for leaders to listen to what they have to say and to work in partnership to find holistic solutions.

We hope that by being inclusive, forming partnerships and respecting the wisdom within communities and individuals when finding solutions, we can effect positive social transformation. Transformation will not happen in three days, but the conference will mark an important step in the process. Ideally, a foundation will be built and tangible direction provided to help focus priorities for cooperative action.

The conference agenda will feature speakers such as National Chief Matthew Coon Come, and chair of the Native Mental Health Association, Bill Mussel, along with speakers from across the NWT and elsewhere. There will be panel and plenary sessions, as well as smaller focused discussions.

Mr. Speaker, there has been an overwhelming response to the news of the upcoming Social Agenda Conference. Over 200 people will participate. Due to the extraordinary attention generated, not everyone who is interested will be able to attend. An additional 150 people have contacted the planning committee to express their desire to participate. We believe this signals the timeliness for developing a Social agenda. This conference is the first of its kind -- a unique, collective forum where service providers will gather together with aboriginal, GNWT and community leaders. We are very pleased that so many Northerners want to get involved. Since this is only one step in the process, people will have other opportunities to help shape the Social agenda. I want to note that an effort was made to ensure participation from as many helping professions and communities as possible.

Consideration of the cost of developing a Social agenda needs to be balanced against the social cost of not doing so at this time. We need to consider our current reality within the NWT -- rates of addictions, FAE/FAS, child abuse, family violence, youth crime, literacy, unemployment, smoking, people who have experienced trauma from past abuse, and teen pregnancy top the charts. What will it cost us in the future if these problems are not addressed?

In ten years, will children today in the NWT be ready to take advantage of employment opportunities created by the previous generation? In five years, will our adults, young and old, be literate, healthy, well and educated enough to fill new jobs? Will leaders at all levels have the courage to stand up and loudly say that child abuse and violence against women is unacceptable? Will communities and individuals take responsibility for making healthy choices? Will we, as leaders, support the people who work tirelessly to combat problems in our communities by listening to and acting upon what they have to say? Will we stop blaming each other and look deeply at what is causing problems so we can prevent them from happening?

It is time to realize that by investing in tackling the root causes of social issues, not only will we improve the social well-being of our people over time, we will also reduce the burden on social programs. For these reasons, a Social agenda makes both fiscal and social sense. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the people of the NWT have the strength to collectively ensure that economic progress will be accompanied by social transformation.

Mr. Speaker, government has already taken action. Many strategies and action plans that deal with social issues are already being implemented. For example, recently announcements have been made about new investments towards a Literacy Strategy and an action plan for early childhood development. Many other valuable and essential initiatives are ongoing.

Yet it can be confusing as to how various strategies are linked. We need to ensure that new government initiatives build upon what is already working, that solutions fit together to reduce duplication, that gaps are identified and that we work in partnerships for the best outcomes possible. That is why one of the next steps will be to develop a comprehensive social policy framework to guide collaborative action. We need a lens through which social issues can be examined and addressed, and the need for new strategies can be evaluated to achieve better coordination and avoid duplication. We expect that the conference will produce new recommendations, which may affect the government's priorities and may require integration with existing strategies.

The success of any actions that flow from a social agenda framework will be dependent upon the collaboration of all Northerners. This means that we, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, also will need to work together alongside our partners outside the GNWT. We hope Northerners can count on the support from all Members of this House, both for the upcoming Social Agenda Conference and for a commitment to work in partnership long after the conference. I look forward to seeing my fellow Members at the Hay River Reserve later this month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

#### **Minister's Statement 5-14(4): Recognition of Air and Army Cadets of the NWT**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Canadian cadet organization is home to one of the most successful and enthusiastic youth organizations in Canada, supporting over 55,000 young people across the country. Here in the Northwest Territories, eight army units and one air squadron help enrich the lives of over 200 cadets.

Today is Cadet Recognition Day, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the cadets, their officers and the volunteers that help make up the cadet movement throughout the NWT.

The Canadian cadet movement offers foundations that help our communities strengthen the Territory and improve our nation. Activities promoting good citizenship, leadership skills and physical fitness training exemplify just a few of the attributes valued by the Canadian cadet organization.

Good citizenship is perhaps the most important component of the cadet organization's training. Through their citizenship training, cadets become even more valued members of our society. The participation of cadets as legislative pages offers a perfect example of the type of citizenship activities cadets take part in. Today, on Cadet Recognition Day, we will also see other activities available to cadets. During the break this afternoon, we will have a chance to meet and talk with these cadets during a reception here in the Legislative Assembly. I encourage the Members to participate in the shooting competition and try and beat last year's shooting champ, Jim "Bulls Eye" Antoine.

In addition to their NWT training, nearly 300 cadets are able to advance their training at the summer training centre in Whitehorse. Many more cadets are able to supplement their scholastic achievements through programs developed by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The cadet movement depends upon a large number of volunteers who act as leaders for the cadet corps and squadrons. Volunteers are also active on parent committees, sponsoring agencies and league executive branches of the Canadian cadet movement. I encourage others to join me in paying tribute to those volunteers today and thank them for their tireless efforts in supporting the cadet program and its people. Their valued abilities and dedication are truly appreciated.

We would not have the cadets without the Canadian Forces. Therefore, I would also like to thank them and their northern-based personnel for the tremendous work they do for cadets. Their efforts are also appreciated by the cadets and by the movement as a whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Minister's Statement 6-14(4): Air Quality in the Northwest Territories**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, air is truly one of the world's most shared resources, and clean air one of its most



valuable. Air knows no political or geographic boundaries. Pollutants we put into our air today will affect us tomorrow and for years to come.

Today is a good day to contemplate the quality of air. It is Clean Air Day in Canada. Clean Air Day is about all of us, as individuals and as members of our communities, making choices that help create a cleaner, safer world for ourselves, our families and future generations.

I am pleased today to release the 1999-2000 Annual Report on the State of Air Quality in the Northwest Territories.

The department established its first air quality monitoring station in Yellowknife in 1985. It was a simple device capable of measuring dust levels.

Since that modest beginning, the department has established a nationally important acid rain station at Snare Rapids, and a modern network of equipment in Yellowknife to monitor airborne levels of fine dust, arsenic, sulphur dioxide, ozone and other pollutants. Last year, a station was set up in Fort Liard to monitor air pollutants commonly associated with natural gas development. To date, results from Fort Liard indicate that air quality has not been significantly affected. It is my intention to expand this vital network of air quality monitoring to other areas of the Mackenzie Valley.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise Members that air quality in Yellowknife is better now than it has been for the past 50 years when gold mining first began in the 1940s. With the closure of the Giant Mine roaster in 1999, the once high levels of sulphur dioxide and arsenic are barely detectable by our modern scientific equipment.

As well, the City of Yellowknife needs to be commended for its efforts in controlling the levels of dust in the air. Thanks to its continued efforts to clean streets in the spring and throughout the summer, the level of dust in the air has decreased each year since 1995.

I encourage all Members to breathe deeply today and remember the importance and value of our clean air. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The Chair recognizes at this time the honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion I would like to make.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Minister's Statement 3-14(4), titled Fiscal and Economic Update; and Minister's Statement 4-14(4), titled Update on the Social Agenda, be moved into committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Accordingly, Minister's Statement 3-14(4) and Minister's Statement 4-14(4) are moved into committee of the whole.

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

### ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Member's Statement on Community-Based Sport and Recreation Programs

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the past few months, I have attended meetings where different sports organizations have given presentations on what they do for the people of the Northwest Territories. The groups we received presentations from included the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Sport North, Northwest Territories Parks and Recreation, and Aboriginal Sports Circle.

Mr. Speaker, the pile of money for sports and recreation is limited. Each of these groups stated that they needed more money. Each organization felt they served the people of the Northwest Territories, and each of them wanted a bigger piece of the lottery revenue pie. Basically, they want money to be taken from one organization and given to their organization, Mr. Speaker. I have a problem with this.

The communities in my riding do not have the money to supply sport and recreation opportunities for our youth. We have facilities but limited funds to run the facilities. We offer sports but many families do not have the money to purchase the necessary equipment. The territorial organizations are not helping us to address these problems.

Let me be blunt. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Parks and Recreation, Aboriginal Sport Circle, Sport North, and MACA's sport and recreation section do not have a presence in my riding. They are not helping the people in the Deh Cho, and these organizations are not meeting the needs in my region.

I have to question why a government department and three organizations are all involved in administration at the territorial sport level. Each of these four bodies uses up money in administration, salaries, and benefits; money that could be better spent on our kids in our communities. Too much money is being spent in administration and not enough is being spent at the grassroots level.

Mr. Speaker, we are not getting good value for the money spent on sport and recreation in the Northwest Territories. We have the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Aboriginal Sport Circle, Sport North and the Northwest Territories Parks and Recreation. None of these organizations meet all of the needs or represent all of the people in our communities. What we have are special interest groups. MACA represents the interests of the government. The Aboriginal Sport Circle represents the interests of the aboriginal people. Sport North represents the interests of the sport organizations. Northwest Territories Parks and Recreation is an association of professionals.

Each protects its own turf and fights for a bigger piece of the money pie. Very little of this money in these organizations filters down to the communities.

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

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

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change in the way sport is administered in the Northwest Territories. It is time to have a system that focuses on the sport and recreation at the community level. It is time for the different groups to come together and serve the needs of all of the people in the North, not just the needs of their organizations. I hope the new sport and recreation policy the government is preparing will reflect this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Support for the Tourism Sector**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the National Round Table on the Environment and Economy released its report, which focused on economic prosperity in the Northwest Territories. Part of the report stated:

"Regardless of how promising the future looks today for diamond mining and the oil and gas sector, a one-track strategy for sustainability is risky over the long term."

Mr. Speaker, I believe the government is on record as supporting this point of view. In its Non-Renewable Resource Strategy, the GNWT stated that the long-term health of our economy is directly related to balanced growth in other sectors. One area of our economy that was identified as holding great promise is the tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, tourism provides a source of income and employment that does not depend on the price of oil, natural gas or precious metals. It is the fastest growing industry in the world, and yet we have not made the investments necessary to capture our share of the market, or to get Northerners trained to participate in this vast, renewable resource.

Mr. Speaker, in his address to the people in January, the Premier talked about Maximizing Northern Employment. Tourism should be part of that initiative. The tourism industry provides many jobs in our economy, with the potential for many, many more. Yet we only seem to find money to fund opportunities in oil and gas. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the last session, we were told that the only way to put money into tourism was to develop a new tax. In other words, the industry had to pull itself up by its own bootstraps.

Just yesterday, I heard about a number of important new initiatives in the Premier's Sessional Statement, several in the Maximizing Northern Employment area, and others tied to the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy. Where was the tax to pay for those initiatives? Are you going to bring in a tax on mining and oil and gas to pay for those training initiatives? I have not heard of anything like that yet, and I do not expect that I will.

Mr. Speaker, it comes down to setting priorities. The government keeps saying that tourism is a priority. In our strategic document, Towards a Better Tomorrow, the Members of this Legislative Assembly have noted the importance of

supporting tourism. However, Mr. Speaker, when we have money for new initiatives, tourism always seems to be overlooked.

Mr. Speaker, my ears perked up today when Minister Handley told us of the new revenues improving our fiscal situation, and he said that gave us room to make some investments in training, business development and management. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development recommended in its Report on the Review of the Hotel Room Tax Act that the Minister make available to the Northwest Territories Arctic Tourism Association, without qualification, an additional \$375,000 from internal RWED reallocations. Mr. Speaker, that should only be the beginning.

Money must be found to promote tourism, to help develop a well-trained workforce and to expand our infrastructure. We have found money for so many other important initiatives over the past year. It is now time to back up what we have been saying all along, let us support tourism.

Mr. Speaker, later today, I will ask the Minister responsible for RWED if he has yet committed the additional \$375,000 to the Arctic Tourism Association as recommended by the standing committee. I hope at that time, Mr. Speaker, that he will be able to answer yes, and further, that he will make sure that tourism gets worked into our funding priorities for next year in a significant manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Social Impacts of Economic Development Activities**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement revolves somewhat around funding as well. Mr. Speaker, I am aware, through contact with Turning Point up in Inuvik, that they have requested funds and have gone far and wide to try and get more funds, whether it be from this government or from oil and gas bodies, to see if they can enhance the drug and alcohol program they provide within the region of Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, they have been unsuccessful to this point. We have heard much about being prepared for this new economic boom that is happening up in the Delta and throughout the Territories. We have heard about the initial new dollars being found for training and for preparing people for work, and that is a very good initiative, and we will see positive results from that.

One side that gets talked about but does not seem to end up with much funding at the end of the day is the social impact. Are we putting more funds into the social envelope? Not as of today, Mr. Speaker. We have heard the Minister of Health and Social Services speak about the fact that the social agenda is

being put forward to develop something for the Northwest Territories. Will that put more money into the social agenda?

There is a question in the Minister's Statement about what will happen in the future if these problems are not addressed. I think, Mr. Speaker, we are already feeling the impacts of those problems not being addressed.

Mr. Speaker, Turning Point does provide an essential service to residents in the region when it comes to drug and alcohol. We have already heard of the impacts within the Inuvik region over the winter. When there are more dollars around the community, you also have some other problems. It is not always bright and rosy when more dollars become available. I hope that, as we have a chance to review -- and hopefully this government will review some of the impacts that have happened within the area over the past winter -- they will adjust their programming to ensure that we are ready for even bigger impacts that will occur next year. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Benefits of Infrastructure Improvements in Smaller Communities**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I will speak on the issue of priorities and funding. This government and the people of the Northwest Territories have been spending a great deal of time and resources on the big picture items: oil and gas, pipelines, diamond mines, hydro development -- many dollars are going to these initiatives, Mr. Speaker.

We are talking about introducing a highway toll for commercial vehicles to fix up our existing highways. Yet at the community level, Mr. Speaker, we still see social problems, communities with third world conditions. How do we expect the people at the community level to participate in a meaningful way, to accept this government as their government, when they live in third world conditions and here we have a beautiful building?

The Minister of Finance referred to a surplus in this year's budget and also to clean air. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that if we are going to create a toll to fix up the infrastructure on existing highways, let us fix up the infrastructure in our communities. Let us prevent dust by paving roads. Let us create parks that are clean where kids can play. Let us create an environment in our communities with the revenues and tolls and other resources so that we can beautify our communities and feel good about living in those communities.

I think that if we start at the very basic and fundamental levels, at the community level, the social problems will start deteriorating. Let us not look for a cure, let us attack the symptoms. I believe one of the symptoms is the infrastructure and the cleanliness and just the basic physical outlook of our communities. Yellowknife is a big place. Fort Smith is beautiful, Hay River is paved, but 20-odd communities in the Northwest Territories do not have any pavement or sidewalks. Some of them do not have parks. Some do not even have arenas. Let us deal with those issues, Mr. Speaker, and let us not wait until we develop a pipeline. Let us not wait until we fix our highways. Let us do it right away, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

#### **Member's Statement on Highway Maintenance Records**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last fall, an accident occurred on Highway No. 3, which unfortunately resulted in a fatality. During the coroner's investigation, he requested the department's maintenance records of the road. He was told that he would have to apply to get the information through the Access to Information Act. In the final coroner's report, the coroner felt that access to road maintenance records should be readily available to review by investigators.

I have been told over and over again by this government that the mandate of the Department of Transportation is to ensure that territorial roads are safe. Maintenance records are kept to both monitor and determine the safety of our roads, and to determine departmental expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that without readily available maintenance records, we cannot determine accurately if the areas that most need attention are getting it. Furthermore, I am concerned that even the maintenance records that we have might be inaccurate.

As my colleague for the Deh Cho pointed out in February, when the department does a traffic count, they put a disclaimer on the information. In 1999, 46 percent of the data for traffic flow on the Hay River Reserve was potentially unusable. It is on this inaccurate information that priorities for maintenance are established.

At the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Minister of Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Employment Opportunities for Northern Teacher Graduates**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government has made a commitment to hire graduates from post-secondary institutions. Teaching has been identified as one of the professions where there is a critical shortage and where the government has paid extra attention to try to train and educate Northerners so that they can become teachers. However, Mr. Speaker, the sad reality seems to be that in many cases the Department of Education or district education councils are unwilling or unable to hire northern graduates.

Mr. Speaker, there are degreed people, Northerners, aboriginal people, long-term Northerners, coming out of the University of Saskatchewan that are being told that they do not have what it takes to be teachers in the Northwest Territories. These are people that have been born and raised here, have probably gone through TEP, and have gone on to further education. Some of them already have classroom experience.

To add insult to injury, not only are they told that they are not qualified to be a teacher, they are offered a job as a classroom assistant -- after they have sweated and slaved and worked hard to become an accredited teacher.

Mr. Speaker, there has to be something wrong with this process. It is so bad that I understand the dean from the Faculty of Education at the University of Saskatchewan phoned the Minister to ask what was wrong with the graduates that were being sent back to the Northwest Territories, that you will not hire them and sometimes they do not even get interviewed.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very unfortunate and unacceptable situation. There are avenues and tools available for the government. For example, direct appointments, rather than being used for patronage appointments, could be used to appoint teachers to be assigned to what has been designated as an essential shortage.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent millions of dollars designing systems to get teachers into the North. When they are trained, they are being turned away. To add insult to injury, not only are we offering them classroom assistant jobs, they are getting snapped up by other jurisdictions. Other provinces and other territories are happy to take our teachers.

Later today, I will be asking the Minister of Education about this very unfortunate situation and the aggressive steps I hope he can outline that he is taking to address this problem. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Leadership Program Students From Range Lake North School**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy today to have students from Mrs. Sandy Bowden's Leadership Exploratory Program from the Range Lake North School.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured they have chosen to visit our place of work as part of their leadership program. I can inform you that they had a short tour of the facility at lunchtime. We shared pizza together while they were listening to my speech, entitled Leadership: What Does it Take and What Does it Mean? I will not repeat that speech because I think we are all leaders here, but I could make a copy available to everybody. I am hoping that they will remember some content of my speech, as well as the taste of the pizza we had.

Mr. Speaker, I have said many times in this House what an important part Range Lake North School is in my life as an MLA. It is a place where I go to stay connected with what is going on in my community by talking to the parents and teachers and children in the school. As well, the parents in the school represent all sectors of our community. It keeps me in touch.

Mr. Speaker, I know your favourite place to visit to get the beat of the community is Tim Hortons, but for me, Range Lake North School is my Tim Hortons.

Mr. Speaker, I could also say that the school has all sorts of activities happening throughout the season. It has plays, musicals and concerts, family fun nights, which bring in upwards of 200 to 300 people.

Mr. Speaker, I have also advised in this House that I have job-shadowed a special education assistant at Range Lake North School, and as we have been hearing from the news and broadcasts, that there is a real possibility that there might be some cuts in our school system. As are other Members from Yellowknife, I am also concerned about that. I understand they had a ratepayers meeting yesterday that proposed even more cuts than what was originally intended. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I am going to keep on top of that. I know the board, the Minister and the department have been working really hard to avoid that situation. I know that we will have time to make sure that none of the cuts to the teachers or the assistants happen...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Ms. Lee, the time for your Member's statement has ended.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement is finished. Thank you.

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

#### **Member's Statement on Condolence to the Family of Kyle Harry**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of the Mackenzie Delta, I would like to take this time to send our condolences to the Harry family and friends of Kyle Harry, whose young life ended so tragically this past weekend. Our prayers and thoughts are with the family at this time. I encourage other people to do whatever they can to support this family through these tough times. I encourage people to continue to keep praying and be strong, and God bless.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Indeed, the condolences of the Assembly go to the Harry family. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

#### **Member's Statement on Housing Forum for Persons with Disabilities**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 28<sup>th</sup> in Yellowknife, a housing forum was held for persons with disabilities. I would like to acknowledge the personal effort and conviction of a few dedicated people with disabilities who led this initiative. I would also like to recognize the NWT Council for Disabled Persons and the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, the Honourable Roger Allen, who helped make it happen.

Mr. Speaker, this forum is an excellent example of how government can receive public input into its programs. The forum is organized and driven by people with first-hand experience, whom government to date has largely ignored. Non-government organizations, social program departments,

private sector and other MLAs from Yellowknife were together in the same room. Concrete solutions were proposed.

Mr. Speaker, this forum had the right mix of participants to generate positive and concrete results. It was a low-budget, highly productive event -- good value for the time and money.

The discussions reflected recurring themes and common issues facing the disabled and this government. The most evident is the government's lack of program coordination. This is a message that is worth repeating. I will say it again, Mr. Speaker, the most evident is this government's lack of program coordination. Often when constituents come to us, there is not just the single issue they are dealing with, but they are going into issues that can encompass justice, income support, housing and employment issues -- already on the agendas for people dealing with disabilities.

Less disadvantaged persons do not receive the services they require to enable them to live with dignity and respect, Mr. Speaker. The common sentiment is why do we have to fight so hard for everything? Why does it take five years for a person with an invisible disability to be recognized and receive services? Why are federal disability services, which try to compensate for particular disabilities, deducted from income support?

Issues facing persons with disabilities cut across all government departments. There needs to be a better way to ensure coordination of government programs and services. We have Ministers for Youth and Seniors, Mr. Speaker. Could there not be a Minister with responsibilities for the disabled? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Impacts of Commercial Vehicle Toll**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to raise some of the questions that need to be raised with the Highway Strategy fast-track, and also around the commercial vehicle toll. I think we are all aware that the program will have many positives, Mr. Speaker. We will see economic growth and diversification, particularly in tourism. Certainly increased safety.

However, there are questions that need to be answered. The government has determined that it will collect "X" dollars per year based on past traffic, Mr. Speaker, but have we considered the possibility that industry will shift modes of transport and look at rail to barge, rail to air, these kinds of things to get around the toll, Mr. Speaker? What about the ice road across Great Slave? Will that have an impact? Will that be more frequently used?

Other questions such as what happens to the northern companies that export? Mines, other manufacturers... businesses now that may be marginal, Mr. Speaker. Will this put them out of business?

I think we also have to be ready for some resentment from both industry and the public. Typically, when we have seen toll

situations in other jurisdictions, people are given the option, for instance, of using a newer, faster, safe highway and paying a toll, or using the older highway; using a bridge versus a ferry, Mr. Speaker. People can make a cost benefit analysis on their own and decide whether they are going to pay the toll. That will not be the case in this situation, Mr. Speaker.

I think the department has to get a real handle on the true cost to Northerners. I do not think it is unreasonable to expect that some people will use 100 litres of fuel a week in their vehicles. If, for instance, the toll adds three cents a litre, they could be looking at \$150 a year of additional expense coming from the toll. Also, 3200 litres of fuel a year to heat the average home in the Northwest Territories could result in an additional \$100 cost to constituents of ours.

These are things we are going to have to get a handle on, Mr. Speaker. As the committee goes about its business this summer and holds public consultation, I expect that many of these questions will be answered, need to be answered, and I look forward to that process, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Tour of Nunakput Communities by Premier Kakfwi**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during April 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, I had the opportunity to accompany the Premier, Mr. Kakfwi, and his staff on a tour of the Nunakput communities. As we toured Sachs Harbour, Holman, Paulatuk and Tuktoyaktuk, my constituents had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with the Premier. We attended both public and hamlet council meetings in the communities, which allowed people to express their concerns to the Premier.

The concerns expressed included a shortage of housing for nurses and teachers, as well as other municipal concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I think the highlight of the trip was when the Premier met with Mr. Eddie Gruben in his home. Although Mr. Gruben was still mourning the loss of his son James, he did enjoy meeting with the Premier, sharing a cup of tea and discussing the Northwest Territories in general.

As the owner of E. Gruben's Transport, Mr. Gruben took the opportunity to pass on some advice to the Premier on business as well as social issues. On behalf of my constituents in Nunakput, I wish to thank the Premier for taking the time out of his busy schedule to visit my riding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on National Aboriginal Curling Championships**

**HON. ROGER ALLEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to advise my colleagues in the House of an event which will put the Northwest Territories, as well as my riding of Inuvik Twin Lakes, on the Canadian curling map at the senior men's

and women's categories at the National Aboriginal Curling Championships held in Saskatoon during the 2001 Easter weekend.

Representing the Northwest Territories in the men's division was skip Kevin Koe; third Jamie; second was their dad, Fred; and yours truly playing lead. We represented the constituency of Inuvik Twin Lakes. Representing the ladies was skip Margaret Begg; third Bridget Larocque; second Dorothy Jones of Hay River; and lead Sheila Vittrekwa.

Mr. Speaker, this was an impressive weekend for the Northwest Territories as both teams were able to compete in a high-calibre sport. Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend our congratulations to the members of both winning teams. Hopefully, our Territory will repeat the same feat next year. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on NWT Track and Field Championships**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Members that the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual NWT Track and Field Championships is getting underway in Hay River today. This year's organizers are expecting over 1100 participants from all over the Northwest Territories. It is fitting that during this year, the International Year of the Volunteer, we recognize and pay tribute to approximately 350 volunteers involved in the process of planning and working at the track meet.

The planning team usually begins their work immediately following the track and field meet from the previous year. Volunteers include school staff, teachers, students, parents and relatives. As is typical in Hay River, the whole community gets involved to support this worthwhile event. Local businesses allow employees time to slip away and participate as much as they can.

I would like to commend all of the people whose personal efforts make the track and field meet successful every year, and I am pleased to note that their efforts have been recognized. This year, organizers of the NWT Track and Field Championships have been awarded the Outstanding Community Organization Award for the South Slave, as part of the Volunteer Recognition Awards.

In particular, I would also like to commend the following individuals for their outstanding dedication to this great event. I will just name them:

- Guy Turvey,
- Shari Burnstad,
- Peter Osted,
- Ray Young,
- Graham Mitchell,

- Linda Gallagher, and
- Pat Tennant.

As you can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, there are far more volunteers than this and too many to name. Some of these volunteers have participated in the track and field meet faithfully. They endure weather -- hot, cold and wet -- to do their part, and they have been involved since the very beginning.

This evening when the House adjourns, a group of us will be attending the opening ceremonies of the track and field meet. So far going down, we have the Honourable Roger Allen, Paul Delorey, Leon Lafferty, Michael McLeod, David Krutko, Steven Nitah, and hopefully yourself, Mr. Speaker. I think this is a great show. By the way, we do have a couple of empty seats on the charter, so Sandy Lee is coming with us. That is great. I am so excited that we can go down there and show support for this great event.

The opening ceremony is so much fun and it evokes such emotion. It gives me a lump in my throat as I watch each school, large or small, march in so proudly under their school banner. Some of them are just little tykes and some are kids in high school.

There are, as I mentioned, still two seats left on the charter if anyone wants to come.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Madam Groenewegen, your time for your Member's statement has ended. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

#### **Member's Statement on Condolences to the Family of Kyle Harry**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like Mr. Krutko, I would like to pay tribute today to a young man who tragically lost his life on the weekend when he was attacked by a bear. Kyle Harry was a young man, only 18, with plans for his future. He was a student at Sir John Franklin High School and was only one course short of his diploma, which was part of that plan. Now sadly, he is gone and unable to help his Gwich'in people as he had hoped to do.

Kyle wanted to study social work at Aurora College, either in Yellowknife or in Inuvik, so he could become a social worker like his mother, Marilyn Harry, whom many in Yellowknife will know for her work in this field. Kyle's ultimate plan was to return to Inuvik where he was born and work as a social worker.

It is always tragic, Mr. Speaker, when a young person whose whole life is ahead of them dies. However, it seems doubly tragic when this young person who died had plans to contribute to society and, in fact, was already doing so. As well as his full course load at school, Kyle was nearly a full-time worker at the Extra Foods store downtown, often working 30 hours a week in the fruit and vegetable department. His stepfather, Grant O'Connor, says that at the end of his school and work day, Kyle would come home, put on his headphones to listen to relaxing music, do his homework and then go to bed. This is certainly not the image many adults have of young people today. That is the image of a young person on his way to becoming a fine, contributing member of society.

Mr. Speaker, I am struck by the sad irony that it is not quite a year ago since I was standing in this House paying tribute to another young Northerner killed by a bear. At the beginning of last July, Mary Beth Miller was killed by a bear in Valcartier, Quebec, where she had gone to train for the biathlon. I certainly hope I do not find myself in this situation again, Mr. Speaker.

I believe my colleagues in this House, and indeed all of Yellowknife and throughout the Northwest Territories, join me in offering my condolences to Kyle's family here in Yellowknife and throughout the North. His mother Marilyn, his stepfather Grant, his siblings Tanya and Steven, as well as his extended family in Inuvik, the Harrys and the Greenlands, have our kindest wishes on this sad occasion. Kyle's funeral will be held tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. at the Anglican Church here in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

#### **Member's Statement on Condolences to the Family of Kyle Harry**

**HON. JIM ANTOINE:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to express my condolences to the family of Kyle Harry, whose young life ended tragically on the weekend when attacked by a black bear. As a Dene who grew up on the land with my family, we learned early in our lives that at this time of the year when you are out on the land, you have to be aware of many things and you have to be prepared for anything that may happen.

Not taking away from what happened here, I just wanted to advise that from what I learned through the teachings of my elders and my family at a young age, at this time of the year, when the bears first come out and are looking for food, it is a very dangerous time of the year to be out there.

Whenever we did that, we always were prepared out on the land. I just wanted to say that I was fortunate to be out in my traditional area at Rabbit's Skin on the weekend of May 26<sup>th</sup> for a few days between our busy schedules here. I was out there with some of my family members, walking on the trails. We did meet a black bear about 15 feet ahead of us. We did have a rifle, and we asked him to leave, and he left. We were fortunate that we did not have to use the rifle, but this is what we have to do out there on the land. When you are out there, you always have a rifle in your camp and you are prepared for anything that may happen.

I just wanted to say this is what I have learned and I think a lot of Dene people who go out on the land know these things when we go out there. When we heard of this sad tragedy, my family and I felt very deeply for this young man and his family. We offer our condolences today. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

#### **ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY**

Colleagues, at this time, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce and recognize in the gallery a person who has been here before, Ms. Betty Fox, the mother of Terry Fox, who is

well known to Canadians for his efforts in fundraising for cancer research.

-- Applause

Ms. Fox is on her way to the riding of Nahendeh, Fort Simpson, where she will be the keynote speaker for the NWT Parks and Recreation meetings tomorrow. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly, Ms. Fox.

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

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize students from grade 5, 6 and 7, the Leadership Exploratory Program from Range Lake North School. I am not going to name all of them, but they know who they are; Ms. Sandy Bowden and her class.

-- Applause

I thank them for waiting patiently. Mr. Speaker, I just have a few more to recognize, my assistant Stephen Dunbar, and to the right of him, his family, Dr. Randy Paterson, Mr. Blair Dunbar, Ms. Linda Dunbar, and Mr. Rob McPhee, who is with Mrs. Fox. They are all my constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce a gentleman who has been in business here in the Northwest Territories, Henry Murzyn. Seated with him is Jane Leblanc, who has been a Yellowknifer for many years. With them as well are a number of representatives from the Northern Region Headquarters here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to take this opportunity, in recognition of Cadet Week here in our Assembly, to recognize cadets participating as pages. We have John Carter, the director of the Northern Training Air Cadet League of Canada; Henry Murzyn, a cadet recognition coordinator, Army Cadet League of Canada; Lieutenant Colonel Rory Kilburn, chief of staff, Northern Area Headquarters, National Defence; Captain Low, RCSU; as well, we have my honorary aide-de-camp for today, Cadet Master Warrant Eddie Peart.

-- Applause

The Chair would also like to take this opportunity to recognize Madam Jane Leblanc and Mr. Darin Reeves. I am not forgetting anyone that is here on my list. Welcome to the gallery.

-- Applause

Any further recognition of visitors in the gallery? Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

**ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS****Question 13-14(4): Highway Maintenance Records**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Transportation, the Honourable Vince Steen. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, last fall, the coroner who investigated an accident on Highway No. 3 was told that he would have to apply through the Access to Information Act to get maintenance records of the roads. I would like to ask the Minister at this time, why are maintenance records considered confidential? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Return to Question 13-14(4): Highway Maintenance Records**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information with me at this time. I could get back to the Member with the information later.

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

**Supplementary to Question 13-14(4): Highway Maintenance Records**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister whether records for maintenance that occurs on Highway No. 3, do they do this on a daily basis for condition of the roads? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 13-14(4): Highway Maintenance Records**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I do not have this specific information for the Member. Based on my past experience on the highways, we did have a daily surface report. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 13-14(4): Highway Maintenance Records**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement, some information is inaccurate. If we are using department records that are inaccurate, as a government, how can we be sure we are spending money in the right areas? Can the Minister answer that please?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 13-14(4): Highway Maintenance Records**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as far as I know -- and as far as my department officials are aware, I am sure -- the reports on the highway conditions are accurate as observed by the highway foreman or the highway maintenance supervisor who is filing the report. We have no reason to assume the report is not accurate. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Steen. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

**Supplementary to Question 13-14(4): Highway Maintenance Records**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if safety is a priority over the volume of traffic to determine where the expenditures go? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not catch the whole question. May I ask the Member to repeat it?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Steen. Mr. Lafferty, please repeat the question.

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if safety is a priority over the volume of traffic when they consider expenditures on highways. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 13-14(4): Highway Maintenance Records**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, safety is the number one priority for the department. The volume of traffic and the maintenance -- which I am assuming is what the Member is referring to -- is related to the volume of traffic. However, safety is the number one priority. Thank you.

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

**Question 14-14(4): Support for the Tourism Sector**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Earlier today in his Minister's statement, the Minister reminded us how the February budget address had outlined the government's overall fiscal strategy, and that included controlling our future by investing in it. I noted too in his statement that he talked about short-term improvements in our funding under the Formula Financing Agreement, allowing us to make investments called for in Towards a Better Tomorrow and in the complementary strategies that we have developed since taking office.



With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he has followed up on the recommendation made by the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development in its Report on the Review of the Hotel Room Tax Act that, "The Minister make available to the NWT Arctic Tourism Association, without qualification, an additional \$375,000 from internal RWED reallocations?" Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Return to Question 14-14(4): Support for the Tourism Sector**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, certainly I take the recommendations from the committees very seriously. On this particular case, I did much better than the \$375,000. I actually gave the Arctic Tourism Association an additional \$900,000. On top of that, I worked in support of them in negotiating matching money from CTC. Now their budget has increased by \$1.8 million for marketing tourism in the Northwest Territories. They are very happy with it. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

#### **Supplementary to Question 14-14(4): Support for the Tourism Sector**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Minister on a fine result that we have achieved now without that tax on hotel rooms.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Hear, hear.

**MR. DENT:** I think this is a tremendous step forward. I would like to ask the Minister, in his response to the call letter from the Minister of Finance, will he advise his deputy minister in RWED to work tourism initiatives into next year's business plan as part of the strategy for Maximizing Northern Employment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Further Return to Question 14-14(4): Support for the Tourism Sector**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I certainly will. I want to point out that there are two main sides to tourism. One is marketing and one is product development. While we have lots of money now, I have a big increase in money in marketing, we do not have the money we need on the product development side. We do not want to attract a lot of tourists here and not have a product for them when they come here. That is the challenge in front of us. Certainly I will work with my department and with Mr. Ootes in Maximizing Northern Employment and ensure that we take advantage of the opportunity we have here. Thank you.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 14-14(4): Support for the Tourism Sector**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also know that the Minister has proposed an increase in the Business Credit Corporation loan limits. Will the Minister work with that organization to ensure that monies can be brought into the tourism area for infrastructure development, management training and so on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Further Return to Question 14-14(4): Support for the Tourism Sector**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, yes, the BCC is a lender of last resort when people cannot access the funding they need from the bank. Tourism establishments, tourism businesses are certainly eligible to put in an application if they are interested, and by all means, I encourage them to do that if they cannot get what they need through normal borrowing channels. Thank you.

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

#### **Question 15-14(4): Hiring Northern Teaching Graduates**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and they are to follow up on my statement with regard to the unfortunate situation where it appears that a number of our teaching graduates from university are not able to find jobs, in spite of the fact that teaching has been identified as an essential service and where there is a shortage of Northerners.

I would like to ask the Minister what steps he has taken to address this issue. Thank you.

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

#### **Return to Question 15-14(4): Hiring Northern Teaching Graduates**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot help but agree with the honourable Member that this case is odd and very unfortunate, and certainly when considering the fact that we have a policy in place. The policy remains, and as the Premier has stated back in January, we are committed to that particular policy.

On learning of this situation, Mr. Speaker, I immediately directed my department to do a review. That review is normally done by corporate human resources of the Department of the Executive. I understand that review is complete, although I have not had the opportunity to review it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ootes. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

#### **Supplementary to Question 15-14(4): Hiring Northern Teaching Graduates**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister gives the impression in his response that it is just a singular issue. My understanding is that it is much wider spread than that, and I would like the Minister to confirm, how prevalent is this? Specifically, what they are going to do to work with the DEC's to ensure that we do not lose our graduates to southern jurisdictions or that they leave the North in frustration after all the money that has been invested in their education? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Further Return to Question 15-14(4): Hiring Northern Teaching Graduates**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that it involves three graduates from the University of Saskatchewan and they are northern students applying for positions here in the North. There was a case in Inuvik, I understand as well, of a former teacher who had applied and who was turned down. In addition to the review by the department, I immediately contacted, by way of letter, each of the chairs of the DEC's and copied that to the DEAs. Additionally, I am in the process of calling each of the chairs to speak to them on this situation.

We are very concerned about our students. We have put a great deal of effort into ensuring that we support them throughout their school years. We are determined to get to the bottom of this, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ootes. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

#### **Supplementary to Question 15-14(4): Hiring Northern Teaching Graduates**

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear that the Minister is taking a proactive approach to this. I would like to ask the Minister, in fact, whether he will keep us apprised of this situation. It is not just an event that happened this year. I know it has been a problem in the past. There seems to be a reluctance to hire our own graduates and, for some reason, the perception is that somehow they are not good enough. I would like an assurance from the Minister that he is going to take steps to ensure that this is resolved once and for all. Thank you.

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

#### **Further Return to Question 15-14(4): Hiring Northern Teaching Graduates**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am prepared to put my full weight behind this issue, Mr. Speaker. These are our northern people. They have been educated by this government in our communities, and it is important that we get them back into the communities, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

#### **Question 16-14(4): Improving Air Quality in the NWT**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development with regard to his statement on air quality in the Northwest Territories. It may sound great, but I have to disagree in some aspects, especially when you talk about the quality of air and when you talk about measuring the dust levels within the Northwest Territories.

I for one have a real problem dealing with the dust problems we have in my communities of Fort McPherson, Aklavik and Tsiigehtchic, where we do not have the luxury of having pavement and where dust is a daily problem, especially if you are doing laundry or just walking down the main street where we have a dust storm every time a vehicle goes by.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I would like to ask the Minister what exactly his department is doing to improve the air quality of the communities when you talk about the levels of dust and the air. He also mentioned that it had decreased over the last number of years here in Yellowknife. That is great for Yellowknife. I would like to ask the Minister, is his department doing anything to monitor the problems in the small isolated communities that have gravel roads where dust is a problem?

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

#### **Return to Question 16-14(4): Improving Air Quality in the NWT**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, dust is a problem in all of our little communities, especially as more and more people become dependent on vehicles as a mode of transportation. It was fine in the old days when most people either walked or went by water, but it is a problem now. We are not monitoring it in little communities, and I really do not think we have to monitor it to know that it is a problem. You simply have to be driving or walking down the street and you will notice it as you see people disappearing in the dust behind you. I agree that is a problem, and I agree that we have to find a way of getting around it. I am certainly open to discussing it further and let us make an effort at getting clean air in every community. I will talk with my colleagues in Transportation and Municipal and Community Affairs, and any other Members who would like to come up with good ways of improving the situation. Thank you.

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

#### **Supplementary to Question 16-14(4): Improving Air Quality in the NWT**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister, will his department make an effort to do a study to see exactly what the quality of air is in those communities where there is a problem, especially in Fort McPherson and Aklavik?

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

**Further Return to Question 16-14(4): Improving Air Quality in the NWT**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement earlier today, we have put up some monitoring equipment in some communities, but monitoring equipment is very specific. To monitor and scientifically tell you how many pieces of dust are in each quantity of air and so on is difficult. I would sooner we spend our time figuring out how we can get on with resolving this problem more quickly. We do, through Transportation, have programs right now where we deal with dust control through the use of calcium. In the interim, maybe that is the solution.

In a longer term, I heard one of the Members mention paving roads in communities. Maybe that is a long term. I am not sure we need to study the dust. We can see it and choke on it in many of the communities ourselves. I would sooner get on with doing something. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 16-14(4): Improving Air Quality in the NWT**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I like what I am hearing now. I would just like to see the green stuff to go along with doing that work. I believe we also have to start realizing through the increase in development, especially in the oil and gas area, that there is a major problem. We are starting to see it in Alberta, where it is very controversial in the whole area of flaring. I think that is an area this government has to take a role on to ensure that the health and well-being of northern residents will not be affected by the increased oil and gas activity, especially in the area of flaring.

I think as a department, the government has to do more studies in that area to ensure the health and well-being of our people are taken care of. Will the Minister also let us know what is happening in that front?

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

**Further Return to Question 16-14(4): Improving Air Quality in the NWT**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, when I answered the last question, I said Transportation has a program to put calcium on the streets. It is actually Municipal and Community Affairs. I just want to make that correction.

In terms of the effects from oil and gas development, then yes, we are definitely watching that one very closely. As I mentioned earlier in my statement, we did put up an air quality monitoring system in the Fort Liard area, where there is a lot of activity going on. We will commit to doing the same thing as exploration and development proceeds in other areas.

I agree as well that flaring has many implications. Fortunately, we have a sweet gas that does not have the same problems as

sour gas does, but I can assure the Member that we are watching it closely and we will monitor the air responsibly. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Handley. Short, final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

**Supplementary to Question 16-14(4): Improving Air Quality in the NWT**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we all know there were some major cuts in this government in the last number of years. I believe this is one area that has taken a major cut. I would like to ask the Minister, can he give us a financial breakdown for the last five years on the monies that have been spent in this area in his department?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley. It seems like a long answer on this one.

**Further Return to Question 16-14(4): Improving Air Quality in the NWT**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have that detailed information with me. I will have my department prepare a summary of expenditures in this area over the last few years and have it sent to the Member. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 6, 0al questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

**Question 17-14(4): Funding for Turning Point Treatment Centre**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question follows up on my Member's statement regarding a funding request made by Turning Point, a group that offers drug and alcohol services in the Inuvik region.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of a correspondence that was sent back to Turning Point from the Minister of Health and Social Services, stating that there are a number of strategies that are under development, or have been developed, that yes, it is a very important area and it is being addressed in some of these strategies, and the Social Agenda Conference coming up is another important avenue.

All fine and dandy, Mr. Speaker, but the fact is Turning Point did not get any new dollars. The dollars that were identified in the previous year have been the static amount that has been given to them in past years. It does not address any growth or further demand on the services.

Mr. Speaker, I do not do this just to try and show bad examples of what happens in the area of economic booms, but the fact is, there are some negative side effects to the amount of development that is happening in the Inuvik region.

I would like to ask the Minister if she will seriously look at their request, and see if there can be more funding put in the area of drug and alcohol treatment. Thank you.

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

**Return to Question 17-14(4): Funding for Turning Point Treatment Centre**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member raises the issue of funding for drug and alcohol programs in the Inuvik area. The correspondence that Mr. Roland refers to, in which I responded to Mr. Derek Lindsay, who is the chair of the Inuvik Alcohol Committee, Mr. Lindsay's correspondence was sharing with myself and several others who he cc'ed, the efforts of their association to engage industry, particularly the oil and gas industry, in working in partnership with the alcohol and drug society in their efforts they are undertaking to address the anticipated increase in demand on services in the Inuvik region as a result of the development that is taking place.

In his correspondence, Mr. Lindsay did not specifically ask the GNWT for any additional funding. I just wanted to make that clear, that when I responded, I did outline to him some of the initiatives that are underway to try and determine where we need to expend more of our resources. Those areas are Working Together for Community Wellness, A Strategy for Addictions, Mental Health and Family Violence in the NWT. That is a document that is out right now for consultation and input.

Also, we mentioned that the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy identifies the need to ensure resources and partnerships to adequately reap the full benefits of economic development.

Presently, there is about \$1 million that is funded to the Inuvik region for alcohol and drug programs. This flows through the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board. If the folks at Turning Point have made efforts through the regional health board to secure additional dollars, I am not aware of that. Perhaps the Member could keep us up to date with that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Groenewegen. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

**Supplementary to Question 17-14(4): Funding for Turning Point Treatment Centre**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that Turning Point, which is part of the Inuvik Alcohol and Drug Committee, has requested more funds through the health board. That funding is a static amount. It is an amount that is for the whole region. When you break it down to each community, there is very little for each community to try and improve on the existing services. My question is, is there going to be more money identified by the department for drug and alcohol programs? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 17-14(4): Funding for Turning Point Treatment Centre**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the research and reviews that are underway right now indicate that there is under-funding in certain areas, and that there is more demand than there are services available to people, that certainly is an area that we would have to consider.

It is interesting to note that the Inuvik region certainly is on the verge of some very serious new economic activity, but in fact, there has been a decline over the past two years in referrals from Inuvik for residential treatment, both in the North and in the south. The referrals are significantly down. We need to look at these types of things as well.

We do have some resources here in the North for residential treatment. For example, there is no waiting list available at the current time for admission into the Nats' ejee K'eh Treatment Centre on the Hay River Reserve. We do need to look at the demand and the need.

As part of the strategies we are undertaking right now, if it is shown that additional funding is required, I would be prepared to make that submission to my colleagues. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

**Supplementary to Question 17-14(4): Funding for Turning Point Treatment Centre**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the referrals are down because the health board is running a deficit and cannot send these people out. There are a number of factors here.

Mr. Speaker, the information she is probably using is not information that has been gathered over this past winter, when we have more up-to-date news and items and actual events that have happened in the community, the number of arrests that have happened over a certain time period and all that.

What information is she using to be able to put forward this position of a non-requirement of new funding? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 17-14(4): Funding for Turning Point Treatment Centre**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. I did not say that there was not a requirement for additional funding, I was just saying that some indicators that we have show a decline in the demand for services.

The Member is right. This might not be the most current information that reflects, say, the last quarter, and some of the activity that Inuvik is seeing in the oil and gas industry and the associated activity in the community around that.

When we look at these strategies that we are undertaking and we are going to be getting feedback on, certainly we welcome

the Member to keep us informed. If the Turning Point group makes a submission to the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board and does not meet with success there in putting forward their case for additional funding, then that is something that can be brought to my attention and to the attention of the department to respond to. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Roland, short.

**Supplementary to Question 17-14(4): Funding for Turning Point Treatment Centre**

**MR. ROLAND:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take the Minister up on that offer to bring forward the application, but my final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, is the talk of the strategy. When that is done, they will review that. Is there a timeline set out? When do we expect some results from these strategies? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 17-14(4): Funding for Turning Point Treatment Centre**

**HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just trying to get the timelines here. For the Working Together for Community Wellness: A Strategy for Addictions, Mental Health and Family Violence in the NWT, right now that document has gone out. We will be accepting submissions and responses to that document up until the end of this month. Following that, there will be an action plan developed as a result of that input. Thank you.

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

**Question 18-14(4): Financing the NWT Highway Strategy**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for Finance in the area of the highway toll, specifically the NWT Highway Strategy. There is no question on the benefits of a highway toll. It will be safer for people of the Northwest Territories to drive our highway system, and it will be good for industry to bring their supplies up. It will be good for tourists. If we invest some of the dollars generated from the highway toll in our communities and clean it up and pave it, it will be good for tourism and the health of people in our communities.

One thing, Mr. Speaker, that might threaten all of this is the possibility of a deep-sea port in Bathurst Inlet. I am wondering if the Minister is familiar with the initiative taken by the Nunavut Government, and if he can update this House on where it is at right now. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 18-14(4): Financing the NWT Highway Strategy**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge, and I may not have all of the latest

information, the Government of Nunavut has not put money into this project. The Kitikmeot Corporation has, though. That is one of their corporations in the Kitikmeot region, and so has the federal government, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. There may also be a contribution from Natural Resources Canada, but I have not confirmed that yet. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

**Supplementary to Question 18-14(4): Financing the NWT Highway Strategy**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wish them all of the luck in the Kitikmeot, they certainly need the economic boost over there. However, if it is going to threaten the economy of the Northwest Territories, I do have some worries. What kind of effect would a deep-sea port have on the economy of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 18-14(4): Financing the NWT Highway Strategy**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I have always believed a good defence is a strong offence. I think the best thing we can do is build up our highway system as quickly as we can and have as good an infrastructure as possible for the Northwest Territories. That will continue to encourage industry to serve that whole mining area through the Northwest Territories.

I think the proposed Bathurst port and a road south from there to Contwoyto Lake and then a barge across to Lupin Mine, and another 70 or 80 miles of road over to Izok Lake will only happen if Izok Lake is economically viable. Izok is a lead-zinc mine. As of early May, the price for zinc was somewhere in the neighbourhood of 43 cents. The breakeven point for zinc to be viable in that area would probably be somewhere around 55 cents. If industry is interested, they would have to be certain that price is going to stay there. It cannot be just a peak.

So just the viability of building and operating a port would have to depend on some kind of major project like Izok. To build it with the expectation that it is going to be cheaper to service the existing mines from the north would mean shipping costs, building a port, operating a port, building a winter road from the north -- it would not be viable right now.

If something major happens in the Izok Lake area, then it is very possible, but I think that is years away from now.

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

**Supplementary to 18-14(4): Financing the NWT Highway Strategy**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand Izok Lake has a great deposit of nickel and other minerals, but there are other properties in Nunavut that have great potential. Miramar Con Mine has a property up there that has one of the largest deposits of gold, I believe, that they are very excited

about. I do not understand why Ottawa would be investing in a port where Canada does not benefit.

The question again is, how does a port, if it gets in, affect the economy of the Northwest Territories? What would that do for our toll system, if introduced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley. I thought I heard two questions there, but answer one if you wish.

**Further Return to Question 18-14(4): Financing the NWT Highway Strategy**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, certainly if there was a port developed and there was the capacity to service our mines from the north then that might pose a threat for us. You still have to look at the high cost of shipping, operating a port and still trucking material 200 to 300 miles south again from the port to service our mines. It could have an impact. As I said earlier in my response, the best defence is a good offence. We cannot predict what will happen here, but the best thing we can do is build up our road infrastructure so that we have a good, viable system through the Northwest Territories to be the best alternative for a mining company.

I think this is all the more reason why we need to get on with highway reconstruction and do it more quickly, even though it means some pain in the short term through a highway toll program. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 18-14(4): Financing the NWT Highway Strategy**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that this government is not responsible for new roads, and the revenue from this new toll is not going to be used for new roads, as that is a federal government responsibility. Also understanding that the Alberta Government gains about 75 cents on every dollar generated in the Northwest Territories, has there been any discussion between this government and the Alberta Government for the possible joint venture of constructing an additional 100 kilometres onto an existing road? It may be down the Ingraham or through the Dogrib communities.

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

**Further Return to Question 18-14(4): Financing the NWT Highway Strategy**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have not had specific discussions as to whether Alberta would contribute and cost share in building a road 100 kilometres further down. Premier Kakfwi has met with Premier Klein on the whole matter of the fact that we both, Alberta and the Northwest Territories, benefit greatly from the present transportation system.

We have talked with them. I have met with the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Energy on several occasions to discuss this same matter. Certainly they realize

the benefit they get as well through the transportation route coming up through Alberta and the business it brings to them.

I think as we continue with discussions, there may be some room for some joint ventures in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 19-14(4): Student Support and the Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, the Minister's department maintains that the PTR and student support levels indicated in the Education Act are territorial averages. I have had numerous constituents call me and write me and tell me that after going through the Education Act and the relevant sections, they cannot find any mention of averages. What they do find is specific reference to education bodies, and subsequently a laid out schedule for student-teacher ratios and student support.

Can the Minister explain why his department chooses to interpret averages when the act does not speak to averages? Thank you.

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

**Return to Question 19-14(4): Student Support and the Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The documentation leading up to the legislation, Mr. Speaker, clearly shows that the PTR is being applied as intended and in the manner that best suits the students. I think there is evidence of that. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 19-14(4): Student Support and the Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have that in front of me, but I do know that the Education Act does not once mention the words "territorial average" in the relevant section dealing with grants and contributions for operations. Will the Minister confirm this? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 19-14(4): Student Support and the Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the time that the legislation was put before the standing committee, it was pointed out that there was an inadvertent error with reference to education body. At the time, we discussed that and it was agreed by the committee that an amendment would be made. That amendment was brought forward to the House and it is in

the record, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, the intent was that it not refer to education body, but that it would apply as a PTR across the Northwest Territories. We also referred to the fact that it was done in the strategic document 2000-2005. There is ample evidence that the intent was that it would be a territorial-wide PTR. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary to Question 19-14(4): Student Support and the Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have no doubt that the department intended for it to be based on a territorial average, but when I read this and do not see average and see specific reference to education bodies, I think being a reasonable person, I assume we are talking about funding those education bodies. Would the Minister agree that a reasonable person reading the Education Act would assume we are talking about legislated minimums for bodies?

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

**Further Return to Question 19-14(4): Student Support and the Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If a person were to check the record, we did bring it to the House. The report from the committee made reference and there was agreement and an amendment made to the bill that was brought to the House to eliminate reference to education body other than in generic general terms in the introductory paragraph. It is not the intent to fund education bodies as such because if we did, we would penalize the very small communities like Kakisa, where you have ten students and you cannot fund according to an education body that would have half a teacher. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary to Question 19-14(4): Student Support and the Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister is wrong. I am not suggesting that we cannot have averages. In fact, we do have averages and there have always been averages, but certainly you could fund the smaller schools at lower PTRs so that they do have additional funding as they do now, but require that these be legislated minimums so that no boards, like the Yellowknife boards, be funded at worse than 17.5, 17 or 16.5. Could the Minister confirm this?

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

**Further Return to Question 19-14(4): Student Support and the Pupil-Teacher Ratio**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On an overall basis, Mr. Speaker, we are meeting the intent of the legislation and the agreement with the NWT Teachers Association. We are pouring a lot of money into this area. It is a government-

supported issue that was supported by the MLAs. We are, at the end of four years, in all likelihood looking at \$30 million plus in this whole area. I think we are meeting the targets. Today, we are at 16.5 to one pupil-teacher ratio. That is a good effort on our part, Mr. Speaker. We are one year ahead of our target. Thank you.

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

**Question 20-14(4): Consultation on Highway Strategy**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation. Since our swearing in about two years ago now, I have been asking questions, along with other Members of this House, to the Minister of Transportation on his plans for construction and upgrades on our highway system. Up until November of this year, he has informed us that there was no strategy and there was no plan. He is developing and building new sections of road according to safety and visibility issues.

I was very surprised this year when a document was tabled in November 2000 called A Highway Strategy for the Northwest Territories. Prior to being an MLA, I was on the Council of Fort Providence for many years as mayor. I was never consulted on this document. I was never consulted as a community representative about highways and I was never consulted as an MLA. I never had any input and was not even aware that this document was being developed.

I want to ask the Minister, which communities and which stakeholders did he talk to and discuss this document before drafting it this year? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Return to Question 20-14(4): Consultation on Highway Strategy**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, development of the Territorial Highway Strategy has been in the works for a number of years, even before my time as a Minister. In order to properly answer the Member's question, I think it would be beneficial if I have the department put together a briefing for the Member as to what forms and what types of consultation took place prior to the document being created. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Steen. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary to Question 20-14(4): Consultation on Highway Strategy**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would appreciate it if the Minister could do that. I am aware that the document has been in the works since 1988. Now the circumstances are starting to change, and we are also hearing that a highway toll may be something that will be introduced. This toll is something again that is aimed at communities and commercial users. I would like to know if there is any new documentation or if this is going to be revised at all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 20-14(4): Consultation on Highway Strategy**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the document the Member is referring to, there was a fair amount of consultation that took place just prior to the document being created. I believe this government spent in the nature -- if I remember correctly, we have somewhere about a million dollars in the budget for consultation and putting together a proposal such as what ended up being called an NWT Highway Strategy. They did have consultations in the communities along the Mackenzie Valley. We had consultations here in Yellowknife and we had some consultations as well in the Dogrib communities, if I remember correctly.

What exactly came about in the end was this particular document that the Member has. We do not look at the document as being written in stone. We hope everyone will see this as living document because the whole strategy will have to be flexible in that the idea of which projects go where are right now identified through the capital and are forecasted by the capital plan.

As we all know, that is simply a forecast. The only real figures are the present year figures. The toll itself will be governed by what we see as a separate body, and that body will be advising the Transportation Department where to make the expenditures. The expenditures will be made subject to the approval of this Assembly. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Steen, Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary to Question 20-14(4): Consultation on Highway Strategy**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those are my concerns exactly. This document is based on a budget of \$16 million per year, I believe. With the introduction of a highway toll, that is going to change the picture.

I believe this document has a lot of areas for improvement. There are some communities and some projects that could be included in this document. Access roads being one of them. A number of the access roads lie in my riding, which are not included in this document.

What has happened to the dollars that are being currently incorporated in this budget for our Highway Strategy? Would those be freed up for other initiatives that are not in here now that we are looking at new dollars?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 20-14(4): Consultation on Highway Strategy**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the strategy as we see it and the new investment based on the toll is \$100 million, but the strategy includes a \$48 million figure

of normal capital investments that we see for the next four to five years.

So the strategy that we are looking at probably, in total, is a figure of \$150 million, roughly. We are speaking towards the existing capital that this government has, regardless of the toll.

In other words, we have identified where we are going to spend \$48 million for the next four or five years in highway improvements. Added to that is the \$100 million that we hope to raise through the toll. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Steen. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

**Supplementary to Question 20-14(4): Consultation on Highway Strategy**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I understand the Minister's answers to mean that the highway toll and the existing capital dollars for this document will be spent according to what is in this document.

I believe that there are serious flaws. There have been omissions that have been identified by myself and other Members.

I would like to ask the Minister, as this document has not been approved anywhere yet, there has been no acceptance by this Assembly for this document, would he consider revisiting and making adjustments to his Highway Strategy?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 20-14(4): Consultation on Highway Strategy**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if that is the wish of this Assembly, and if that is the direction the department is directed to proceed, then we will visit it. Thank you.

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

**Question 21-14(4): Coordination of Government Services**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement earlier today, I talked about the plight of disabled people in the Northwest Territories. I would like to address my question to the Premier in this respect, because it is a situation that is very evident. It cuts across many government departments, Mr. Speaker.

The situation that I have faced, at least once, is where a constituent has issues that deal with a number of different departments. The coordination of government services is the issue. I want to ask, Mr. Speaker, what is the government doing to improve the coordination of government programs and services for the disabled? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. I apologize, I did not get the Minister you were directing it to. Can you please assist me?



**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, of course. My question is to the Premier. What is the government doing to improve the coordination of government programs and services for the disabled? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Braden. The question is directed to the honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

**Return to Question 21-14(4): Coordination of Government Services**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have worked towards a Social Agenda Conference, which is to look from the perspective of front-line workers in the communities, what it is that we are faced with in the communities, what we have in place in terms of resources and our state of organization at the community level, how we will try to improve that.

Aside from that approach, to date I have no specific information as to what exactly the Department of Health and Social Services is doing in this regard. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 21-14(4): Coordination of Government Services**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am disappointed to hear that there is so much reliance in the upcoming forum in Hay River. I too am looking forward to hear good results from it, but I would like to ask the Premier about the harmonization initiative that has been underway and much talked about for some time now. However, there is little evidence of anything really happening to improve the lot of the disabled and the coordination of programs, as was promised by this harmonization project. Mr. Speaker, what is the status of the harmonization initiative? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 21-14(4): Coordination of Government Services**

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

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

**Question 22-14(4): Yellowknife Education District No. 1 Funding Concerns**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to Mr. Ootes, the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment and it has to do with the funding situation at YK No. 1.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that I have attended almost all public meetings and board meetings with regard to the budget problem with the YK No. 1. I think there is still some confusion over what is happening there.

The first meeting, they talked of a \$1 million deficit this year and \$3 million over three years. The second meeting I went to,

they talked of a \$700,000 deficit and a much-reduced number of possible cuts.

Yesterday at a ratepayers meeting, I understand the board has announced that the deficit will be as much as \$600,000, but that there will be two additional cuts.

Could the Minister advise this House as to what he knows about the financial situation of YK No. 1? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 22-14(4): Yellowknife Education District No. 1 Funding Concerns**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be able to speak on this issue. Some time ago, I met with the chair and the members of the board of Yellowknife Education District No. 1 and the purpose of our meeting was to discuss with them the process of developing their budget.

Their budget projection looked like they were having a \$1 million plus deficit. That did not conform to our figures because of certain factors. We asked them to re-look at that and to work with our officials.

I understand that they have been doing that. I am not familiar with the new figures. The problem with dealing with any figures, if it is the same as previously, did not take into account termination benefits for those teachers or staff that were leaving, for which we refund them.

In the original figures, there was a \$1 million deficit. We had allocated and accounted for \$400,000 of that, Mr. Speaker, that should not have been looked at as a deficit picture.

So we need to sit down and, when I get the budget from the school board -- which will be submitted through the department to me -- then I can have a clear picture of the situation, but we are working with them. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary to Question 22-14(4): Yellowknife Education District No. 1 Funding Concerns**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward, as well, to be able to get a copy of that budget, if possible, once it has been submitted to the Minister, so that we could all work together to resolve this financial situation.

I know that the board has been working very hard to resolve it, but I am still not clear as to why, with a \$600,000 deficit, which could be paid over three years, we are looking at any possible cuts in teaching positions. Could the Minister commit and advise this House as to what he is prepared to do to prevent any cuts to the teaching positions, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 22-14(4): Yellowknife Education District No. 1 Funding Concerns**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to acknowledge the work that the honourable Member has done in this area. I know that she has become very familiar and there have been a number of meetings. I know she has attended those and taken a keen interest on this. She has spoken with me a number of times.

There still seems to be some questions and lack of information from my part, to be able to be judgmental on how to resolve the problem. I think it is up to the board to make the recommendations as to how they wish to proceed. They are a duly elected board.

Our process is that they can develop and accumulate a surplus but they must take care of their own deficit. There are mechanisms in place to allow them to take care of that deficit over a three-year period.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to our process of funding, we fund according to formula. That has never changed. That has been in place for many years. We have made no alterations to that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ootes. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary to Question 22-14(4): Yellowknife Education District No. 1 Funding Concerns**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there lies my frustration. I am proud of the record of this government in providing extra funding to the educational system, yet we are looking at class sizes that are getting bigger and bigger, and there has to be some more information about this.

I know Members here are raising the question about PTR, but I think that is just one part of the bigger problem. Can the Minister confirm that prior to the August deadline of laying off anybody or cutting any positions, that he will do everything he can to prevent any cuts in teaching positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 22-14(4): Yellowknife Education District No. 1 Funding Concerns**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should point out that our process of funding has been consistent. In the last year, we have put in \$500,000 more for the Yellowknife public school system. This year, we are putting in approximately \$900,000. Plus, just recently, we put in and announced that we had \$1.3 million over the Territories, which will translate into approximately \$300,000 extra for YK No. 1, a substantial amount of money. We are bringing down the PTR and we are funding accordingly.

The actual PTR for Yellowknife on a blended basis for the YK No. 1 district, Mr. Speaker, taking into account our funding and that from the rate fares, is approximately a little over 16, and it may even be below that at this point. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ootes. Your final, short supplementary, Ms. Lee.

**Supplementary to Question 22-14(4): Yellowknife Education District No. 1 Funding Concerns**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Minister is rattling off numbers, I could say that the latest stats I have is that YK No. 1 used to be funded at 19 points plus. When they were being funded at that, they were still staffing at about 15. Now they are getting more money, but class size is bigger. Can I get the Minister to commit that he will look into that in detail to find out why, when there is more money going there, there is bigger class size? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final, short reply, Mr. Ootes.

**Further Return to Question 22-14(4): Yellowknife Education District No. 1 Funding Concerns**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we should not confuse class size with the pupil-teacher ratio for the district. There may be classes that are larger, but there are also classes that are smaller. It is an average, Mr. Speaker, of the district. We use an average across the Territory. I think that is a very important element to remember. There may be classes bigger than the 18 or 16 to one that is being used, but certainly on a funding process that we use, we are equitable to the YK No. 1, as we are to all districts. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ootes. The time for question period has ended. I just want to remind the Members that there is an event planned here for the break. That will take place immediately. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta.

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

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

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Nay.

**MR. SPEAKER:** There is a nay. The Member does not have unanimous consent. The House will now take a short break to participate in the events that are going on in the Great Hall.

-- Break

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House will come back to order, following a very exciting and entertaining break. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

**ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

**Written Question 2-14(4): Pupil-Teacher Ratio Calculations**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written question today is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Yesterday in the House, Mr. Ootes suggested that we needed to compare apples to apples where pupil-teacher ratio and special needs funding is concerned.

Since I was of the understanding that there is a cross-Canada definition of PTR funding which allows for comparison, could the Minister please provide the following:

- What is the Government of the Northwest Territories' definition of pupil-teacher ratio?
- Which positions are included in this PTR calculation? and,
- How do other Canadian jurisdictions define PTR, and which positions do their calculations include?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address. Item 10, petitions. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

#### ITEM 10: PETITIONS

##### **Petition 1-14(4): Chief Albert Wright School – Building Extension**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Mr. Speaker, I, on behalf of my constituents, would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of a Chief Albert Wright School building extension.

Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 158 signatures of Tulita residents. The petition indicates that there is not enough classroom space for teaching the students properly. I submit this. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for the North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

#### ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

##### **Committee Report 2-14(4): Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's Report 1999-2000**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present the Report of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's Report, 1999-2000.

The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories enacted its first Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPP) on December 31, 1996. As is noted in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's Annual Report for 1999/2000:

"The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act was created to promote, uphold and protect access to the information that government creates and receives and to protect the privacy rights of individuals."

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, but is required under section 68 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act to prepare and submit an annual report on the

Commissioner's activities to the Legislative Assembly. Ms. Elaine Keenan Bengts was re-appointed as the Northwest Territories' Information and Privacy Commissioner on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000 and will serve a five-year term.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act provides the public with a means of gaining access to information in the possession of the Government of the Northwest Territories and governmental agencies. However, under the legislation, there are exceptions that function to protect individual privacy rights, and enhance the ability of elected representatives to research and develop policy and run the business of the government. The act also gives individuals the right to see and make corrections to information about themselves in the possession of a government body.

#### **Committee Review of the Report**

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight met to review the Information and Privacy Commissioner's report for the 1999-2000 year on April 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and again on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The list of witnesses included Ms. Elaine Keenan Bengts, the Information and Privacy Commissioner; Mr. Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board; Mr. Robert Taggart, manager of corporate services for the Financial Management Board Secretariat; and Mr. Gerry Sutton, acting deputy minister, Department of Justice.

During the review, it became apparent to the members that there was a difference between the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the Financial Management Board when it came to the interpretation of the act. In her report, the Information and Privacy Commissioner stated "This public body (in reference to FMBS) in particular continues to be less than cooperative in meeting the objectives of the act." Through discussions with Financial Management Board Secretariat officials, it was determined that FMBS believed it had acted in accordance with the legislation. The committee has noted the gap between these two bodies and encourages them to work more cooperatively in the future.

The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act is a new piece of legislation for the Northwest Territories. At the time of this report, the legislation had been in effect for four years. In the course of working with the legislation, the Commissioner found deficiencies and problems. The Commissioner made six recommendations that, in her opinion, would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the act. During the review, both the Commissioner and the acting deputy minister of Justice addressed the recommendations. In addition, an interjurisdictional survey was performed to determine the practice in other Canadian jurisdictions. After the interjurisdictional survey was completed, the committee met again on Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in Fort Smith to complete the review.

#### **Committee's Response to Recommendations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner**

##### **Commissioner's Recommendation 1 - The Acceptance of Recommendations Made**

An amendment be made to the legislation which would create a presumption that the recommendation made by the ATIPP Commissioner is deemed to be accepted 30 days after the recommendation is made unless, prior to that, the head of the public body issues a different decision.

The committee heard from the Information and Privacy Commissioner that heads of government bodies consistently failed to respond to the Commissioner's recommendations within the legislated time frame. As the Commissioner does not have the power to force a response and there are no consequences within the NWT legislation to promote a timely response, the process can become stalled for unnecessary periods of time. By implementing an action for failing to respond to the Commissioner's recommendations within the legislated time frame, the process would proceed in a more timely manner.

The committee noted that there are no jurisdictions in Canada that treat the failure of a head of public body to respond to the Commissioner's recommendations as an acceptance of the recommendations. The committee did find, however, that some jurisdictions have legislated the failure of the head of a public body to respond to the Commissioner's recommendations within the legislated time period to be a refusal. This concurs with what was presented by the acting deputy minister of Justice. The committee is not in support of the Commissioner's recommendation, however, it would support an amendment to the legislation to reflect what is used in other jurisdictions.

#### **Committee Recommendation**

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

#### **Commissioner's Recommendation 2 - Service of Documents**

The act be amended to provide that all notices required under the act be delivered personally to the recipient, or be served in some other fashion which allows for verification of the date of delivery, and that the 30-day reply period begin only after service has been so effected.

The Commissioner informed the committee that there were problems with the amount of time taken for the delivery of notices. It may take 14 to 20 days for a mailed notice to get to a remote community. If a reply is made in the same fashion, there is a good chance that the 30-day time frame will be missed.

The committee draws upon section 51 of the NWT Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, which states:

Where this Act requires notices to be given to a person, it is to be given

- a) by sending it to that person by prepaid mail to the last known address of that person;
- b) by personal service; or
- c) by substitutional service where so authorized by the Information and Privacy Commissioner

The committee is not convinced that changes to our legislation are necessary. Section 51(c) of the NWT Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act provides for service of documents in a manner that allows for verification of the date of delivery. The interjurisdictional survey found that there was only one jurisdiction, Yukon, which says a notice that is required to be given to a third party "may" be given by certified mail. All other jurisdictions indicated that the time taken for the delivery of mail was not an issue for them. When it comes to the means for delivery of notices, the committee is of the opinion that our present legislation is adequate. Consequently, there was no need for the committee to pursue this recommendation.

#### **Commissioner's Recommendation 3 - Privacy Complaints**

The act be amended to provide clear statutory authority for the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review complaints related to violations of personal privacy and to make recommendations.

In her opening comments to the committee, the Commissioner stated that the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act sets out a number of rules about the government's collection and use of personal information. However, the provisions of the act are weak in terms of what happens if one of the rules are breached. Additionally, the act does not specifically provide the authority for the Office of Information and Privacy Commissioner to review a complaint of invasion of privacy or improper use of personal information. The Commissioner would like the power to investigate and make recommendations in the event of a breach of privacy provisions of the act. The committee concurs that the Information and Privacy Commissioner should have this authority.

#### **Committee Recommendation**

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

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to ask my colleague, Mr. Miltenberger, to continue with the report. Thank you.

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

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Commissioner's Recommendation 4 - ATIPP Commissioner's Powers**

The act be amended to:

- i. Provide the ATIPP Commissioner with the power to subpoena documents and witnesses;
- ii. Impose penalties for failure to comply with the time limits outlined in the act;
- iii. Provide for the withholding of performance bonuses from heads and deputy heads of public bodies that consistently fail to meet deadlines; and
- iv. Bring municipal governments under the act.

### Subpoena Powers

During the course of the committee's review, members were informed that there are basically two types of Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioners in Canada. One is an ombudsman-like commissioner and the second exercises an adjudicator role. Presently, the NWT legislation has the Commissioner acting in an ombudsman-like role. The committee would like our Commissioner to remain in this capacity. It was also noted that in the majority of Canadian jurisdictions the Commissioner has subpoena power. The committee is in favour of granting the power of subpoena to the Commissioner to deal with access to information issues but is not in favour of granting the power of subpoena to deal with privacy complaints. This follows the model that is used by the province of Ontario.

### Committee Recommendation

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

### Penalties for Lateness

The committee does not in agree with the imposition of penalties for failure to comply with time limits outlined in the act per se. However, they did note that the legislation does have a penalty, under section 59(2) of the act, for willful obstruction of the Information and Privacy Commissioner or any other person in the exercise of the powers or performance of their duties under the act. The committee feels that it is time to review the penalties for willfully disobeying the act with a mind to making the consequences greater.

### Committee Recommendation

The standing committee recommends that the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act be reviewed respecting the penalties for willful obstruction, violation or disregard of the legislation.

### Withholding Performance Bonuses for Failing to Meet Deadlines

The third part of this recommendation asks that there be a provision for withholding performance bonuses from heads and deputy heads of public bodies that consistently fail to meet deadlines. The committee noted that this power is not granted in any other Canadian jurisdiction and does not support this action.

### Municipalities to be Included under the Act

The Commissioner also suggests that municipal governments should be brought under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The committee undertook its own research and determined that there are two means by which municipalities could be made subject to this type of legislation. One way is to include municipalities under the existing Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the second is through separate legislation specifically addressing communities. The committee is of the opinion that more research and consultation on this matter is required.

### Committee Recommendation

The standing committee recommends that the Department of Justice and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs along with the Northwest Territories Association of Municipalities, bands and other forms of community governments, explore whether or not there should be Access to Information and Protection of Privacy legislation for municipalities;

And further, whether municipalities should be included in the current legislation or whether separate legislation should be developed.

### Commissioner's Recommendation 5 - Public Utilities Board

#### The Public Utilities Board be Subject to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

During the review process, the Department of Justice notified the committee that the regulations for the act had been changed to include the Public Utilities Board. This means that the Public Utilities Board is now subject to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Consequently, there is no need to pursue this issue further.

### Commissioner's Recommendation 6 - Legislation With Respect to Private Sector Privacy Standards

The Government of the Northwest Territories consider introducing legislation to respond to the recent passage of Bill C-6 (Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act) by the Parliament of Canada.

The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) is federal legislation which gives Canadians new legal rights when their personal information is collected, used or disclosed in the course of a commercial transaction. Information supplied to the committee by the Department of Justice indicates the act will be implemented in three stages:

- As of January 1, 2001, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act applied to businesses that collect personal information and are federally regulated.
- On January 1, 2002, organizations that collect personal health information, examples of which include drug stores, dental clinics and other health service providers, become subject to the PIPEDA.
- As of January 1, 2004, other private sector businesses that collect, use or disclose personal information in the course of a commercial activity will become subject to the legislation. The federal government may exempt organizations and/or activities in provinces that have their own privacy laws that are similar to the federal law.

In her opening comments to the committee, the ATIPP Commissioner stated:

"The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act came into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. This act governs the protection of personal, private information in the private sector, as

opposed to the public sector. In other parts of the country, there is a phase-in period to allow provincial governments to introduce their own legislation dealing with privacy issues in the private sector.

However, because of the constitutional nature of the Northwest Territories, the act is fully effective in this jurisdiction since January 1<sup>st</sup>. The effect of this is that complaints of invasion of privacy or improper use of personal information by the private sector will now be dealt with by the Federal Privacy Commissioner's office."

This information was different from that which was presented in the Commissioner's report and different from the information provided by the Department of Justice. The committee sent a letter to the Minister of Justice requesting clarification.

The department responded that they understood that the application of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act in the Northwest Territories would be the same for both the provinces and the territories. The Department only recently became aware that there was a different interpretation resulting in the act being applied differently in the territories as compared to the provinces.

In the Minister's response, it was also brought to the attention of the committee that the federal Privacy Commissioner's office had released a brochure titled "The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Document Act: A Guide for Canadians". This brochure states that the PIPEDA "covers all businesses and organizations engaged in commercial activity in the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut" as of January 1, 2001.

This is cause for concern. The federal Interpretation Act interprets the word "province" to include all three territories and it is not known why, in this situation, the territories would be treated differently from the provinces. Industry Canada, the federal department responsible for the administration of PIPEDA, has been contacted by the Department of Justice and is reviewing the situation. The Department of Justice has requested that Industry Canada make its position known to the GNWT. Further, the Department of Justice has undertaken its own review of the PIPEDA in order to examine the act's application in the NWT.

The standing committee requests the Minister of Justice to keep the standing committee informed of any new developments in this issue. The committee would also like to be supplied the positions arrived at by the NWT Department of Justice and Industry Canada. Until the issue is resolved, the committee will not act upon this recommendation.

#### **Cabinet Documents**

During the review, a number of other issues relating to the ATIPP legislation were raised, researched and discussed by the committee. One of these issues was public access to Cabinet documents. The standing committee is of the opinion that, in pursuit of a more open and accountable government, it is desirable to open up the public's access to Cabinet documents. Legislation from the different jurisdictions was

reviewed and the committee agreed that Alberta's legislation was what would be the preferred option for the Northwest Territories:

21(1) The head of a public body must refuse to disclose to an applicant information that would reveal the substance of deliberations of the Executive Council or any of its committees or of the Treasury Board or any of its committees, including any advice, recommendations, policy considerations or draft legislation or regulations submitted or prepared for submission to the Executive Council or any of its committees or to the Treasury Board or any of its committees.

- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to:
- (a) information in a record that has been in existence for 15 years or more;
  - (b) information in a record of a decision made by the Executive Council or any of its committees on an appeal under an Act; or
  - (c) information in a record the purpose of which is to present background facts to the Executive Council or any of its committees or to the Treasury Board or any of its committees for consideration in making a decision if
    - (i). the decision has been made public,
    - (ii). the decision has been implemented, or
    - (iii). Five years or more have passed since the decision was made or considered.

#### **Committee Recommendation**

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

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the standing committee was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the secretary to the Financial Management Board, the manager of corporate services for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, and the acting deputy minister of Justice to discuss this report. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight requests that the Executive Council table a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days in accordance with Rule 93(5) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the Report of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, on the Review of the Report of the Privacy Commissioner, 1999-2000.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Frame Lake, that Committee Report 2-14(4) be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. 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? The motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 2-14(4) moved into committee of the whole for tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 2-14(4) is moved into committee of the whole for tomorrow. 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 5-14(4): Terms of Reference for the Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Taxation**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I have two documents to table. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled, Terms of Reference for the Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Taxation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Tabled Document 6-14(4): 1999-2000 NWT Air Quality Report**

Secondly, I wish to table the following document entitled 1999-2000 Northwest Territories Air Quality Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**Tabled Document 7-14(4): Description of Inuvik Constituencies From the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act and a Map of Campbell Creek**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table two documents. One dealing with the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act which basically gives you the legal description of constituency boundaries, and also on a map that is attached.

**Tabled Document 8-14(4): Letter From the Minister of Transportation to David Krutko re: Highway Project Deferral**

I would also like to table a letter I received from the Minister of Transportation dated May 28<sup>th</sup> dealing with the highway projects that have been deferred.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

#### ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR THE FIRST READING OF BILLS

**Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Education Act**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, June 8, 2001, I will move that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Education Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 1-14(4) and Committee Report 1-14(4), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Welcome to committee of the whole. We have two items to deal with, Minister's Statement 1-14(4) and Committee Report 1-14(4). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we deal with Committee Report 1-14(4) with a view to concluding that report today before we rise.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. We will deal with Committee Report 1-14(4). General comments. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, if there are no general comments from Members right now, there are a couple of recommendations that were made by the committee that I would like to present as motions for consideration in committee of the whole.

**Committee Motion 1-14(4): To Adopt a Progressive Approach to the Timely Tabling of its Public Accounts (Carried)**

Mr. Chairman, we took note at standing committee of the significant lapse in time between the end of the fiscal year and the time in which the public accounts are tabled by the government, or whether they have been tabled over the years. What we would like to recommend is that the government adopt the practice of meeting a timetable for having the public accounts ready for tabling and make that a progressive approach to the tabling, so that it gets earlier and earlier each

year until we are tabling the reports in a timely basis. Therefore, Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee request that the government immediately adopt a progressive approach to the timely tabling of its public accounts by having:

- (a) the 2000-2001 Public Accounts ready for tabling by October 31, 2001;
- (b) the 2001-2002 Public Accounts ready for tabling by September 30, 2002;
- (c) the 2002-2003 Public Accounts ready for tabling by August 31, 2003;
- (d) and in subsequent years, to have the public accounts ready for tabling by no later than August 31 of the same year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, I do not have a problem with the motion in principle. The only difficulty we will have in meeting this kind of timeline is that it is going to require the Auditor General to dedicate a lot more resources to the work that he has to do in the Territories in preparing for the public accounts report.

Under the current system, and commitment from the auditors, we would have difficulty achieving this because we often do not get the reports from other entities that are included in here, the Business Credit Corporation, the Business Development Corporation, until later.

If you do this, you could end up with a public accounts report that may have some incomplete sections in it, unless we have the full cooperation and dedication by the auditors to dedicate the resources that are necessary to achieve these time frames.

Pushing it to specific dates may end up, through no fault of ours, with incomplete reports. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to respond to the Minister's comment. As we noted in the report of the standing committee, this recommendation was made on the advice of the Auditor General's office, so the Auditor General was consulted in this recommendation. If there are implications for that office, then we would expect that office has an obligation to follow through, having agreed to this recommendation being presented in the form of a motion here today.

It has been the subject of some discussion in previous reports on the review of the Auditor General. The lateness of the delivery on the consolidated entities, financial statements to the government. We have had some previous discussion about

that. I think the goal here is to give the government some targets and to put some pressure on those consolidated entities to make sure that they do deliver their reports on a timely basis, so the public can have these reports when they are relatively recent.

I think the Minister would have to agree that it would be useful for Members of this House to have this sort of information in advance of consideration of the business plans. It is a good results type of information for Members to review, to see how the government has performed in the past year.

What we are trying to do with this recommendation is ask the government, on a progressive basis, to move the process along to get to the place where we are much closer to dealing with these reports on a real-time basis, rather than a year or a year-and-a-half after the fact, which has been the case in the last couple of years.

I know because of the split of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut in one of those years, there were some significant accounting problems that led to that. We would hope that now that we do not have that sort of problem, we would be able to get the accounting brought much closer to real time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

**MR. MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to encourage the government on this particular issue. The need for timely information is critical for us. As an MLA on my second term, going into my sixth or seventh year, we have always been dealing with out-of-date information. It is problematic. It makes the exercise just that in many cases: an exercise that has often been overtaken by events.

The government and ourselves have been insisting on targets and accountability frameworks for all the departments. I think it is only fitting that this critical part of the business process be given timely information. I would hope that this would be agreed to.

I would also suggest that it would be unfortunate to not have this passed because one small component of the government financial picture is not there. The vast majority of the money in the budgets is in the departments, and not tied up as much with some of these smaller boards and agencies. I would hope this would pass and would allow us to be more effective and efficient in doing our jobs. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Abstentions? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of the other issues we discussed in committee was the value of having a document that would incorporate performance indicators based on data in the Public Accounts that both the public and Members could review and get an idea of how the government was performing. We certainly found that the secretary to the Financial Management Board feared to support



this kind of approach and indicated the government was already working towards it.

We thought that in order to demonstrate that the House really would like to see some effort put into getting this done fairly quickly, that it was worthwhile introducing a motion to reinforce the desire to see this.

**Committee Motion 2-14(4): To Produce a Financial Health Document That Incorporates Performance Indicators Based Upon Public Accounts Data (Carried)**

Therefore, Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories regularly produce a brief, timely, accurate and straightforward document that incorporates performance indicators based upon data included in the public accounts to report the financial health of the government.

Furthermore, the document must:

1. Be published once a year initially;
2. Be user-friendly; and
3. Use the same set of indicators each year.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Braden.

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is interesting to note, in fact, just this afternoon in the fiscal and economic update the Minister of Finance delivered in the Assembly, there were five or six points indicating changes in our economic, and to some degree, our social performance. I think those are excellent examples of the kinds of snapshots that the government can report on even more frequently than just once a year to help us get a sense of where we are going.

I think the mechanisms to measure and report on these kinds of performance indicators are already in place. This motion is one that I wholeheartedly support, because I think it is something that can give everybody a sense of just where we are and where we are going, especially in these very fast-paced times. It is a good motion and I support it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the standing committee, in a somewhat new approach to reviewing the Public Accounts this year, or the Review of the Report of the Auditor General, also went back and followed up on our report from a previous year's report.

You will find in the report tabled in the House yesterday, Appendix A, which is a follow-up on the 1997-1998 Auditor General's report, in which we report on the government's response to our recommendations from that report.

Mr. Chairman, what I would like to do at this time is go through that appendix and get it read into the record, and also deal with the recommendations in there in the form of motions.

As followup to the review of the 1997-1998 Auditor General's report as background, Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed the Report of the Auditor General and Other Matters for the Years 1997 to 1998, from September 26 through 28, 2000. The committee made several recommendations to the government based on its review of that report.

The government considered the committee's recommendations as bitted responses. The committee recommendations arising from its review of the 1997 and 1998 Auditor General's report are listed below, along with their respective government responses.

As part of its regular follow-up process, subsequent recommendations were made by the committee, where the government response received was not sufficient to meet the initial recommendation.

The standing committee expects the government to follow up on all the recommendations on this report, including the subsequent recommendations outlined below.

**Recommendations, Responses, and Subsequent Recommendations**

The standing committee recommends that the present Financial Management Board's record of decisions, setting the limits for subsidies issued by the Northwest Territories Development Corporation, be made into regulations by December 31, 2000.

**Government Response**

The government response to that recommendation was, Mr. Chairman, that Cabinet approved the regulations for the Northwest Territories Development Corporation on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2000. These were put into force on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

During the review, the standing committee also asked the Development Corporation for the definition of a "job" to ensure that subsidies to subsidiaries, which are based on the number of jobs created, are accounted for properly.

Mr. Chairman, in its letter of April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the Financial Management Board informed the committee that it is working with the Development Corporation to finalize the definition of a "job". The FMB will provide the committee with the final definition when it is approved, and FMB hopes that this will occur in early May.

**Committee Comment**

As committee comment, Mr. Chairman, we would note that we are still waiting for this information and it has long passed early May; we are now into early June.

The standing committee recommends that the Northwest Territories Business Credit Corporation Act be reviewed to make appropriate information on loans available to the public, where such information will not jeopardize a business; and

Further, that the act be changed to allow for information of that desk to be public after a suitable period of time.

### Government Response

The government response was that the Financial Management Board has requested the Minister responsible to implement a process requiring the Northwest Territories Business Credit Corporation (BCC) to disclose non-proprietary information to the Legislative Assembly.

This information may include client names and the value of any outstanding loans. As it would not be possible to enforce such a requirement retroactively, the government stated that this policy may be applied in the future.

The BCC provides information annually in its annual report, respecting loans in excess of \$20,000, which are written off or forgiven. The report is tabled annually in the Legislative Assembly.

### Committee Comment

The committee comments on that response, Mr. Chairman, as part of the follow up process.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, as part of its review of the Auditor General's Report for 1999, makes the following recommendation.

Mr. Chairman, I now make this in the form of a motion.

### Committee Motion 3-14(4): To Require the Business Credit Corporation to Disclose Non-Proprietary Information to the Legislative Assembly (Carried)

THEREFORE I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Business Credit Corporation implement a process that would require the Northwest Territories Business Credit Corporation to disclose non-proprietary information to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, just for clarification, I am assuming that the intent of the motion is that it applies from here on, not retroactively.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that taking the government response to us that the FMB did not see any way that they could enforce such a requirement retroactively, I have no reason to question that. I do not believe that the committee would question it, but it is something that we would expect to take place on a go-forward basis, from this point on, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those against? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Item 3 is from our report on the last review of the Auditor General.

The standing committee recommends that the Financial Administration Act be reviewed to address requirements for accountability frameworks, monitoring and tracking systems and more tools for ensuring compliance with policies, regulations, directives and procedures.

The committee was concerned over the government's inability to take effective action when a department or territorial corporation did not follow proper procedures. Ministers and the deputy ministers are ultimately responsible for their departments. The Auditor General added that there are limited tools in government to ensure proper adherence to procedures.

### Government Response

The government response, Mr. Chairman, the deputy minister performance appraisals are now directly linked to their respective departmental business plans and departmental results reports. General performance provisions are contained in the deputy minister employment contracts and require an annual performance agreement between the Premier and the deputy minister. The result is a direct link between performance and pay.

### Committee Comment

The committee comments on that response that the government's response to this recommendation was incomplete. Therefore, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, as part of its review of the Auditor General's Report for 1999, makes the subsequent recommendation as part of the committee's follow-up report progress.

This is subsequent recommendation number two. I will present that in the form of a motion as well, Mr. Chairman.

### Committee Motion 414(4): To Revisit and Address Outstanding Issues From the AOC Report on the Review of the Auditor General's 1997 and 1998 Report (Carried)

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the government revisit recommendation number three, from the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight's Report on the review of the Auditor General to the Legislative Assembly for the years 1997 and 1998 and address these outstanding issues:

- a. make a commitment to review the Financial Administration Act, in respect to this recommendation;
- b. address requirements for accountability frameworks, monitoring and tracking systems; and
- c. adequately address compliance issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those against? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The standing committee recommends that it be a condition for all future contribution agreements to include a monitoring and reporting system to ensure compliance with Government of the Northwest Territories objectives; and

Further, that the Financial Administration Act be reviewed to address requirements for accountability frameworks, monitoring and tracking systems and more tools for ensuring third party compliance with Government of the Northwest Territories objectives.

The committee had noted that there have been changes to the structure of government and the methods by which it delivers its programs. The Auditor General remarked that upwards of 50 percent of the territorial government's budget is now delivered by third parties.

The standing committee is concerned. Existing systems and procedures to monitor third party compliance with conditions of their contribution agreements are not adequate. Monitoring of compliance with the conditions of the contribution agreements is important to ensure that the intended results are achieved.

In response to the 1995 report of the Auditor General, the Financial Management Board Secretariat indicated that legislative changes to the Financial Administration Act may be considered in order to improve third party accountability. To date, these changes have not been made.

#### **Government Response**

The government replied that once its third party accountability framework is completed, it will be implemented, subject to legislative requirements as applicable. Any legislative proposals would have to be prepared by October 2001.

The standing committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly request the Auditor General for Canada conduct an independent review of government contracting to ascertain the extent of risk to the government.

#### **Government Response**

The government response; it is up to the Auditor General whether to undertake any requested review. The government does not know the status of the Legislative Assembly's request.

Consequently, the government's internal audit bureau was requested to perform a procurement review. As part of this review, an expert, Mr. Michael Asner, reviewed current government practices. The comptroller general for the government stated that a study in best practices had been completed and reforms would be presented to the Financial Management Board for consideration.

#### **Committee Comment**

The committee looks forward to receiving the Asner Report once it is completed. The committee also expects to receive a copy of the best practices study mentioned by the comptroller general, and a briefing on what components have been adopted by the government.

The standing committee recommends that the government address the recommendations regarding environmental cleanup and related restoration costs presented in the Review of the Report of the Auditor General to the Northwest

Territories Legislative Assembly for the Year Ended March 31, 1996.

#### **Government Response**

Departments and corporations are required to give an update on their environmental liabilities. Departments that already have a program of inspection will be requested to complete said inspections by the end of 2002-2003. Departments that do not have a program of inspection will have until 2002-2003 to establish such a program, and an additional year to complete assessments for remedial action. However, the government stated that this is contingent upon FMB and standing committees approving adequate funding.

#### **Committee Comment**

The standing committee continues to be concerned about the government's outstanding environmental liabilities and in the interest of accountability, will continue to pursue this issue with the government.

The standing committee recommends that the government develop an action plan for presentation to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight that deals with the recommendations raised in the Report of the Auditor General to the Legislative Assembly for the Years 1997 and 1998, and the recommendations in this report; and

Further that the action plan contain benchmarks and accountability framework and firm timelines.

#### **Government Response**

The government's March 6, 2001 document, Comprehensive Response to Committee Report 4-14(3), addresses this motion and provides timelines where they have been established.

#### **Committee Comment**

The standing committee, as part of its review of the Auditor General's report for 1999, makes the subsequent recommendation as part of the committee's follow-up process.

Mr. Chairman, again I would make this in the form of a motion.

#### **Committee Motion 514(4): To identify Action Plans, Benchmarks and Timelines in Management Responses to Subsequent Auditor General Reports**

Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the government identify action plans, benchmarks and firm timelines in its management responses to all recommendations raised in subsequent reports of the Auditor General. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Does the committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 1-14(4) is concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** A motion is on the floor to report progress. It is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those against? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

#### ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 1-14(4) and would like to report progress with five motions being adopted. Committee Report 1-14(4) has been concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko, is there a seconder? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Nahendeh. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

#### ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):** Mr. Speaker, meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight; at 10:30 a.m. of Governance and Economic Development; at 11:30 a.m. of the Special Committee on Self-Government and Sunset Clause.

Orders of the day for Thursday, June 7, 2001:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents

14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
  - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
  - Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2001-2002
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Minister's Statement 1-14(4), Sessional Statement
  - Minister's Statement 3-14(4), Fiscal and Economic Update
  - Minister's Statement 4-14(4), Update on the Social Agenda
  - Committee Report 2-14(4), Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's Report 1999-2000
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, June 7, 2001, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:17 p.m.