



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, November 6, 2001****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Please be seated. Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Transportation, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 56-14(4): Amendments to Highway Investment Strategy**

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, since its introduction, the Highway Investment Strategy has been a source of considerable debate.

The strategy will enable the GNWT to invest an additional \$100 million into the reconstruction and repair of NWT highways while distributing the cost of these improvements among those sectors of our northern economy that will benefit the most from them.

Mr. Speaker, the strategy is a critical part of our overall fiscal strategy. The funds it will generate will enable us to upgrade our highways -- a key component of the infrastructure that we will need to have in place in order to pursue our vision of resource development in the NWT. The strategy will also allow us to apply any new revenues to investments in other key priority areas -- areas such as those related to education and health care initiatives identified in Towards A Better Tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, support for these proposed bills has not been strong. However, most residents of the NWT have acknowledged that highway improvements are necessary and agree with the intent of the bills. Many Members of the Assembly, representatives of industry and the general public have offered suggestions as to how this initiative could in fact be improved. They include considerations like:

- Adding a sunset clause so that once highway improvements are completed, the permit fee will also conclude;
- Provisions to protect the NWT's fragile manufacturing industry;
- Increased tax breaks for residents of the NWT to counter some of the increased costs reflected on residents of the NWT; and
- Protection for lower-income families.

Mr. Speaker, the government has agreed to consider these suggestions and we are prepared to amend the proposed bills to reflect these concerns. To that end, we do not intend to proceed with the proposed legislation this session. Instead, we will take the time to consider, make amendments and share these changes with all stakeholders and Members of this Assembly. We will reintroduce amended legislation during the February budget session.

In the meantime, we will be looking to those individuals and organizations that in the last six months have pledged to continue or support our lobby of the federal government for investment in our region.

Mr. Speaker, everybody agrees that our NWT highways are in much need of improvement. Our decision today will delay much-needed improvements and interim steps may have to be taken to protect our investment of over a billion dollars in the NWT highway system. These steps may include reductions in speed limits, road or load bans, restricted hours or days of operation and seasonal limitations. It also means that we will be forced to spend more money on repairing and rebuilding portions of some highways that will eventually be discontinued, or redirect money from other program areas to finance the most critical of our highway deficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that this government believes that the Highway Investment Strategy is the solution to rebuilding NWT highways to a standard that will encourage and support future investment without taking money away from other important government programs and services.

I trust that we will be able to identify changes so that Members of this Assembly will be able to support this important initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 57-14(4): The Proposed Human Rights Act

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I tabled a proposed Human Rights Act and a related issues paper on equal pay.

The proposed Human Rights Act has many changes from the version that was tabled last November. These changes were made as a result of the public consultation that occurred from last February through to this summer. There was much support

from the public for this project and many ideas for changes. A lot of work has gone into this draft. The Department of Justice only has a few more issues to research and review before a bill will be ready for introduction, which is planned for February.

This human rights project has been a high priority for our government. It is an important project and we want to make sure that we get it right. Tabling the draft Human Rights Act at this time will allow members of the public and interested groups to get started on their review of the proposed legislation. Although the department has finished the formal consultation process, I would be happy to hear any additional comments that people may have on this version.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the passage of a Human Rights Act in the life of this Assembly will be an important milestone in the evolution of the Northwest Territories and I look forward to our debate on the bill in 2002. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on The Highway Troll Fairy Tale

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we used to have a tradition of doing something lighthearted in this House on Fridays. I do not believe we are going to be sitting until Friday so I have a Member's statement that I hope no one takes offense to. My daughter helped me write it. It is called the Three Truckloads North.

Once upon a time in a land not so far away, there were three truckloads north. In the winter, they hauled loads and loads of freight to the good people of the Northwest Territories. On their way to the North over the highway system, the three truckloads north had to cross a rushing river. There was only one way to cross over and that was on the ferry. It should be a bridge, but in this case, it was a ferry. The ferry was made of reinforced steel plate. In the wheelhouse of the ferry lurked the highway troll.

No one was allowed to cross the river without paying the highway troll. He wanted the trucks to pay a trip fee. The smallest truckload north was the first to reach the raging river. Vroom! went the little engine as it hauled its freight on the deck of the ferry. "Who is that driving on my ferry and wearing out my roads?" growled the highway troll over the loudspeaker on the ferry from the wheelhouse.

"It is only I," said the smallest truckload north. "I am on my way to Yellowknife with this load of bread and vegetables for the food stores so the families can feed their children." "Oh no you are not," said the highway troll, "not until you pay me." "Oh please, highway troll," pleaded the smallest truck. "I am much too small to pay a trip fee. Why don't you wait for my brother? He is much bigger and has a different axle configuration and would be able to pay a much bigger fee."

The highway troll did not want to waste his time on a little truck if there was a bigger and better truck to tax. "All right, you can pass on my ferry," he grunted. "Go and get heavier and I will

tax you on the way back." So the smallest truckload north passed over the raging river.

The highway troll did not have to wait long for the second truckload north. Vroom, vroom! roared the engine as the second truck drove onto the deck of the ferry, causing it to dip slightly to one side. "Who is that driving across the deck of my ferry?" screamed the highway troll, suddenly appearing in the wheelhouse. "Truckload north," said the second truck. "I am heading up to Yellowknife with this load of industrial parts for the suppliers who sell materials to the folks who service the industry." "Oh no you are not," said the highway troll, "not until you pay the trip fee." "Oh no, please," said the second truck. "I may be bigger than the first truckload north, but I am much smaller and will pass through many fewer zones than my big brother, the third truckload north. Why do you not wait for him? He would be able to pay a much bigger fee."

Mr. Speaker, I am going to run out of time here. I did not think this was so long. I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude your very interesting statement.

-- Laughter

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The highway troll was getting very frustrated but he did not want to waste his time on a middle-sized truck if there was an even bigger one to come. "All right. You may cross on my ferry," he grumbled, "Go and get bigger and I will tax you on your way back." The highway troll did not have to wait long for the third truckload north. Vroom, vroom, vroom! thundered the big engines as the big truck pulled onto the deck of the ferry, causing it to tilt to one side.

"Who is that rolling onto my ferry?" roared the highway troll. "It is the big truckload north," said the B-train loaded with fuel. "I am hauling fuel up to resupply the mines when the winter road is ready." "Oh, no you are not," said the highway troll, as he clambered onto the deck of the ferry, "Not until you pay the trip fee." "That is what you think," said the big truckload north. Then he blasted his horn, revved up his engines, flashed his running lights and busted the highway troll, up, up, up into the air and down, down, down went the highway troll. He landed right back in his chair in Yellowknife at the drawing board in the Cabinet room beside his friend, the finance troll.

-- Laughter

The big truckload north rolled down the road to Yellowknife, bumpy and windy as it was. Until the highway troll found a fairer way to collect the tax, anyone can cross the river and the roads without paying the highway troll.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I was just checking my list to see which riding the trolls were from. Item 3,

Members' statements. The honourable Member for -- while we are on a roll -- Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement on Hay River Family Support Centre

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as most of us are aware, the week of October 14th to the 20th was officially proclaimed Family Violence Awareness Week throughout the Northwest Territories. It is imperative, Mr. Speaker, that we as legislators place a tremendous amount of importance on this critical issue, not just during Family Violence Awareness Week but throughout the year.

By importance, Mr. Speaker, I do not just mean passing a motion of proclamation in this House. I am referring to the fact that we as government should commit adequate resources to putting an end to family violence.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to recognize and to surely thank Ernestine Gladue and her very competent staff at the Family Support Centre in Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this government should do everything in its power to assist shelters such as the Family Support Centre in promoting the safety and well-being of women and their families.

Mr. Speaker, we need to find a solution to generational violence in our communities. We need to offer future generations an alternative to violence. Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that this government can and should do more to support family violence shelters such as the Family Support Centre in Hay River so that they may assist people to make positive choices towards healthier lifestyles.

At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will have further questions to the Minister responsible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Support for the Oil and Gas Industry

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to once again talk about the GNWT's support for the development of oil and gas industry related opportunities for residents and businesses in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of oil and gas exploration activity in the southern Mackenzie region; activity that should be supported and assisted by this government to a much greater degree than is currently the case.

According to the NWT oil and gas activity update issued by RWED on September 14th of this year, there are plans in place by industry to drill as many as 13 wells, in addition to seismic programs in the Deh Cho region. Five of these exploration wells were slated for the Cameron Hills. Total expenditures in the region are then projected as high as \$90 million. In contrast, the same document states that there are up to eight exploratory wells being planned by industry in the Beaufort-Delta region for the upcoming winter.

Notwithstanding the subsequent effect of September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States on these plans, I feel that these numbers should help honourable Members place my constituency of the Deh Cho in some kind of context when it comes to assessing GNWT assistance for development in the region.

These drilling statistics demonstrate that some of the drilling training that is being conducted in the Inuvik area would be very beneficial in my constituency, yet there is no such program being offered in the Deh Cho. Indeed, although NWT Community Mobilization, with GNWT assistance, has facilitated many workshops on industry worker certification in the Sahtu and the Delta over the last 12 months through its Worker Capacity Building Program, there has been none in my constituency since December of 1999.

Community organizations consequently have to pay for basic training initiatives themselves and try to recoup the funds from the GNWT in any way that they can. This is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment labels some of its initiatives in oil and gas training as just-in-time training courses. Mr. Speaker, this term illustrates the government taking a reactive approach to human resources planning and training.

Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to continue my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. You still had a few seconds left to go but the honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment labels some of its initiatives in the oil and gas industry training as just-in-time training courses. Mr. Speaker, this term illustrates the government taking a reactive approach to human resources planning and training.

What our workforce needs is a proactive approach to training that will ensure that the trained people are in place in advance of opportunities actually arriving. Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to wait for training programs to be put in place just in time for trainees to see exploration companies leaving town.

I would like to also raise the issue of specialist advice for communities in my constituency. Many of the community governments in my constituency are aboriginal government organizations that have traditional land rights in the area rich in oil and gas potential. The GNWT should be assisting these communities with funding to enable them to hire industry-specific specialists on a confidential basis to allow them to negotiate value-added business deals with industry partners.

I am not talking about in-house advice offered by the GNWT, Mr. Speaker. I am talking about funding for aboriginal community governments to hire industry specialists and negotiators that will allow them to conduct professional, due diligence analysis negotiation on potential business deals.

At the present time, there are opportunities for commercial participation on a number of different levels, up to and including equity participation in oil and gas initiatives for aboriginal community governments in my constituency. Only informed

decisions will maximize long-term benefits for these communities and the NWT as a whole, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what is needed is for a comprehensive and imaginative package of government services and programs to be put in place that will assist aboriginal governments to take advantage of the unique opportunities that are available to them. Opportunities that, if taken advantage of, will benefit all Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Support for Wildlife Harvesters

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Bathurst caribou migration patterns are unpredictable at this time of the year. There is no clear reason as to why they are doing this. When the caribou move away from our Dogrib communities, our hunters need more money to be able to reach them. More people in the Dogrib region are going out to hunt and trap due to the Western Harvester Program. This program gives them a chance to purchase big items like snowmobiles, sleds, boats, which they otherwise would not have been able to do.

Mr. Speaker, we need more money for our communities that are spending more to get their hunts in. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that RWED is funding our hunters on an annual basis but they are not looking at harvesting and migration trends.

When the caribou turn on their hooves and head east again, it will cost our people more to get close to them in terms of time and fuel costs.

Mr. Speaker, the migration through the winter range normally brings the Bathurst herd to the area north of Great Slave Lake, around Wekweti, Wha Ti and Gameti. In 1997-98, they moved even further south into northern Saskatchewan. Last year, some of our communities had to charter planes to get to the caribou, which they did not have to do in the past.

Some communities had to go as far as Deline, using winter roads through Fort Simpson and Wrigley. They had to also hire large trucks to haul their meat back. Due to this, some of the bands have deficits they cannot get out of.

I will have questions later for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Highway Investment Issues

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Highway Strategy has been put on the backburners. However, Mr. Speaker, there is an opportunity here to address some of the concerns that were raised during the public review process.

One of the main concerns I heard from people who are not on the road system is that they get to pay but they do not get anything in return. Here is an opportunity for the troll from Transportation and the troll from Finance to get their heads together and come up with ways so communities that are not on the road system will benefit from this strategy.

I have spoken many times in this House on the dust problem and road conditions in our communities. This is one strategy that can address this problem. No one on that side of the House has been able to concretely answer my questions on dust and how it can affect the health of people in the communities -- no one. There are no strategies in place to address that particular issue and I think the Minister of Transportation has the opportunity and time now to address that particular issue, along with the Minister of Finance and Municipal and Community Affairs. They should work together to address that issue.

The other area of concern that the people have in those communities is that the price will be going up, of course, but they do not get anything in return. It is not fair. If the Minister is going to table the strategy again, make it fair for all residents of the Northwest Territories, not just those who are using the highway system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Plans to Return Home to the Inuvik Boot Lake Constituency

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform my constituents that hopefully, if we wrap up today, I will be travelling home tomorrow to meet not only with my constituents but to once again take my spot in the family unit back home. I will gladly inform my constituents that the issues that have been raised in this House, or the things that have happened over the last number of days and weeks that we have been in session, if they have concerns or questions, I invite them to come over to my constituency office in Inuvik, sit down with me, have a cup of coffee and I will try to address their concerns. If they feel they want to come over and seek some clarification on the issues and concerns that were raised in this House.

Just informing my constituents and my family that I am coming home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on St. John Ambulance Investiture Ceremonies

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow in the Great Hall, as you know, the Legislative Assembly will host the St. John's Ambulance investiture ceremonies. The St. John Order is over 900 years old and it has been in the North for approximately 24 years. Volunteers will be recognized through investments and promotions by the chancellor of the Canadian

prory of the St. John's Ambulance, Mr. Robert Langdon, and the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Glenna Hansen.

This year, there will be 20 Northerners recognized for their volunteer service work in the Order of St. John's Ambulance. Twelve recipients will take part in the ceremony in the Great Hall tomorrow and another eight will be honoured in Ottawa later this month.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge Mike Lowing, a constituent of Yellowknife South, who is being recognized tomorrow for his volunteer efforts and being promoted to the rank of officer in St. John's Ambulance.

Mr. Speaker, Mike started as a young cadet many years ago with the St. John's Ambulance. He is currently on the board of directors and in 1996 became a serving brother. The honour and awards committee selected Mike because of his dedication and work for St. John's Ambulance in our community. His main service with St. John's focuses on improving first aid training and determining community needs for training services and supplies. Mike is known by members of the St. John's Ambulance, his peers, and indeed our entire community, as a very dedicated person who gives as much time as he can to this organization and to community service in general.

Youth programs are of particular interest to him and he enjoys promoting healthy lifestyles and safety to youth. Those who know Mike fully recognize and appreciate how much time and effort he dedicates to our community. Mike joined the Yellowknife Fire Department as a volunteer in 1984 and is currently employed as a firefighter and has been since 1985, Mr. Speaker.

In closing, I would like to ask my fellow Members to join me in recognizing the invaluable work and service that St. John's Ambulance brings to the North. The interest and training in the North are the highest per capita in the country. I think, Mr. Speaker, this speaks volumes about the many dedicated volunteer men and women serving in our communities.

Congratulations to all of this year's recipients. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Gwich'in Tribal Council Meetings in Ottawa

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just returned from a meeting held in Ottawa yesterday afternoon with the Minister of Indian Affairs, Robert Nault, the Gwich'in Tribal chairman and the board of directors, along with Bob Overvold, divisional director.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to that meeting, there were several issues we dealt with in trying to find ways of working through the different areas. One of them was the land use planning process, which has been stalled and has not been ratified by the Minister of Indian Affairs. Hopefully through the meetings that were held yesterday afternoon, we can come to a conclusion to this effort within the next couple of months.

The other concern that was raised was in regard to the Yukon ADAP process and the Yukon overlap, the new Yukon Act, which has been introduced in the House of Parliament, and the effects of that act in the Gwich'in land claim and their rights in the Yukon. Note there again, we are hoping to work in conjunction with the Minister and the Premier of the Yukon to try and find a solution to this problem through dialogue.

The other issue we worked on was the whole area of governance. As we all know, the Gwich'in self-government agreement has been initialed by the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit and this government, and the federal government is in the process of doing the same thing. Again, there are some questions on the next stage, which is the final negotiations which are taking place. We are hoping there again, through working together with the three parties, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit in the Beaufort-Delta region, and the Minister of Indian Affairs, we can find a solution to that problem.

Another area that I think is most important is the regional priorities we have to look at, especially with what has happened in the Mackenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea areas, the whole area of economic development and trying to prioritize some of those developments and find ways to deal with the effects that come with it. We also have to realize the social envelope that we have to look at. What are the health and education requirements? Training is one. The other area is looking at how we can work together to formulate some of these training programs, develop the different economic opportunities and projects that will come, and trying to find a partnership arrangement between the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Minister of Indian Affairs, through the federal programs, and the Aboriginal First Nations governments to coordinate these efforts.

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

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement, I think it is imperative that we build on these partnerships in cooperation with governments, aboriginal First Nations and the different jurisdictions, the Yukon Government, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government.

I think it is important that this government, especially from the Premier's office, meet with the counterparts in the Yukon to help us resolve some of these outstanding issues, especially in regard to the devolution process that is taking place with the Yukon to ensure that rights of First Nations people in the Northwest Territories who have bilateral rights over the Yukon boundary, especially in the Gwich'in settlement area and the claim itself, that we have to work on that relationship.

With that, I have heard from the Minister of Indian Affairs that he is going to pass that message on and hopefully through the dialogue between our Premier and the Premier of the Yukon and the Minister of Indian Affairs we are able to accomplish these efforts. With that, thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Human Organ and Tissue Donor Program

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a statement about HOPE. HOPE is the acronym for Human Organ Procurement and Exchange. This program is administered by a committee with the Stanton Regional Health Board through an educational committee, which promotes the national organ and tissue donor awareness campaign.

This program is a voluntary donation program that allows people to say, "Yes, I want to donate certain or all organs for use for transplants by individuals in need." In most parts of Canada, they do so by indicating it on their health care card or driver's license.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories does not have a specific donor identification format like those found in other provinces and territories. Therefore, temporary donor cards were created. Unfortunately, there are a number of different donor cards being used and it gets quite confusing as to which one to sign. One kind is this kind that I have that I have signed and had witnessed by my wife. Once that is done, you must make sure you carry it at all times. Unfortunately, because people in the health care system may not know what to look for, they may not be able to find it when it may be appropriate.

Our jurisdiction needs to have a simple donor identification system put into place. We should be able to indicate on our driver's licence or on our health care card that we wish to be organ donors.

Mr. Speaker, as of December 31st last year, 26 residents of the Northwest Territories had benefited from transplants. Nearly 3,700 Canadians are waiting right now for organ transplants that could enhance or even save their lives. In the year 2000, 147 patients on transplant waiting lists died when no organ became available.

Mr. Speaker, Canada's present donation rate is 13.7 per million population, one of the lowest in the industrialized countries.

Mr. Speaker, living donation is increasing as one way to close the gap between the number of people on transplant waiting lists and the number of available organs, but cadaveric donation is still the most typical source for organ transplants. That requires that a person's heart be beating and still transporting oxygenated blood around the body even though the brain may be dead.

Mr. Speaker, even in other circumstances, people may make donations because things like corneas and bones and muscles -- Mr. Speaker, I see that I need to request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, even in those circumstances where the heart may have stopped beating, donations can still be made because corneas, bones, muscles, pancreatic and nerve cells, for

example, can survive for a limited time after the body stops breathing and the heart stops beating.

Mr. Speaker, Canadians overwhelmingly support the idea of organ donation. In a 1999 Angus Reid survey of more than 1500 Canadians, 81 percent were willing to donate any organs, or certain organs, for transplant at the time of death but only 65 percent of Canadians have ever discussed the idea of organ donation with a family member. In most parts of Canada, families make the final decision on organ donation, even if their loved one left a signed consent.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that northern citizens are made aware of and have the opportunity to participate, contribute and support this health care issue. Northerners, I believe, want to be part of this and our friends need us to be involved.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Minister of Health and Social Services to make residents aware of programs like this. I would urge the Minister of Transportation to provide an avenue for them to participate by implementing a policy allowing NWT residents to indicate their willingness to participate in the organ donation program by signing their drivers' licences or health care cards to indicate that they do wish their organs to be used. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Highway Taxation Limitations

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in light of Minister Steen's statement today, I would like to say something about the highway toll legislation that we have been reviewing for the last number of months.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am alarmed by the red herring included in the Minister's statement, which says that if we do not agree with another tax initiative that we may have to contemplate cuts in programs and services in health and education. I do not believe that is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I think the government has to be made fully aware that there is absolutely no tax base in a jurisdiction with a population of 40,000 people. We simply cannot draw blood from stone.

Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees that the cost of living is already too high. The cost of fuel has created a great hardship not only for the residents of Yellowknife but for residents all over the Territories. Any kind of taxation on the road will result in increased costs for gas for the trucks or vehicles and increased costs of building homes. I have already received complaints from constituents who are saying that the rent is going up. Airfares have already gone up and there is no guarantee that groceries and all essential items will not go up as well. I think simply that the message we have been hearing is we just cannot take it any more.

Mr. Speaker, the government has been saying that the tax credit will address this. In my opinion, no tax credit could make up for the cost of living that would be incurred by any kind of taxation. Any tax credit that the government would introduce

would only make up for the loss from a number of years that we have gone without a cost of living credit, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government should also realize that any increase in cost as a result of a highway toll would make the government the biggest loser. Just this year, just in this supplementary appropriation in this session, the government is asking for \$2.7 million extra dollars to make up for the cost of fuel. This is not including some \$30 million that the government is already paying for the fuel.

Mr. Speaker, any kind of highway taxation will send the wrong message to the resource industry, which is already paying upwards of \$6 million...

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, your time has expired.

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

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, any sort of taxation that would increase the cost of living will send a terrible message to small businesses. Their cost of inventory will go up and they would have a more difficult time attracting people who are already facing a shortage of housing and the high cost of living, and discouraged from moving.

Mr. Speaker, highway taxation will have a terrible impact on back hauls of crushed cars or recycled items, or those who are manufacturing and exporting. Mr. Speaker, there is also clearly an uncertainty about the clawback implications of any taxation given that the federal government takes 80 percent of any tax revenue.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative is also administratively very cumbersome. We do not have weigh scales and it would require that we build weigh scales. That would cost millions and more money for manning them.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this government has had it good for the last two years. We know that it has had upwards of \$150 million extra and it is time for them to buckle up, clean their house up before they hold their hands out to the people and keep saying that if you want tourism, you have to pay for it through a tax, or if you want the road, then you have to pay through a highway tax.

It is time to stop that, Mr. Speaker. If the government is having a hard time, people are having a hard time and we need to look within first before we go out and ask people to buckle up some more. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Clawback of the Federal Child Benefit Supplement

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in this session, I asked Members to support and circulate in their constituencies a petition on behalf of children living in poverty. This petition was sponsored by the Yellowknife Women's Centre, the Status of Women Council of the NWT and a constituent of Great Slave, Ann Marie Giroux, an advocate on behalf of children living in poverty.

Mr. Speaker, children live in poverty across Canada and in the NWT. Some schools, a very few, are fortunate to have community programs such as the Rotary Club's Kids Ahead that help out in this area. I know that many schools and teachers are expressing growing concerns that when children come to school, they do not have very much in their lunch bag because parents do not have enough to afford food. We hear the plight of our local food bank here in Yellowknife and organizations like the Salvation Army and the Yellowknife Women's Centre are working harder and harder to meet the needs of some residents.

There is particular concern among low-income families on income support about the clawback by this government of the National Child Benefit Supplement.

Mr. Speaker, the National Council on Welfare has expressed its deep concern about this clawback on many occasions. The council states: "Any program that is intended to support poor families but bypasses the poorest has missed the boat." Mr. Speaker, is our government missing the boat on this one?

Under federal-territorial arrangements, the GNWT claws back the National Child Benefit Supplement from income support assessments. The government then uses the clawback for a variety of programs for low-income families, including the NWT Child Benefit, the Working Supplement, and the Healthy Children's Initiative.

According to the National Council of Welfare, other jurisdictions, Newfoundland and New Brunswick, have chosen not to claw this back while still providing other programs for low-income families. This means, Mr. Speaker, more money in the pockets of the poorest families.

Mr. Speaker, as inadvertent as it may be, this government perpetuates children living in poverty in the NWT through its clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement.

I would urge Members and residents across the NWT to seek out this petition, Mr. Speaker, sign it and get it in before the deadline of November 19th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Deh Cho First Nations Leadership Meeting

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. (translation not provided)

Mr. Speaker, I would like unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi. (translation not provided)

Mahsi. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Member's Statement on Acknowledgement of Canadian Rangers and Junior Rangers

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the approach of November 11th, I would like to invite this House to join me in giving recognition to the Canadian Rangers and junior ranger groups serving in the communities of Nunakput.

Mr. Speaker, these volunteers are always the first to be called out at times of on-the-land emergencies, such as search and rescue events. The rangers are also expected to act as guides when the armed forces hold training exercises in the Nunakput area. A periodic inspection of DEW Line sites is also one of the duties performed by these all-weather rangers.

Mr. Speaker, on November 11th, I invite the Members to give recognition to these hardy, local servicemen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Question 166-14(4): Closure of Territorial Treatment Centre

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by Mr. Bell on October 30, 2001, regarding the rationale for the closure of the youth addictions program.

A review of this program undertaken in October 1998 recommended its closure. Serious issues pertaining to client safety and the program's success rates were raised during the review. During the year prior to the closure, the program was also experiencing very low occupancy rates, approximately 56 percent.

Beginning in January 1999, the department, in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, embarked on an alternative programming initiative. The intention was to work with Northern Addictions Services (NAS) to develop alternative programming to address the underlying issues of addictions for both adults and youth. In March 1999, NAS advised the department in writing that they were no longer interested in participating in

this process of change. They indicated that the NAS board had a different vision and would pursue options with Justice Canada. All contractual arrangements between NAS and the department were terminated effective June 30, 1999. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledah, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 181-14(4): Proposal to Amend Liquor Regulations

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by Ms. Lee on October 31, 2001, regarding jurisdiction over licensed premises. In particular, whether the City of Yellowknife or the Liquor Licensing Board had jurisdiction with respect to closing times in relation to the unruliness on Yellowknife streets that oftentimes happens after bar closing.

Mr. Speaker, the current liquor regulations require that all licensed establishments stop serving liquor at 2:00 a.m. and patrons have 15 minutes after that to leave the premises.

Mr. Speaker, matters relating to licensed premises fall under the jurisdiction of the NWT Liquor Licensing Board. Municipalities do not have jurisdiction to regulate licensed premises. While the board does regulate closing times, it does not have jurisdiction outside licensed premises. Once the bars are closed, the responsibility for maintaining order on the streets falls to the RCMP.

The Liquor Licensing Board is concerned with problems relating to bar closing and I understand that they are reviewing options which may include changes to the liquor regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 185-14(4): Security at NWT Airports

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake on November 1, 2001. Mr. Floyd Roland wanted to know if the security screening done at the Yellowknife airport is performed at the discretion of the airlines.

Under the authority of the Canadian Aviation Security Regulations, Transport Canada designates the security classifications and requirements for Canadian airports. In determining its security designations, Transport Canada completes a risk assessment for each airport according to a number of criteria, such as the type and volume of air traffic moving through the airport and the routes the airport serves. In the end, the specific reason Transport Canada has for assigning a security classification to a given airport is confidential.

The Yellowknife airport has a tighter class II security classification than Inuvik or Norman Wells. The regulations require that on flights departing the Yellowknife airport for other class I or II airports, the air carrier must conduct security screenings of the passengers and their luggage. The air carriers can exercise discretion as to how they decide to satisfy

the security regulations. In the case the Member referred to in his question, the air carriers could screen the passengers and luggage prior to their departure from Inuvik or Norman Wells and thus avoid the security screening in Yellowknife before proceeding onwards to a class I or II airport.

In this case, however, the air carriers have decided not to do the security screening in Inuvik and Norman Wells. This means that onward bound passengers from Inuvik and Norman Wells must go through the security screening in Yellowknife before continuing their flight. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

Colleagues, would you join with me in recognizing in the gallery, Mr. Robert Langdon, Knight of the Order of St. John and Chancellor of the Canadian Priory of St. John Ambulance, and his wife, Betty Langdon.

-- Applause

Mr. Langdon is here to assist the Vice Prior Glenna Hansen with the 2001 Investiture, which will be held tomorrow in the Great Hall at 11:45 a.m. This will honour 12 Northerners and promote Commissioner Hansen to the rank of Dame of Grace; the first aboriginal Canadian to be knighted.

-- Applause

The order believes that tomorrow's investiture will be the first in some 900 years to be held outside of a church or regal residence. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome someone accompanying them, David Connelly, the president of St. John Council for the Northwest Territories and for Nunavut. Welcome to our Assembly.

-- Applause

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize two members of Canada's Olympic badminton team who have been invited to the Northwest Territories at the invitation of the Northwest Territories Badminton Association, Mr. Bryan Moody of Quebec and Mr. Brent Olynyk of British Columbia. They will be visiting schools and giving clinics and presentations, Mr. Speaker. They will also be giving a short exhibition of high level badminton on Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. at Sir John Franklin gym. They are seated in the gallery with Laurell and Ron Graf. Please help me welcome them to the gallery.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Eddy Dillon of Tuktoyaktuk. Mr. Dillon is the former mayor of Tuktoyaktuk and has been active on many Inuvialuit boards as well as on the Northwest Territories Water Board.

-- Applause

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the past two weeks, we have had the able assistance of two fine groups of young people in this House, our pages. One group, those here today, are students at William MacDonald School, which is a school in my constituency. I would like to recognize the pages. With us today we have Abby Alty, Amanda Baton, Sandra Bokovay, Jill Campbell, Alexandra Cracknell, Jessica Fournier, Kesley MacDougall, Alexandra Malakoe, Michael Shayhi, and up in the gallery is Josh Parent. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a Hay Riverite up in the gallery, Mike Mahar. Mike is a town councillor in Hay River. Welcome to the Assembly.

-- Applause

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well would like to take this time to recognize Ms. Frieda Martselos, a local successful businesswoman from Fort Smith, a constituent and a friend, now in the Business Credit Corporation. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs responsible for sport, recreation and youth, and as a '72 Olympian, I would like to recognize Mr. Bryan Moody of Quebec and Mr. Brent Olynyk of British Columbia. Welcome.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize all of the members of the board of directors for the Business Credit Corporation who are with us today, and two staff members. The people are Kim Staples, the chair; Darrell Beaulieu, vice-chair; Frieda Martselos, a member and director; Eddie Dillon, director; Michael Maher, a director; and two staff people, Tracey-Lynn Lower and Ian Collins with the BCC. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a visitor in the gallery today who is actually a constituent of Mr. Delorey, but it is my daughter, Gillian. She is here on official business. I want to assure her teachers of that. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mrs. Whitford, Mrs. Speaker, on a rare visit -- shows you the Speaker does not play favourites. Any further recognition of visitors in the gallery? I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone here and I thank you for coming to see your Legislative Assembly.

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 224-14(4): Costs of Community Harvests

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the Honourable Joe Handley. In the communities in my riding, some bands had to go into a deficit so they could harvest caribou for the communities. I would like to ask if the Minister for the department can make up some of the deficits that they had accumulated last year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 224-14(4): Costs of Community Harvests

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recognize the importance of caribou to many people. In the past, we have considered applications by communities who have to travel unusually long distances to harvest traditional food. I do not know which community Mr. Lafferty is referring to but certainly if they request it, we will have a look at it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 224-14(4): Costs of Community Harvests

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Due to the unknown migration patterns of the caribou herds, the communities cannot tell how much of their fund they can or will use year to year. The department is funding them annually at the same amount at all times. I would like to ask the Minister if he will look at past expenditures on the way they will fund them in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 224-14(4): Costs of Community Harvests

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly we will look at past expenditures, look at whether or not what we are doing is fair to all of the harvesters. We recognize that the money we provide is meant as an incentive, as a contribution. It is not meant to cover all costs every year. There are some differences sometimes. Mr. Speaker, we will take a look at past expenditures. Thank you.

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

Question 225-14(4): Redesign of the Highway Investment Strategy

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We heard earlier today the government's intention not to proceed with the highway toll bills, but of equal significance to me was the commitment to go back out into the community, to industry, to look for ways to bring back more acceptable ways of investing in our highway infrastructure and for paying for it. I think this is a very positive signal and I look forward to that work.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Transportation is what plans does he have for including and bringing in communities, individuals and industry experts to help redesign the Highway Investment Strategy? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 225-14(4): Redesign of the Highway Investment Strategy

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department is considering different options as to how we could approach this particular issue and how we can include all the stakeholders in a review of what our plans are and how best to approach this important subject and come to some kind of agreement as to what type of legislation we could put in place that people could agree with and live with.

At this present time, we are considering all options, including the use of consultants, if necessary.

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

Supplementary to Question 225-14(4): Redesign of the Highway Investment Strategy

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The overall initiative, as I have said, is a very good one but you know, I think we heard a lot of expertise when we were taking the bill out in committee and in the discourse over the last few weeks. I would again ask, of all the information and the people who are available, when, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister be contacting those people to bring them into the process of redesigning this new plan? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 225-14(4): Redesign of the Highway Investment Strategy

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Considering all we have to do before we come forward with a plan here, including discussing this at Cabinet level, I expect it will be at least two weeks before we come out with any kind of plan.

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

Supplementary to Question 225-14(4): Redesign of the Highway Investment Strategy

MR. BRADEN: You know, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Minister gets it. He still seems to be telling us that the government's approach here is to design a plan and then go out and get people to react to it. I am advocating that the government brings people in to help build the plan. That is how we are going to get buy-in and ownership of the plan and how to make it work.

I would have to ask just how does the Minister expect to come up with a workable plan if he does not include the expertise that we already have out there? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 225-14(4): Redesign of the Highway Investment Strategy

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has a good suggestion and that will be taken into consideration as well. We have had a lot of different suggestions brought forward by trucking firms, chambers of commerce, chamber of mines. We have to review all of these, whether they can be used in the short term or whether they are long-term options. We have had suggestions that the chamber is going to put together a force of people that would go and lobby the federal government. We are giving them the opportunity to do this. The department is open to all suggestions, including the one from the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 225-14(4): Redesign of the Highway Investment Strategy

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the approach, the attitude, the appetite from Members here and from the people in the Northwest Territories is that we want, we need, we will help put the plan together. There is a lot of good will out there to go in this direction. The signal that we really need to receive from the Minister is that people will be welcomed and encouraged to participate in the process. When will the Minister be issuing an invitation to participate in an organized fashion and forum to help build this plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 225-14(4): Redesign of the Highway Investment Strategy

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to emphasize that this is not something the department will be doing on its own. We need the input from Cabinet on this as to what the consultation package is going to be, what process we are going to take in order to have input into this plan and how we are going to do the approach.

Like I said, I do not expect that this thing is going to be done overnight. There is no doubt that it is going to take a lot of thought on the part of the department as to how we can have an effective plan, whereby people take ownership of this thing, whatever the proposal comes out to be. However, the initial proposal that we are suggesting at this time is going to be the same proposal with amendments, as we have identified. Thank you.

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

Question 226-14(4): GNWT Contracting Policies

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier regarding Cabinet decisions allowing for negotiated contracts. Mr. Speaker, the process is decided by Cabinet to allow for the contract to be either negotiated or sole-sourced. In most cases, what we have seen is that there seems to be a trend in this government where a lot of these contracts that either have gone to Cabinet to be approved for negotiated contract, got the approval from Cabinet. Then, at the end of it all, some department, Public Works and other departments, may dispute the amount set in the contract. Then they go out to a public tender. Then what we see is they come back to this government to get more money to complete the contract because it exceeds their mandate.

I would like to ask the Premier, what is his government doing to ensure there is monitoring of how these contracts are dealt with if they do not meet the criteria of a negotiated contract, go to public tender, then to come back way over the margins that are set through the planning process?

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

Return to Question 226-14(4): GNWT Contracting Policies

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 227-14(4): Oil and Gas Training in the South Mackenzie

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Over the last while, I have raised questions regarding oil and gas training many times. Today, I want to point out that RWED has released information on the NWT oil and gas activity update, dated September 14th, that provides statistics produced

indicating that there are more drilling rigs being planned for the southern Mackenzie than the Beaufort-Delta.

I want to ask the Minister why there is no drill rig training currently being conducted in the southern Mackenzie, similar to what is being done in the Beaufort-Delta?

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

Return to Question 227-14(4): Oil and Gas Training in the South Mackenzie

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the process that was used for the drill rig training that took place in Inuvik was a partnership process whereby Akita Drilling provided the drill rig, and other funding was made available by the federal government and various departments. The Governments of the Yukon and Nunavut also participated in order to train their employees. It was a conglomeration of a number of funding sources to put in a rig to provide rig training and then service rig training. That was one of the impetuses in the Inuvik region for having a drill rig placed there.

We would certainly be supportive of any such move in the Deh Cho if there is a desire to have a drill rig placed in that community to do drill rig training, but partners would have to be brought in. It is an extremely expensive process, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 227-14(4): Oil and Gas Training in the South Mackenzie

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell us what types of initiatives he has planned to encourage drilling rigs to come in and put on training programs prior to lands being opened up for exploration? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 227-14(4): Oil and Gas Training in the South Mackenzie

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have two programs that are directly involved in the oil and gas training. One is access training, entry level type of training. We provide about \$500,000 in that area and \$600,000 for advanced training. It is in the advanced training area that we can provide funding for that. We would be extremely interested in ensuring that the program we held in Inuvik, if it could be continued in other regions or in Inuvik, or wherever possible.

Last year, we had an indication that there may be interest in the Sahtu. We have to ensure that if we are going to provide training in a particular area, Mr. Speaker, that we have adequate numbers as well. Last year, we had approximately 120 required applications in order to, at the end of the day, graduate about 60.

Just to get back to the Member's question, we would be extremely interested in pursuing it. I am meeting with some oil and gas people in Calgary in about two weeks time. I can discuss it with the various interest groups, the people that may be drilling in that area. It is not an issue that can be solved overnight because of the cost of doing this and because of the commitment that has to be made on the part of the drilling company.

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

Supplementary to Question 227-14(4): Oil and Gas Training in the South Mackenzie

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, RWED's information tells us that there are plans for 13 wells, in addition to seismic programs, for the Deh Cho. I do not see any programs being developed by the Minister of MACA. I would like to ask when this Minister plans to have something that we can see concrete in our communities in the Deh Cho.

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

Further Return to Question 227-14(4): Oil and Gas Training in the South Mackenzie

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated, we are extremely interested in pursuing this but it does require partnerships. We will require the effort of everyone concerned in this in order to bring about the possibility of a program in the Deh Cho. Thank you.

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

Question 228-14(4): Organ Donor Identification

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation. Will the Minister of Transportation make whatever changes are necessary to allow NWT residents to indicate on their drivers' licences that they want some, or any, of their organs used for transplant in the event of their death?

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

Return to Question 228-14(4): Organ Donor Identification

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a new suggestion that I have not heard before but I most certainly will take it into consideration. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 228-14(4): Organ Donor Identification

MR. DENT: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate hearing the Minister confirm that he will look at this issue. Will he agree that he will examine the issue and report back to this House no later than our next sitting in February?

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

Further Return to Question 228-14(4): Organ Donor Identification

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can commit to that. Thank you.

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

Question 229-14(4): Family Support Centre Funding

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I alluded to earlier in my Member's statement, the Family Support Centre in Hay River struggles to make ends meet on a daily basis. They operate on a shoestring budget for the programs and services they provide. Family Support Centre staff continually hold fundraisers on their own time in order to provide adequate programming for their clients. I think it is unfortunate that due to our government's apparent inability to adequately fund the Family Support Centre, the staff are forced to hold bake sales and such to properly provide for their clients. Would the Minister of Health and Social Services please state whether he would be willing to have his officials review the annual budget of the Family Support Centre and determine whether they are adequately funded? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 229-14(4): Family Support Centre Funding

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I am prepared to have the departmental officials review the budget to make sure they are adequately funded. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 229-14(4): Family Support Centre Funding

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Family Support Centre operates a 12-bed facility in Hay River with a wide variety of programs for clients and their children. They also fund the second stage house for women and their families to continue their healing after they have left the Family Support Centre. This is all accomplished within a yearly budget of \$280,000. Conversely, the Alison McAteer House in Yellowknife is a 12-bed facility as well but they receive \$400,000 in funding. The Fort Smith shelter receives approximately \$270,000 for a six-bed facility. This hardly seems equitable. Can the Minister explain to this House how this funding is arrived at? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 229-14(4): Family Support Centre Funding

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the funding is based on historical funding patterns. The Member for Hay River North raises an issue and along with looking at the budget to see whether there is adequacy, another question that I will be asking is why funding levels are the way they are. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 229-14(4): Family Support Centre Funding

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Family Support Centre in Hay River and other shelters throughout the North previously worked closely with two violence prevention consultants that were employees of the Department of Health and Social Services. I say previously because as far as I am aware, these positions have not been staffed since July. Can the Minister please indicate when he anticipates having these positions staffed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 229-14(4): Family Support Centre Funding

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is a fairly specific question in regard to personnel, so I will have to take that one as notice. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Question 230-14(4): Examination of the Highway Investment Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister of Transportation and it is following up on his statement and my statement and the answers that he provided to my colleague for Great Slave.

Mr. Speaker, I must say a chill went down my spine when I heard the Minister is contemplating hiring a consultant to revisit this issue or make it better on how to -- I do not know what exactly he is going to consult about. Mr. Speaker, the Governance and Economic Development Committee has gone up and down the Valley. We listened to the people. We wrote a report. I know for a fact that his staff went out to the communities before us -- his staff came with us. The conclusion is this is not a workable option. People just cannot take it anymore.

I need to ask the Minister, what is he expecting the consultant to get from studying any further? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 230-14(4): Examination of the Highway Investment Strategy

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there were a number of different messages that came forward from the consultation work by the committee and by the department. The department is reviewing all of these suggestions.

There is no doubt that there are many people, as the Member suggested, who just do not feel this is a viable option. However, there were some suggestions that something has to be done now, regardless of whether this is a popular option or not. Hopefully, some other form of funding can be identified in order to pay for the cost of reconstructing our highways and bringing them up to standard.

There were suggestions put forward, Mr. Speaker, that possibly, provided we switch from an axle configuration to a full weight option, that the truckers may be more satisfied with this method of regulating and charging for the use of the highway.

There was also a suggestion that there should be a sunset clause. Those are two prime options that we thought we could do something with in the short term. There are many long-term suggestions, Mr. Speaker, including going to the federal government, including the option of resource revenue sharing but unfortunately, the department does not see those as short-term options, but rather as long-term solutions.

Eventually, these may come into play but meanwhile, we have to deal with highways as they are. That is where the department has a problem and a dilemma as to how exactly to proceed with this. The plan was not to apply a tax. What we are suggesting is not a tax and we would not be considering it as a tax. We would be applying a system that did not affect the general public as they use the highway themselves but rather as heavy truck traffic was using the highway. In other words, people with light vehicles would not be paying a fee. That was the plan. It still is the plan.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member suggested, there are many people who do not feel there is any way we can proceed with this plan. The department feels we do not have much of an alternative and we are putting it to the people again with the suggested amendments to see what we come up with by February. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 230-14(4): Examination of the Highway Investment Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to be rude and I want to make it clear that I support any way to find money to improve our roads but, Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have heard anything from what the Minister has said that would require a consultant.

Mr. Speaker, I could tell him that changing this thing to a weight configuration will not help the situation. From what I understand, the department will have to build weigh scales all over the North at a cost of \$1 million to facilitate this. He does not need a consultant to tell him that the sunset clause may be a viable option but that is only if people could accept the option.

He does not need a consultant to tell him this road needs work. Mr. Speaker, I do not understand why he needs a consultant.

Perhaps what he should do is talk to the Finance Minister and Cabinet about prioritizing. Would the Minister not agree with that, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Before I go to the Minister, perhaps the question period can go back to question period, a little bit less of the statements there. The questions are too long, the answers are too long. We have a full list today. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 230-14(4): Examination of the Highway Investment Strategy

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am trying to keep my answers short. First of all, this is not a Department of Transportation initiative alone. This is a Cabinet, government initiative. The Minister of Finance is involved. The Minister of Finance knows the whole situation and is aware of the amount of money and resources needed to bring the highways up to standard.

I would like to point out one thing, Mr. Speaker. The Member suggested that 43,000 people could not stand a tax of this nature in order to bring the highways up. Nowhere in the proposal is there a suggestion that this is a tax on the people. This is a fee applied to trucks that are using our highways. That is the way we are looking at it. We are not trying to tax 43,000 people. We are trying to make this apply to the resource sector because they are not paying taxes in the Northwest Territories, as we see it. This is a way of trying to collect from them. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 230-14(4): Examination of the Highway Investment Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I take your warning and I will try to keep my question as short as his answer over there. Mr. Speaker, from where I sit, and I give this advice without charging him a consultant fee, what I see is that the Department of Transportation has been very badly served by the budget process. It has not kept up to their capital budget at 1991 levels. It has gone through so many cuts it just cannot do it anymore.

I think the Minister has a very good argument to make to the Cabinet and say if we say this road is in unsafe conditions, it is hazardous, it cannot go on anymore, Cabinet has to make the decision. Would he not agree with that, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return to Question 230-14(4): Examination of the Highway Investment Strategy

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the suggestion of no need for consultants, well, the department will take that as a cost-saver. That is fine but I have another Member on the other side of the table here who is suggesting

we do something like that. We have to take everything into consideration here and try to keep everybody happy.

As far as whether or not this proposed plan is going to result in more revenue, more capital for the department, as the Member has suggested, it is a recognized fact that capital for the department has been reduced almost on a yearly basis. This is true. We are just not keeping up with the impacts on our highways.

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

Supplementary to Question 230-14(4): Examination of the Highway Investment Strategy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give notice to the Minister that if he brings this bill back again, he should go on the public hearing process because I do not want to go back again with a third bill and get beaten up by the people who do not want to see a cost of living increase.

Mr. Speaker, the answer is very clear from the people. You cannot get blood out of stone. Would the Minister please make a commitment to talk to the Cabinet to see if they are being true...

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

Further Return to Question 230-14(4): Examination of the Highway Investment Strategy

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I will answer the question there, can I get blood out of a stone? I am sure going to try.

-- Applause

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

Question 231-14(4): Status of Forest Resources Inventory

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I am not looking for blood today, just three answers.

-- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley. Mr. Speaker, the department is doing an inventory that is called a forest inventory in the NWT. This is conducted to determine forest conditions, structure, and health, and to quantify the forest resources. Inventories assist forest managers and forest users in a long-term, sustainable management and planning of the forest resources. Can the Minister give us an update on that work that has been done to date? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 231-14(4): Status of Forest Resources Inventory

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, as the Member has indicated, doing a forest inventory is to undertake a very thorough and comprehensive review of all aspects of a forest. That includes the age, the health, the different types of trees, the amount of commercial timber, the amount of habitat per wildlife, looking at all of the aspects of it and providing a picture that is useful not only from a commercial perspective but also from people who are dealing with subsistence.

We do forest inventory on an ongoing basis in various regions of the Territories so it is an ongoing process that is at different stages in different regions.

In the South Slave, the Member's area, we are looking at a four or five-year process. We are basically at year one right now. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 231-14(4): Status of Forest Resources Inventory

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of the inventory done on forestry, I imagine they are using satellite imagery and so on to get a complete picture of vegetation, soil, et cetera, that could be used for wildlife management as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 231-14(4): Status of Forest Resources Inventory

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, that is correct. We do rely quite heavily on satellite imagery to complete a forest inventory. It will indicate the type of trees, vegetation and growth that are suitable for various species of wildlife. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 231-14(4): Status of Forest Resources Inventory

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as part of the inventory, I believe the department is also doing a timber supply analysis, which combines forest growth information, current inventory information and land resource management objectives. One of the objectives is, as I understand it, to develop recommendations for an annual harvest level sustainable on a long-term basis, and others to identify exclusions of areas from forest harvesting to maintain other uses. Can the Minister tell me if the timber supply analysis for the North Slave and South Slave river areas have been completed? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 231-14(4): Status of Forest Resources Inventory

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. The timber supply analysis is more focused on what would be allowable as a commercial harvest in an area. It could be for wood lots. It could be for timber for producing lumber. The timber supply analysis in the South Slave and the Slave River areas, as I understood the Member asking, is not complete. It is underway by the department. The department is using that information to determine what we call an annual allowable cut, or annual allowable harvest. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 231-14(4): Status of Forest Resources Inventory

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In determining the annual allowable cut, I also understand that it is also...(inaudible)...to go to the communities to see if there is support for any kind of development in the forestry area in the immediate community area. My understanding is that the timber supply analysis will not be completed until 2003 for the South Slave, the North Slave River area. Although that is still in progress, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act has pretty much cleared Mr. Patterson to develop areas in the South Slave River area and the North Slave River area for cutting. Does the department routinely grant permits, which they have not yet, to companies in areas for development where there is still an ongoing study to determine the viability of that area? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 231-14(4): Status of Forest Resources Inventory

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, we will not give an annual cutting license or a longer-term permit for anyone unless we are sure that the harvesting being requested is within sustainable levels. We would not give it to anyone until that allowable cut is determined. I believe the Member is right, although I would have to check on the exact guidelines, but I believe that there is a requirement for consultation with communities as part of that process. Thank you.

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

Question 232-14(4): Protecting the Safety of Highway Users

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Transportation. I was interested to hear his statement today when he said that in pulling these bills that are before us, the delay here will mean that much-needed improvements and interim steps may have to be taken to protect our investment of over a billion dollars in the NWT highway system. Would he not also indicate that steps may

need to be taken to protect the safety of our residents? Thank you.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. I missed the last part of that question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr. Bell, for the convenience of the Minister, would you please repeat the last part of the question?

MR. BELL: Thank you. The Minister suggested that interim steps may need to be taken to protect our investment of over one billion dollars in the NWT highway system. Would he not admit that interim steps might also be necessary to protect the safety of our residents?

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

Return to Question 232-14(4): Protecting the Safety of Highway Users

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that goes without saying. That is part of the whole idea. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 232-14(4): Protecting the Safety of Highway Users

MR. BELL: Thank you. Just for clarification, interim steps as he has detailed, such as reductions in speed limits, might be necessary to protect our investment and they might be necessary to protect the safety of our residents. Is that the case? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 232-14(4): Protecting the Safety of Highway Users

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is correct. It applies to both.

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

Supplementary to Question 232-14(4): Protecting the Safety of Highway Users

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate last year, when there were reductions in speed limits on Highway No. 3, if this in fact was not taken to ensure the safety of our residents was protected? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 232-14(4): Protecting the Safety of Highway Users

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I recall correctly, that was the main issue at that particular time,

the safety situation on Highway No. 3. That is why we reduced the speed limits.

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

Supplementary to Question 232-14(4): Protecting the Safety of Highway Users

MR. BELL: Thank you. I would just like the Minister to indicate that in fact, the condition of the road had deteriorated to such a point that it was necessary to reduce the speed limit in order to protect the safety of our residents. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 232-14(4): Protecting the Safety of Highway Users

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the condition of the highway surface has a major impact on safety and on driving conditions. There is no doubt that when we reduced the speed limit, it was to reflect the conditions of the highway. It was also to reflect the type of traffic on the highway at that time. Thank you.

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

Question 233-14(4): GNWT Contract Budgeting Process

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It is in regard to the department's responsibility to ensure the accountability of expenditures by this government. Mr. Speaker, as we know, there has been a lot of increases, especially with the way the contractual processes have gone. In my case, there have been capital projects cancelled because of cost overruns on bridges and what not.

I would like to ask the Minister, is there a process within your department or within this government that looks at projects specifically to ensure that the engineering costs are within reason? Realizing the environment we are in today, a changing environment, so when those contracts go, they come in on budget. They do not come in under budget where we are having to come back for dollars or canceling projects in Members' ridings.

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

Return to Question 233-14(4): GNWT Contract Budgeting Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, there are a number of processes in place to ensure that we are getting the best value for our dollar on contracts. As much as possible, through the Department of Public Works and Services, who have the expertise on assessing values and the engineering aspects of capital projects, we attempt to ensure that our projects come in within the estimates provided and on a timely target.

We cannot always control all of the circumstances though. There are always some projects that come in higher, some that may come in lower. I think we have a system that ensures, at least from an engineering and contracting perspective, that we are being as diligent as possible.

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

Supplementary to Question 233-14(4): GNWT Contract Budgeting Process

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, exactly what is the reporting process to ensure you are doing what you say you are? Do we have a reporting process in which you file a report somewhere in this government, so we can see exactly how you are monitoring these activities to ensure the expenditures are justified and we are not wasting public funds by going through a public tendering process and then having to come back later and put more money into these different projects?

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

Further Return to Question 233-14(4): GNWT Contract Budgeting Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe we have any one document that would detail all of the projects, showing exactly where they were over and under, but we do regular reports back. We have a system of audits. We would provide detail to anyone who may be concerned about a particular project on exactly what that project cost, where the money was spent and how it was spent. I think we have the capacity to do that. We do not do it and report it for every project we do in the government, I do not believe. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 233-14(4): GNWT Contract Budgeting Process

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my concern here is what I am starting to see is there seems to be a trend that regardless of how low you bid on a contract, you get the contract, you know that does not matter if you go over that contract. The government will come forward with more money to extend that contract and also generate more revenues for the person who bid the lowest, yet the second bidder could have bid that same price and did not get the contract.

I would like to know, do you look at the possibility of a trend where people may be underbidding, knowing that if they get the work, this government is going to come back with increased dollars to extend that contract and generate more revenues for a contractor?

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

Further Return to Question 233-14(4): GNWT Contract Budgeting Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we certainly want to ensure that companies do not do that. That is underbid in order to get a contract and then come back to us and say now we need a bunch more money. If that starts happening, then I am sure the Minister of Public Works and his staff would have serious concerns about that particular contractor and whether or not we would want to continue doing the project with them. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 233-14(4): GNWT Contract Budgeting Process

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister commit to do some sort of an audit or review of the contracting practices of the government and the departments to ensure that practice is not being conducted?

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

Further Return to Question 233-14(4): GNWT Contract Budgeting Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I can commit to taking that up with my colleague, the Minister for Public Works, and we would have to decide if we would want to do it right across government or do it on specific projects. I would like to discuss it with him since this is more related to Public Works' responsibility than Finance. Thank you.

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

Question 234-14(4): Rental Accommodation for Income Support Clients

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for [Education, Culture and Employment](#). Mr. Speaker, I think the Government of the Northwest Territories is overall the largest tenant in the Northwest Territories. We probably account for more leased and rented accommodation and office space than anyone else and this includes indirectly paying rent for income support and long-term disability clients.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, these people are not capable of fending for themselves when issues arise with landlords -- issues such as maintenance, security or heat in the building. I have also dealt with situations, Mr. Speaker, where clients themselves are at fault because they have abused or neglected their own responsibilities.

My question for the Minister is what does the department do to ensure that its clients get fair value for rental accommodation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 234-14(4): Rental Accommodation for Income Support Clients

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government is a provider of housing in some indirect and direct ways. We do this through the income support payments whereby we provide the client with the cost of rent. The responsibility is on the part of the tenant to pay the rent to the landlord in the case of private housing.

In that case, there is a responsibility, in other words, between both. Both the landlord and the tenant to assume responsibility for such issues as maintenance and upkeep of the unit.

We do not enter into that directly with private landlords, Mr. Speaker, because our payment is to the client rather than to the landlord itself. There may be cases, which would be small numbers, where there has been a choice made to have us pay the landlords directly, but I believe those are small numbers. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 234-14(4): Rental Accommodation for Income Support Clients

MR. BRADEN: Thank you for the explanation. I guess the issue that I wanted to explore, Mr. Speaker, is where there are difficulties and for some tenants who just do not have the wherewithal to be able to approach landlords and deal in a responsible manner with issues that may arise from the quality of their accommodation.

This is where I was wondering, as part of the front-line service, if you will, to these clients, does the department provide any assistance there? Is there an inspection or a monitoring service that the department provides to clients in relation to the accommodation that we really are paying for? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 234-14(4): Rental Accommodation for Income Support Clients

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The effort has been, and I believe it has been the approach for some years, to provide the responsibility or make the income support client responsible for handling their own affairs. That is partially by choice, of course, by the clients too. So we try to ensure that is carried throughout the system.

I think the Member may have a point there, of what is it we can do on our part to assist clients. Certainly in the case of social housing, we have our department, the Housing Corporation, to turn to. In the case of private housing, I believe what the process is where we could assist and make some suggestions and have a handout sheet that we could provide to income support clients of the process they can follow in the event that they have problems.

For example, if they do have complaints about their tenancy, they need to turn to the rental officer that is available. I think clients need to know that and how to proceed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 234-14(4): Rental Accommodation for Income Support Clients

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the kind of thing that I believe the government could be doing and at very little cost. I think this is something that would address what is often a two-way street, where there are issues that a landlord has and has difficulty addressing. I would like to ask if the Minister could commit to putting together an information program with the input of both landlords and tenants to help avoid or reduce the kind of problems that may come up. Is a program like this doable? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 234-14(4): Rental Accommodation for Income Support Clients

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware, of course, of the pervasiveness of problems, whether small or large, but certainly the idea that the Member is presenting is a good one whereby we can put together, on a consultative basis by getting input from landlords and tenants, perhaps a sheet or package of information that we then hand out on a consistent basis to those individuals who do rely on income support and who are perhaps stymied by knowing what process to use in order to resolve their particular problems with tenancy in buildings. Thank you.

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

Question 235-14(4): Organ Donor Identification

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a follow-up to my question to the Minister of Transportation, I would like to ask a question to the Minister of Health and Social Services. As the Minister will likely be aware, not everybody in the Northwest Territories has a driver's licence. So while I welcome the Minister of Transportation agreeing to take a look at including a section on the driver's licence to indicate a person's wish to have their organs used for donation, will the Minister of Health and Social Services similarly take a look at our health care cards and see whether or not we could have a space on that to indicate that our organs should be used for organ donation? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 235-14(4): Organ Donor Identification

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is clearly an important issue and yet I will make that commitment. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 235-14(4): Organ Donor Identification

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will this Minister also commit to making sure that he informs the House as to whether or not this would be possible no later than the beginning of the next session?

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

Further Return to Question 235-14(4): Organ Donor Identification

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. No further supplementary? Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 236-14(4): Community-based Resource Development Funding

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is a follow up to the questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and these questions are directed to the Minister of RWED. As his information provided to us on September 14th indicates that they will be looking at around \$90 million worth of investment in oil and gas exploration, I would like to ask him, and in response to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment's comments about not being able to spearhead training that he ought to wait until oil and gas companies come in and take that initiative on before we start to see training, I am concerned that we are going to see opportunities pass us by. I would like to ask the Minister of RWED if he would commit to making funds available in a timely manner to community-based business organizations that wish to conduct business activities in the resource development sector? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 236-14(4): Community-based Resource Development Funding

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, definitely I am prepared to make money available for any good proposal that we receive from communities. For example, we have done a lot of work with the Hay River Reserve. I think they have some very successful ventures in there. As well, I am prepared to, and I have made the offer to the Grand Chief, to assist in looking at a regional plan. I think we need to look at what the future holds in the long term and how we might take on the opportunities regionally. I am prepared to do it either way, either through communities or regionally. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 236-14(4): Community-based Resource Development Funding

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to have the Minister's response. Mr. Speaker, the winter exploration program is already in the works. I would like to ask the Minister if he would provide special funding for the communities to hire industry-specific specialists that can assist the communities in the areas of confidential diligence reports, business analysis and negotiations assistance? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 236-14(4): Community-based Resource Development Funding

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would certainly look very seriously at any proposals we have from communities or from the region that relate to work that is going on, or is projected to go on in the near future, definitely. Thank you.

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

Question 237-14(4): Approach for Investing in Highways

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my questions that I was posing to the Minister of Transportation. I would like to ask the Minister to change his approach. Rather than trying to convince the people of an option that is totally untenable and to try to get blood out of a stone, would he please go to his Cabinet colleagues and the Premier and revisit this issue. How urgent is this and how willing is this government to spend some money on the road? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 237-14(4): Approach for Investing in Highways

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Member that this is a very important issue with this government. After we announced that we intend to allow the bill to die in this session, this government will meet as Cabinet and review where we go from here as far as funding for our highways is concerned. Thank you.

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

-- Break Due to Technical Difficulties

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. We were still on item 6, oral questions, and we had about a minute and a half left to go. The honourable Member for Range Lake was on to her supplementary. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee, your supplementary.

Supplementary to Question 237-14(4): Approach for Investing in Highways

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe I have established that he really does not need to study this issue anymore. People have spoken. People have said no to the hotel tax, no to the highway tax. Would the Minister tell his Cabinet the only option we have left is for the government to find the money from within?

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

Further Return to Question 237-14(4): Approach for Investing in Highways

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question seems to ask an opinion of me, or of me to express an opinion. As we indicated in my statement today, we do plan to go back to the drawing board, go back to the stakeholders and see whether or not there is the potential out there for this initiative to go forward with some amendments to it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 237-14(4): Approach for Investing in Highways

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not think I am getting through at all, with all the statements I had made, all the questions I had. I do not understand. I have to tell the Minister there is no stakeholder he can pay enough to say this is fixable. Will the Minister not go to Cabinet and say, "Okay, you guys. Enough money to the Executive, enough money to RWED, let's get some money in Transportation." Would he do that, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return to Question 237-14(4): Approach for Investing in Highways

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Among all of the other things, I will take that as well to the Minister of Finance. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period has expired. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 9-14(4): Workers' Compensation Board Fiscal Policies

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I have several written questions for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. I have raised these certainly from my own interests as well as on behalf of a constituent of mine, an injured worker.

1. What kind of severance packages are offered to the executives, management and staff when they leave the Workers' Compensation Board?

2. What is the donation policy of the Workers' Compensation Board?
3. The Workers' Compensation Board in Alberta has recently announced rates that are going to be going up in the neighbourhood of 30 percent for employers. Are rate increases being contemplated for NWT employers?
4. Mr. Speaker, when donations and severance packages are paid out, what is the source of the funding?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 10-14(4) moved into committee of the whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and have Committee Report 10-14(4) moved into committee of the whole for today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Committee Report 10-14(4) is moved into committee of the whole for today. 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 Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 73-14(4): Northwest Territories Emergency Plan

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Emergency Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Tabled Document 74-14(4): Investing in the Future of Northerners, Northwest Territories Development Corporation 2000-2001 Annual Report

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two documents for tabling. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Investing in the Future of Northerners, Northwest Territories Development Corporation 2000-2001 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Tabled Document 75-14(4): Interim Manufacturing Directive

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Interim Manufacturing Directive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Tabled Document 76-14(4): Evolving Education for an Evolving North: Aurora College Annual Report, 2000-2001

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Evolving Education for an Evolving North: Aurora College Annual Report, 2000-2001. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

Tabled Document 77-14(4): Letters of Support for the Premier and Staff

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table three documents. Letters of support for the Premier and staff.

Tabled Document 78-14(4): Comments by Sheila MacPherson, Solicitor for Premier Kakfwi, Regarding the Report of the Special Committee on Conflict Process

I also wish to table comments from my legal counsel during the consideration of the report of the Special Committee on Conflict Process, Shelia MacPherson.

Tabled Document 79-14(4): Northwest Territories Power Corporation Annual Report 2000-2001

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Power Corporation Annual Report, 2000-2001. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 16-14(4): Appointment to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and the Board of Management

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, November 8, 2001, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that the Legislative Assembly approves the following appointments:

- To the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, the Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen; and,
- To the Board of Management, the Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen, as a full member and the Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes, as an alternate member.

At the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Motion 17-14(4): Setting of Sitting Hours by the Speaker

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, November 8, 2001, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours that the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to proceed with his motion, the appointment to standing committees and Board of Management. Are there any nays? There are no nays, you may proceed, Mr. Nitah.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS**Motion 16-14(4): Appointment to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight and the Board of Management (Carried)**

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

WHEREAS the rules of the Legislative Assembly require that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight have 11 Members appointed to it;

AND WHEREAS the Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod, and the Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden, have requested to be reassigned to other standing committees;

AND WHEREAS there is a vacancy on the Board of Management due to the reassignment of the Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley, and the Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine;

AND WHEREAS any vacancies on standing committees and the Board of Management should be filled as soon as practicable;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that the Legislative Assembly approves the following appointments:

- To the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, the Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen; and,
- To the Board of Management, the Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen, as a full member and the Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes, as an alternate member.

Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. 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. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

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

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

Motion 17-14(4): Setting of Sitting Hours by the Speaker (Carried)

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

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours that the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House.

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

By the authority given under Motion 17-14(4), the Speaker is putting committee into committee of the whole until the matters before them are concluded and they are prepared to report: Bill 8, Bill 9, Bill 10, Bill 12, Bill 14, TD 42-14(4), TD 51-14(4), CR 7-14(4) and CR 10-14(4) with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call the committee of the whole to order. We have several items. Bill 8, Bill 9, Bill 10, Bill 12, Bill 14, TD 42-14(4), TD 51-14(4), CR 7-14(4) and CR 10-14(4). What is the wish of the committee?

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend the committee consider, in this order, Bill 14, Tabled Document 42-14(4), Bill 8, Bill 12, Committee Report 714(4) and finally, Committee Report 10-14(4).

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will begin with Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2001-2002 after a short break. We will begin with Mr. Handley.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee of the whole to order. We are dealing with Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2001-2002. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

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

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome, Mr. Voytilla. I believe we are on the Executive, operations expenditures, Financial Management Board Secretariat, directorate, special warrant for \$1 million. Any comments? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe when we had recognized the clock yesterday and interrupted our discussion, the remarks directed at this particular item were quite critical. There are aspects of that I think are warranted. I would like to go on the record, Mr. Chairman, as speaking very strongly in favour of the initiative. I think it is one of those areas, one of those opportunities that comes along in the big picture and in the government's mandate to see when the timing is right, to see when the appetite is there, for a good, strong presentation and an aggressive presentation on a given issue. The potential that we have for hydro development in many sectors of the NWT is, I believe, one of the most promising, one of the most sustaining ventures that we could undertake in this Territory. This is something that I think will have a legacy that can last for decades.

I am speaking in favour and in support of this expenditure, this special warrant. The timing was right. We received some information from Mr. Voytilla yesterday that indicated who was brought into the picture here. With only a couple of exceptions here, who I do not know, I did have the opportunity, the experience and I would say the privilege of working with many of the people who are on this team when I was employed with the Power Corporation in the mid-1990's, Mr. Chairman.

This is a good group of people that was brought in in a hurry, but again, in recognition by the government that the timing and the appetite was right.

Mr. Chairman, there is one aspect which a number of my colleagues reflected on related to this and that is that of sole-sourced contracting without much recognition for what might be here in the NWT. While a number of aspects of this work was, I will certainly agree, quite specialized, I would very much like to leave a comment for the record that even where there are issues that can be deemed to be really exclusive and really specialized, that it is incumbent on government to make some kind of effort to bring in northern people, northern contractors -- perhaps in partnership or as associates -- so that we can transfer that knowledge and that skill and start building our own base of expertise here in the NWT.

This is the main criticism that I have of this particular area but I think in relation to the timing and the opportunity, this particular expenditure does merit support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister, do you want to respond?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Only to say that I hear what the Member and other Members are saying. The message is clear and I appreciate it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Directorate, special warrant, \$1 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have a question to the Minister as to whether or not he is planning any more expenditures in the coming years on NWT hydro initiatives?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, we have included money in the business plan for continuation of this project. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Could he indicate to us as to how much he has allocated for those? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, that is a matter that is before the committee. We have gone through business plans. It is going into our main estimates for next year and it has to be considered, I think, outside of this forum. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under this item, it indicates that out of the million dollars, \$100,000 is allocated for travelling consultation, another \$100,000 for publications and materials, and another \$800,000 for research. Could the Minister indicate whether or not his future spending in this area will be in a similar fashion?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would not be able to say at all that the future spending is going to be broken out exactly this way. I think there has been some advice from Members given to us about how we handle all of the energy initiatives, including hydro. That has to be taken into consideration. We also have to look at where we are at the end of this fiscal year with the results that we have found from the consultations that we have had. No, I would not want to say that it is going to be broken out this way at all. I think it is too early for that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand the Minister is listening to Members on this issue and other spending measures in this supp, and probably coming business plans and so on. I would like to register my grave concern about the way in which this was introduced. I do not believe -- in fact, maybe I should ask the Minister as to why a special warrant was warranted for a million dollars. What was the nature of the urgency with this million dollar spending? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Following the electrical generation study, it was very clear that hydro development figured in as a major piece of our overall fiscal strategy for our government. Before we proceeded very far along that route, we wanted to consult with aboriginal leaders and with aboriginal people. We wanted to have the base work done before we did that so we could give a clear message.

The best opportunity to do it is at the general assemblies. There was a need to move ahead with this during the summer when the assemblies are meeting or else have a prolonged process and delay and probably a much more expensive initial consultation if we did not get to the assemblies. There was a matter of urgency in our view and a need to move ahead with this, given the larger North American energy crisis that this continent is facing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not know. Each answer brings me more questions here. Mr. Chairman, we are aware of the campaign that the government has been involved in with respect to oil and gas initiatives. The GNWT position on that has been in the mass media, probably more than this hydro strategy, but I do not remember seeing a million dollars of special warrant to fund an oil and gas initiative. I wonder why is it that other venues of consultation with aboriginal leaders were not used, such as consultation with the Aboriginal Summit or through the Intergovernmental Forum, or any other means. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with regard to oil and gas, and particularly with gas, we could see that one coming several years ago and it built up gradually. In fact, in my previous life in RWED, I realized what was happening and that was when the Mackenzie Valley development project was undertaken. That goes back to 1998. That one built up more gradually.

In the case of the hydro potential, it came to us very quickly, partly because of the electrical generation study but also because of things that are happening in North America. There was the U.S. Energy Strategy that was coming forward. There was the creation of the Energy Reference Committee by the federal government. There were also discussions by western provinces about a western power grid. All of these things led us to believe that it was important for us to have a good assessment of what our potential was in order that we were able to link in with these other initiatives. It was critical to move ahead with this one, otherwise we might find ourselves knocking at the door after all of the broader strategies have been put in place.

Mr. Chairman, again I come back to the issue that it was urgent to do this and it was urgent to consult with aboriginal people. The window was there and we had to take advantage of it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, I think the question of urgency in this matter that warrants a million dollar quick spending is a matter of opinion. Mr. Chairman, we reviewed yesterday in this House, in this committee, supplementary spending for the

establishment of an Energy Secretariat, where \$100,000 was allocated for consultation, another \$80,000 for consensus building, \$50,000 for research and analysis, and demonstration projects of \$45,000. Now we are looking at another \$100,000 for travel and consultation, another \$100,000 for publications and materials, and \$800,000 for research. I am advised here that the Minister is planning on spending more in this area.

I guess my first question would have to be, does the Minister see any redundancy in the government creating an Energy Secretariat that has a separate task, and then the Minister and the chairman of FMBS flying in charters all over the North, doing a thing that sounds like it should really be done by an Energy Secretariat? Does the Minister see any problems with that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, I do not see any problems with it. While there may be some efficiencies to be gained by doing this through a more coordinated structure, there is no redundancy between the two exercises. This one is looking at hydro potential and assessing the extent to which aboriginal leadership would support the development of that potential. The Energy Secretariat is quite a different task. It is not looking at hydro potential in the sense of it being an opportunity to generate revenue, which is the primary purpose of this one.

The Energy Secretariat is looking more at efficiencies and a more effective way of our government through policy being able to respond to a lot of the energy use issues. A lot of what is driving the Energy Secretariat is more the increasing cost of heating fuel, for example. There was a need for us to look at what is our policy with regard to energy. That is a different task than this one. There is not the level of redundancy that the Member implies. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not claim to be an expert in energy areas, but I do not know if the people out there can tell the difference between what the Energy Secretariat is supposed to do and what the Minister has indicated as to the nuances of differences in these duties.

Mr. Chairman, I want to register very strongly that this is a real problem for me, that we could fork out a million here and a million there. There are millions of dollars being spent on consultation, travel and publications and materials. I guess that is okay if we had plenty of money to spend but we just talked about not having enough money. This would have built one kilometre of road between Rae and Yellowknife.

Mr. Chairman, I want to put the Minister on notice that there will be very little tolerance for this kind of waste of money. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think we need to look at these in the bigger picture and with a bit more vision than looking at each one as a specific initiative. The whole hydro potential initiative is a way of being able to identify potential revenue and that potential revenue, if people agree with the development of the potential, is one way of being able to

resolve the problem that Ms. Lee refers to. That is a very limited amount of revenue. I do not see this as competing for road development. I see this as a way of generating new revenues in the future so we are not caught in this kind of bind. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Following up on this activity and the special warrant for \$1 million for the hydro initiative, I would like to know from the Minister the end result. Will there be a decision made here with this expenditure that again, as a special warrant, has already been expended? Are we going to see something flow out of this before the end of this fiscal year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I do not think, at least I had not contemplated doing a report at the end of the fiscal year, saying here is where everybody is at with this. I see it more as an evolving process, a process that goes through continuous stages of evolution.

I think what we will find is that some regions are going to move ahead very quickly and want to move on and take advantage of their hydro potential. Other regions are going to want to have more time to think about it and to ask more questions.

Mr. Chairman, I had not planned on putting together a report at the end of the year. If Members wanted that, I would be happy to give a status report on where we are at with each of the regions, but that was not part of our planning. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister's response concerns me quite a bit, the simple fact that a special warrant is something that is required urgently. In the Minister's response, he talked about this being an evolving process. Hopefully, he has not based it on Darwin's theory where we are still looking for the missing link.

If we have already expended money based on urgency and there is not even going to be a report at the end of this fiscal year, I need some -- why is this a legitimate expenditure, especially based on urgency? Did this result in a final position or a position being put forward, besides that one of a general nature to say yes, there is some potential here? We can put a cent per kilowatt hours tariff and make millions as a government. That is general and can be formed without having to expend a million dollars, especially in an urgent matter such as this.

So hopefully some justification from the Minister as to why is this a special warrant, especially in light of the fact, Mr. Chairman, that this House has questioned the need for special warrants previously through supplementary appropriations. We seem to be coming up with a trend here.

So some justification as to why this expenditure was required under a special warrant and is in such an urgent nature when we will not even see anything in the Assembly to account for this type of expenditure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I just finished saying that if Members want, I would be happy to do a status report. I do not want to repeat myself too much but this was certainly viewed as urgent last spring. Again, I have to say that we had the electrical generation report. There was an American election. There was going to be an energy strategy for the U.S. to develop. The Energy Reference Committee was established by the federal government. The western provinces were talking about a western power grid. All of these things created a window of opportunity for us so it was necessary to take advantage of that and we did that. We do have a lot of information now that will substantiate our hydro potential.

We have also had extensive consultations at the assembly level with aboriginal leadership. We want to continue carrying on with that one. I think there has been a lot of progress made in taking advantage of the opportunity that existed. I think Canada, including the federal government, realized the potential we have in this area now and we are a player at the table.

In terms of the urgency with aboriginal consultation, there are assemblies held generally once a year. They are held mostly in the summer, anywhere from late June/early July through to the end of August. We wanted to be prepared to be able to take this initiative to the aboriginal assemblies and get their views on it. We have been clear all along that we will not proceed unless they are in full agreement with it happening in their traditional area. We have heard from people. Some want more information.

There was no other way, given the urgency of responding to things that are happening nationally and continentally. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister state if in fact through those consultations with the aboriginal groups through the summer he received a positive response or a firm indication that they are ready to proceed with this initiative up and down the valley? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, some people are certainly ready to carry on. I think the Dogrib people, for example, have created their -- I cannot remember what it is called, a hydro trust, or what the term is -- but they certainly want to move ahead and take advantage of the opportunities in their area.

The leadership in the South Slave area has indicated much interest in the Taltson River system and the potential that is there. There have been positive sounds with regard to the Bear River. There have been mixed feelings on the Mackenzie River.

The feedback we are getting is generally what we expected. Some people want to move ahead quickly, some people are taking a more cautious approach. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For a million dollars, that is a pretty soft answer. Mr. Chairman, again, I go back to the fact that this is a special warrant. Again, some urgency was required, but we talk about an evolving process that sounds

like it belongs in the business plan process, which could be developed in an orchestrated way.

The two systems the Minister spoke about are existing. There are existing hydro facilities there. I would suggest that in fact, there is opportunity to work together with those existing groups because you have existing dams in place. The Taltson already has the capacity over double what it is now producing. To me, that is not a whole new initiative that would require a plan that is just being put together. I would think it would be something where you can work with the regional groups there and come up with a procedure and a way of moving forward.

I think it is important as a government to investigate these things. I am just questioning the fact that this is a special warrant for a million dollars and the Minister states "If this House wants a report, we could put something together." That is not acceptable, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as I said before, we had to respond to what was happening nationally and also right across North America. That urgency was there. There was a need to talk with aboriginal leaders. I do not know what more I could say without repeating myself.

A lot of the money that was spent was spent doing an assessment of the potential. There is a lot of information, very technical information that I would be happy to share with Members, if Members want to read the files and the information that has been collected.

Mr. Chairman, I believe the Premier wanted to add further on this issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the 70's, there was a gas pipeline proposed to go down the Mackenzie Valley. It was based on the perception that the United States needed gas at the time. It was deemed economical to do that.

The difficulty that the producers and the Canadian Government ran into was that the communities and the people here in the Northwest Territories were neither informed nor involved in that decision.

Today, as Mr. Handley has pointed out, we are at a point where the U.S. was in dire need of gas last year. It precipitated discussions between the U.S. President and our Prime Minister on at least two different occasions.

I think it is important for us as a government to respond to that. That was the fundamental need to fast-track the idea of an Energy Secretariat. If we are going to sustain support for a pipeline and oil and gas development in the Delta, in the Liard, then we need people at the community level to be aware of not only the demand globally, continentally in the U.S. and in Canada, but just to know how everything fits together; what the environmental concerns are, what is Canada doing regarding the Kyoto Protocol, what it means to us in terms of revenue, not only for our government but for emerging aboriginal governments as well.

We are proposing a hydro strategy. There are specific hydro projects that are in place there as well.

All to say that all of these things could be good things, but they are not worth anything if we do not take the steps to ensure that our people, at the community level, have the basic information they need to feel comfortable and to feel informed about the decisions they will be compelled to make with us in the next couple of years. It is fast tracking it, we agree.

Maybe, as Ms. Lee says, we are better off to build a kilometre of road. I guess I differ substantially. I think this is an investment we need so that we can protect the public willingness and support to look at pipeline proposals, the continued oil and gas development. This Energy Secretariat is our way of trying to make sure that the information is there at the community level for people. That is really what it is.

I ask Members to see it as an investment. We still have substantial support from our communities for oil and gas development, both in the Liard and the Mackenzie Delta, but Members are also aware that people are concerned. Unless they know what is going on and they have basic information, they are not willing to proceed at any great speed. If there is no move to invest in roads, invest in social initiatives that could negate some of the impact of development, then people are not going to be so willing as they are now.

It is trying to protect the momentum we have. That is really what it is for me. I hope Members can see that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Roland, did you want a chance to reply?

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is interesting. Now we have gone from a hydro unit and a special warrant and the urgency required to some of the social concerns of the Northwest Territories in development. It is hard to argue the fact that the Premier just put forward, to be prepared. No one wants to be unprepared. However, as we heard the Finance Minister state earlier, there probably will not be a decision. If we want a report, there might be a report by the end of the fiscal year. I question the fact that this is a special warrant, that it was spent on an urgent basis.

We are really stretching our parameters here, never mind the fact that the establishment policy of FMBS does not include expenditures of this nature as far as I can see. It is one of maybe you can develop policy, that would be agreed. In fact, this does not even go towards establishing policy, not that I have heard yet. If we are going to establish policy, do we need to spend \$1 million in the system?

Anyway, this money is spent by special warrant, it is of an urgent nature -- where do we draw the line? You probably would have had all the support of Members of this Assembly to go this route if a plan had been laid out. However, to come back later on to say a special warrant for \$1 million, and oh, by the way, we probably could have a report for you by the end of the year -- I mean, does that suffice? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in a lot of ways, we report almost daily when the House is sitting. We report to committees on an ongoing basis. There are many forums by

which we report without putting final reports or annual reports on all the initiatives we undertake.

I do not view this one as any different in that respect. It is something that I am prepared to give the committees, to give individual MLAs, briefings, updates at any time. The question that I answered before was with regard to a report at the end of the year, a formal annual report. I had not contemplated doing that. I will say if the Members want that, we could give an update on it. Having said that, we are prepared to meet with committees any time as we do on all our initiatives. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Next on the list I have Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not going to say too much on this here to hold things up, but I have to say a few things with regard to the amount of money that we are spending, both with the Hydro Secretariat and the Energy Secretariat. For me, I have to go back to representing my constituents and the people who elected me to come here. They are watching how we spend our money.

I agree. I think we have to look at ways of generating revenues for the government, for the people of the Territories and for communities. However, when I look at the amount of money that we are spending in the name of energy and how many different groups are actually spending money under the name of energy, with no exact amount as to how or where it is going, the fundamental question we have is that we do not even know if we are ready for development, if everybody is in agreement and that we are going to get anything at the end of this.

If all we want to do is consult with communities and find out if everyone is in agreement to proceed with hydro development, I do not see where that would take the amount that we are talking about here. Today, when I get a call saying that a licensed play school that has been in operation for a number of years and has been fighting this government for over two years trying to get a little bit of funding so that she can stay open and keep it to service a community, when they are looking after 19 kids and she is finally closing her doors on December 12th because she cannot access any dollars from this government because we do not have money. We do not have any money to address our kids' needs and here we are spending millions on looking at something that might generate revenue for the Territories.

I think that somewhere along the line, we have to be very conscious of providing some services to the needs that we have today. This is going to increase the cost of living. It is cutting back on our services and I really do believe that we have a large number of organizations right now that are going around consulting. We have the Intergovernmental Forum and we have every aboriginal group talking about where they want to go and how they want to develop their territory.

I think there are vehicles in place right now that we can get the answers that we want. I think a lot of the money we are spending would be spent by business, by big business. If we tell them we are ready for business, they will come and they will do a lot of the work that we are saying we are spending money on right now. I do not think we have to spend the money on the business end of it. We are not going to be able to do the business anyway. Every one of those businesses are too big for our government to take on and fund. I think business would look after that expense. All we have to do is tell them we are

ready, get policy in place, legislation, what do we want to make from it, how much do we want for our aboriginal governments, how much do we want for our government. I do not see that costing \$2.6 million or \$3 million.

I do think that our communities are in big need of funds. That \$2.6 million, or \$1 million even, would go a long way to satisfying some of the needs that we have with our kids that we say we want to promote and we want to give our kids a good start in life. When I hear that we have to shut operations down in our communities because we have no money, I have a hard time looking at spending these kinds of funds in just consultation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Again, Mr. Chairman, I want to say that of this money, there is \$800,000 out of the million that was spent on research, so it is not just consultation. There is a lot of research that was done. We could rely on the private sector to just look after us but we really, in our responsibility to the public, have to have a pretty clear idea of what potential is out there and what are the resources that we are managing on behalf of the residents of the Territories.

I do not think it would be responsible just to depend on the private sector to just do it for us without us having any idea what is there. I think there is a need for us to do that research and decide for ourselves to what extent we want to take advantage of the opportunity.

As well, Mr. Chairman, there is always the need to balance the paying for the costs that people are facing and trying to manage businesses or social programs and so on. A balance between that and a balance between putting our money into investing where it is either going to cut our costs or generate new reviews.

This year, this supp, for example, there is \$2.7 million in here because of forced growth on energy costs. That would just continue to grow. I do not think that it will be responsible to not look at ways of cutting that cost through the Energy Secretariat's initiatives or looking at initiatives like the hydro one, where we are saying if we cannot cut the costs down and balance our budgets only that way, we need to look at new revenue opportunities. That is what this hydro potential is basically doing, is saying let us find a way of generating new revenue and also have the opportunity to decrease our dependence on diesel. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are dealing with directorate, special warrant, \$1 million. Next on the list I have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister, he says that the special warrant was needed for the assemblies in the summer. I would like to ask him if the ministerial travel budgets could not accommodate this? I know the Ministers travel to all these assemblies. We have seen them all the time for the consultation. I know in Snare Lake they did a presentation on hydro. Could the ministerial travel budget not cover that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have to have some appropriation to charge it to. So if I am travelling and doing

consultations with communities on hydro, then that really quite rightly has to be charged to the hydro project. It could not be charged to the fur program or to Finance or to somewhere else. Could my ministerial travel have covered it? Theoretically it could have. However, I think this is an appropriate place to charge it since these discussions were about hydro. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. I just noticed that one of the things that was said earlier, the reason that they needed this special warrant was the urgency because of all the assemblies in the summer. I noticed that the special warrant was approved on September 26th. All the assemblies were done by then. Can you tell me why?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, that was the first opportunity there was for approval for this. The expenditures on this began much earlier than that because again, I have to say -- not just because of the assemblies, that is one piece of it -- but the other piece was because of the situation that was happening nationally and internationally. That was all going on and we were spending this money earlier than September 26th for sure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: I know that special warrants are to be used for expenditures in urgency. I would just like to note to the Minister that we did have a special Assembly in July. I am sure they could have made us aware of these expenditures that were coming. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would have to check back but I believe that AOC or one of the committees was briefed on this initiative well before or during the session in July. I do not think this was a big surprise to everybody that we were looking at hydro. I think everybody was very much aware of it much earlier than that. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too have a real concern, especially with the process that was used in this, especially after going through the March budget cycle where we approved a budget knowing that there were expenditures, that there was a session in July.

Especially now, where we see a lot of new initiatives popping up all over the place, which this is one of them. I think that with the concern raised by my other colleagues on this side of the House, it is awfully frustrating when we sit on this side of the House and we ask for resources to assist with our social problems in our communities, such as health problems in regard to the delivery of health care services. Then, all of a sudden, we keep getting the comment "We do not have the resources" or "We have to try to put it into the business planning cycle" or "We have to get it in to the main estimates." However, these types of major projects -- \$1 million

expenditures -- are coming through the House as special warrants.

The concern I have is that we should, realizing now that we are in a financial crunch, we are talking about initiatives and trying to get dollars for training. We are talking about resource development. I think as a government, especially from this department realizing that the financial arguments that you present to us on this side of the House are pretty hard to swallow when you see this type of initiative coming forth in this manner.

So I would like to ask the Minister, why was there not time to either put this into the main estimates and allow it to go through the budget cycle? Why is it that we could not spread this out over a longer period of time? Why was there not time to put this into the budget cycle in regard to business plans and approval of the budget from this House?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, first of all, it did not go into the budget because in order to do that, we would have had to do this in early December 2000. That was before we even had the electrical generation review, before we had a chance to analyze the study, before a lot of things began to happen nationally.

We really became aware of how things were unfolding right across the United States and in Canada with the committees that I mentioned before, national committees and national strategies, probably more into March, April, May, June, in that period is where we were able to build it in.

I appreciate the Member's frustration if we seem to be bringing up these new initiatives. I believe everything, as much as possible, should be dealt into business plans. This one is going to be built into the business plans for consideration for the coming year. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister tell me how much of the \$1 million special warrant has been expended to date?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I believe it is approximately \$700,000.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister give us a breakdown of that \$750,000, in what area? We have a sort of budget cycle here, where we have a \$100,000 for travel, consultation. You have publication and materials, \$800,000 for research. Do you have an idea of the breakdown of that \$750,000 and what is left?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we did go through this breakdown yesterday but if the Members want, we can do it again. I will ask Mr. Voytilla if he would like to give you that breakdown.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The work completed to date includes two economic feasibility studies to determine whether or not we could bring power to market at current rates. That was about \$60,000 to date, although some of the billings on that project are not in yet.

There was work done with the South Slave leadership to try to work out a consensus on how to approach the Taltson development. We have retained Mr. Francois Paulet to assist us in that work with the South Slave leadership. That was about \$23,000. We retained an individual who had a specialization in transmission line issues, Mr. Norm Olsen. That was about \$7,000. A lot of that work tied into the economic feasibility analysis we were doing, as well as the preparation work for the Western Governors' meeting and the Energy Ministers' meeting on the east/west transmission grid.

Mr. Peter Lougheed was retained to give us advice strategically on interprovincial issues, both trade and transmission, as well as industry market potential in western Canada. That was about \$17,000. McLennan Ross, Barristers and Solicitors, were retained to do work with respect to the legislative regulatory and taxation aspects of NWT hydro development. Again, feeding into some of our feasibility work but getting road maps on the jurisdictional issues involved with hydro development, regulatory issues and processes and how to potentially structure the approach to hydro development from a taxation standpoint, including the potential for introducing a levy on hydro generation, which would be the main source of government revenues flowing from hydro development.

In addition, they did some work on how we would move the Taltson project forward, the steps that would be involved and the work plan that would need to be followed to advance that project, should we get agreement with the South Slave leadership to in fact move forward aggressively on Taltson developments. That was about \$140,000.

We retained a communications firm to help us with the public consultation, media information and overall communications advice on how to effectively communicate the issues with respect to hydro development to the public. That was about \$74,000.

We retained -- we did not retain but we participated in an inter-provincial study of transmission grid issues across Canada. That was contributed to by all provinces and territories participating. Our cost on that was \$5,900.

We then have the continuing work of the electrical review team, who worked not only with the hydro project but on dealing with some of the related issues with respect to electrical generation regulation and distribution in the Territories, and following through on their recommendations from last year, as well as following through and doing a lot more research to assist us with assessing hydro potential.

The three consultants that have done that work for us: Mr. Jim Robertson, and we have paid out about \$90,000 to Mr.

Robertson; Dave Morris and Associates, about \$100,000; and Mr. Fred Abbott, about \$40,000.

In addition, we have worked closely with the Power Corporation to draw on whatever information and expertise they had in the field. Mr. Gord Stewart has been a key member of our steering committee. Their local hydro officer, Mr. Grabke, has provided invaluable assistance to us as well. That has been their contribution to the project.

That summarizes the work that has been done and paid for. Many of those are northern contractors. Some are southerners, as has already been discussed. This was largely to build the body of knowledge and information about the aspects of hydro so that we knew whether or not we had something that was viable to market. We started to know what would be involved in marketing it and we were dealing with many of the issues that we felt were relevant to address through our community consultation and our work with aboriginal governments, and seeing if there was an interest in jointly pursuing this activity.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did have a chance to question quite extensively on this special warrant for the hydro initiative yesterday and I do not want the Minister to have to reiterate everything he said and go through this again. I do have one question from his answers here today, in that he indicated some of the urgent nature was due to the summer assemblies and in fact, work had been going on even prior to those summer assemblies and that he could have charged some of this work to ministerial travel but this seemed like the appropriate place to charge it.

It occurs to me that the special warrant was approved by FMBS on September 26th, so all of this money that was being spent up to that point had not been approved by anybody. I do not know the Financial Administration Act inside and out, but it would seem to me that there has to be some stipulation under the FAA if the Minister and the department are going to spend money, that this be approved by FMBS. In fact, this was not and we know it was not until the 26th of September, not much more than a month ago. A lot of this money was being spent without any authorization. Is that the case?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, there was certainly a lot of discussion in Cabinet and FMB on this issue before work was undertaken and as work was undertaken. Maybe I will ask Mr. Voytilla just to explain the special warrant process for the Members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister pointed out, the work plan for the summer project had been discussed at FMB and had been approved in principle. We then undertook to initiate the work and to cost out the work plan in adequate detail for the Financial Management Board. The September 26th date is the date that the special warrant was signed by the Commissioner. That is the date that appears on the document. The date it went to FMB may have been somewhat before that but it was in September that the Financial Management Board gave the final approval to the dollars associated with the work plan, although the work plan

had been approximately quantified for them at the outset of the summer.

With respect to the Financial Administration Act, the authority exists to expend money within the appropriation subject to the purpose of that appropriation. The key consideration for us was to get authority for an additional appropriation prior to us hitting a level of spending that we could not have accommodated should that special warrant not have been approved. We feel that we adhered to that provision of the act.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. I will not be able to recall everything that Mr. Voytilla has said here, but I think he indicated there had been a lot of discussion prior to this point but no approval of the detail, just sort of a blanket, general approval, go out and spend some money and when you figure out the details and add it up after the fact, we will approve it. If this money was being spent before there was any approval of the detail, it is really sort of permission after the fact, or forgiveness after the fact. It does not seem to me, and I do not know how it typically works, that you can just have a lot of discussions, approve things in principle, go out and spend the money and then come back, tally up the costs and say, "There are the details. We approved the details of the spending" and the official approval of FMB then goes ahead. It seems to me that you should have approval of the detail before you spend the money, even if you think you might be able to keep it within the appropriation. What if this had ended up being \$7 million worth of spending? Maybe that is not realistic but I do not know how you could just sort of make a best-guess stab at something, hope it comes in under the amount allocated for the appropriation and spend away, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We did provide a quantified work plan with estimates of what the cost would be in carrying it out. However, those were estimates because until you engage in discussions with the specialists and scope out the project and the work required, it is difficult to be specific with the cost of each aspect of the project. We were working within a tentative budget on the project.

With respect to the specific question on the timing of the special warrant, we had to make sure that our spending for that date was something that we could accommodate should the special warrant not be approved. The timing of the special warrant is very critical to that because the special warrant in this case was signed by the Commissioner on September 26th. The timing of that was important because that was approaching the period of time when we could not have dealt with the expenditures to date without the authority of the special warrant.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Handley indicated that much of the work had taken place prior to the summer assemblies and in fact, quite a bit prior to that. It had been ongoing for some time. I wonder then when the quantified work plan was provided to the FMB with this tentative budget. Was it six, eight, ten months ago, a year ago in order to have come before the work was undertaken? Thank you.

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have the specific meeting date at hand, but it was in the late spring, about the same time as we briefed, I believe -- and I will have to check the records on this -- the standing committee on the rough outline of the work we felt needed to be done this year on hydro.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I just ask then to be officially notified by the Minister in writing as to the date the quantified work plan was provided to FMB with this tentative budget and when the quantified work plan was approved by FMB? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we could provide that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I have a sense that I am speaking from a minority position here in support of the initiative overall. I just wanted to reflect on the nature of the comments and then the detail that has been going on here, Mr. Chairman. I think we have spent an ample amount of time querying the government on process. I think our point has been made and I would urge, Mr. Chairman, that Members take a look at what we have achieved on debating this issue, especially the process part of it. We have a considerable amount of other business to transact and this is a request, Mr. Chairman, for Members to look at what we have talked about and what more can be gained from dwelling on this issue. Can we move forward to concluding this item and getting on with the rest of the supp? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden, for your comments. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question for Minister Handley. Yesterday the Premier said that he would move this money from this department. I would like to ask why we are dealing with it under FMB if that money is going to be moved. Can he tell me that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think what the Premier had said was that we would look at a way, following advice from the Members, of having a more coordinated approach to our energy initiatives. What we are talking about here is a supplementary appropriation for the current year, so we have to look at it in this format. Certainly from whenever a decision is made as to how we are going to structure it, then it would appear in whatever that new structure would be, but this one we have to deal with because it deals with this current year. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before my last question, there was a list of items mentioned by Mr. Voytilla. Is

there a possibility of getting a copy of that with regard to the memo that you read off so that we can have a copy? Is that a possibility?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it was in the package of information that the committee asked for so it has already been provided. If the Member needs another copy, we could arrange for that. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it is possible, I would like a copy. I was not in the House yesterday when you gave that information, so I would like to get a copy of that.

My question to the Minister is you mentioned a lot of individuals in your comments. It is my understanding that they were involved in the review with regard to the Power Corporation in light of what was happening in Hay River. There was a call for a proposal for power generation and supply for Hay River. That is where this energy stuff came about. You mentioned individuals who were involved in that project but again, you mentioned the same individuals are now involved in this project. Was there a contract in place to do specific work in relation to these two different initiatives or was there an extension to those contracts for them to carry on and do this work that is presently in front of us?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the information we provided was providing following the briefing to AOC, so it was provided some days ago.

With regard to the individuals, three of the individuals were people who had done work on the initial power generation study. This was an extension of the contract.

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

MR. KRUTKO: When was the new contract issued with regard to the work previous in light of this information? Was there a new contract issued after the conclusion of the work or was there an extension to the existing contract?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it was an extension of the contract, not a new contract.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In light of the new information we have in front of us, it seems like the department knew all along that this was the road path they were going to take, but Members on this side of the House are basically shocked to see a million dollar special warrant pop up with no consultation and no attempt to put it into the planning cycle. We had a session here in July, in light of what was happening with

regard to the power review, and now this comes forth for another \$1 million supp for a special warrant.

I have a problem with that. Why is it that you continued on with a contract knowing that the money was not approved by this House? You should have made an attempt at that time to come back to this House in July, realizing that there was going to be additional work to the two contracts that you had in place with individuals. An extension of those contracts should have been brought forth to the House when we sat in July. I would like to know why that was not done.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, three of the individuals did most of the work on the power generation study. That study was completed at about the end of December, December 2000. In about March, it became very clear to us that there was an opportunity for us to look at our hydro potential and make that known as part of the bigger picture, what was happening across Canada and the United States. The same individuals were used.

I would have to look back at the exact dates, but roughly in March, looking at the Taltson River system and the potential that was there to have hydro provided to the south, particularly to Fort McMurray. From then on, we went on with looking at the complete picture of the hydro potential in the Northwest Territories.

So this was an extension. It was using the same individuals because of the work they had done and the expertise they have. I do not know what more I can say on that, Mr. Chairman. It was an opportunity to do it. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You mentioned Taltson Dam. That is existing infrastructure that is in place now. Was that the focus of this review? What is the possibility of considering new initiatives?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in the case of the Taltson, there is some hydro generation there of roughly 20 megawatts. This was looking at the whole potential of the Taltson River, which would be closer to 200 megawatts. It is a fairly substantial expansion of that project.

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

MR. KRUTKO: With regard to these major investments that we are making looking at this strategy, is there any idea of when we may see some returns on our investment, when we actually see power flowing south and somebody picking up the bill for this?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, hydro potential is a fairly long-term investment and a long-term project, when you

consider the environmental reviews one has to go through. A lot of when we would see returns would depend on how quickly aboriginal leadership are ready to move ahead with projects. My guess would be that if we started working on the Taltson system today, we would probably be looking at five years from now to see a return. I think we are going to see a return gradually over the next 20 to 25 years as many of the potential sites in the Territories are developed. That is long term. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is the other concern I have. A lot of these plans and initiatives are activated in the life of this cycle, where we have two more years to go. You are talking about something becoming a reality, in this case, five years down the road. With new governments and new social issues and problems we see as legislators, we have a deficit situation and the case where the government has to review its priorities. Something that is long term usually does not see the light of day or it is going through a study or review. A lot of the studies and reviews by this government, a lot of money was spent. Consultants and lawyers made a lot of good dough on this review but at the end of it all, it does not bear any efforts to implement these studies.

From someone who has had to deal with social problems in our communities, you cannot cut it in regards to selling us on something when we know that money could be spent better with regard to helping with the day-to-day problems in the Northwest Territories and dealing with people problems. The infrastructure in a lot of our communities could probably use a lot of these dollars.

My view is that it is a great idea but if we are doing something that is going to exceed the life of this Assembly, we should try to implement things we know we can implement within the time frame that we have. We should cut back on the studies, knowing they are not getting us anywhere.

It is a great idea but the timing is just not right. I would like to know why we are spending money on these studies and reviews, knowing it is just going to continue to cost us more money. We do have to bear the financial light we are under right now. We realize that a lot of these mega-projects, as we know it, especially as the Government of the Northwest Territories, where we depend on our resources from Ottawa, probably will not bear fruit from this government because we cannot afford to establish a couple of billion-dollar projects as we are looking at here.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we have to keep a balance, as I said before, between the immediate needs we have and the long-term opportunities we have. The first diamond mine took us eight years before we saw diamond production. The gas pipeline is probably going to take us six or seven years from when we started to when we will see the benefits of a pipeline. So at the same time -- and I don't want to understate the importance of the short-term immediate needs people have -- we have to continue to look at long-term investment opportunities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the time, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Braden is not alone here. I am in support of this initiative by government. Sometimes I wonder if we are a government and we should be just hired as managers and not as legislators, because sometimes initiatives that the government makes, we do nothing with but try to kill. The road toll is a good example of that.

We are talking about process now. It is a process that my colleagues spend many, many minutes -- hours even, discussing process. To what end, Mr. Chairman? I do not know.

I would like to talk process here, Mr. Chairman. I would like to know what are the next steps now that we have a body of knowledge, now that we have contacts in the South Slave, people on the payroll who have been working with the aboriginal groups.

The question that our colleague, Mr. Miltenberger, who is on the other side of the House now, brought to your attention a week or so ago on Alberta's plans to develop the Slave River, the possible development of the Slave River for Alberta and how that might effect the Slave River in the Northwest Territories and all the people in the Northwest Territories, knowing that 75 percent of the watershed that goes through the Mackenzie and into the Northwest Territories comes from the Slave River. To me, there is some urgency here. What are the next steps with the remaining \$300,000? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly one of the major steps we have to undertake is to continue the consultation with aboriginal leaders. I was on the phone with a leader today talking about one of the projects. I intend to meet with a number of them who are interested as soon as there is time to do it. So the continued discussion with the aboriginal leadership on how this can be developed is an essential step. We continue on with that without delay.

The second is, as the Premier has said, a need to look at the structure, how we are doing this. Certainly we have included funding for the next year, but we need to look at if there is a more efficient, more effective, more coordinated way of undertaking this. So internally, we have to look at our own structures as well.

I would say, Mr. Chairman, that ongoing consultation is the most immediate need right now. Aboriginal leaders are asking us to meet with them soon and I want to carry through with that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Knowing that there are no diamond mines in the South Slave region, we do not know if there is oil and gas in that area, the long term viability of hydro development -- a very long term, Mr. Chairman -- is a good economic initiative to take. I would encourage the department

and the Minister to continue consultation with the aboriginal group but I would encourage him to take it one step further; that he hosts, in a South Slave community, a regional leadership meeting specifically to deal with Taltson, knowing that there has been pressure on the Northwest Territories by Alberta in their discussions on the development of the Slave River. I encourage the Minister again to host a Taltson hydro development project meeting with the South Slave leadership. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly I will take that up with the South Slave leadership and the Member and others who are interested. If there is a will to do that, then I would be interested. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to put on record a few points because I have been advised by officials that I am not able to move a motion to delete \$1 million out of a special warrant.

I do believe that this is an abuse of process in terms of what is meant for special warrant spending. I have always been under the understanding that it is for emergency spending. Every indication from what the Minister is saying here is that this is something that is ongoing; this is something that government sees as a potential area. I think there is a big question there as to whether or not a big portion of the money should have been spent before it was appropriated and that it should be put forward in the amount of \$1 million as a special warrant.

Mr. Chairman, we have a department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. As we are well aware, we know that Minister Handley is responsible for various projects. There was no way of knowing for us that he was undertaking this task under the authority of FMBS. We approved PYs for hundreds and hundreds of people. We have in the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development hundreds of people. They have PR persons. They have communications advisors. They have oil and gas experts. They have energy people. We fund all that.

We have recently created an Energy Secretariat and the money that goes with it. It came as a total surprise to us that there was a totally separate project under hydro strategy and that all this money is spent.

Mr. Chairman, it is very annoying and it is misleading to say that if you support it and if you support revenue initiatives for this government in the long term and if you have a vision and if you believe in aboriginal consultation with aboriginal leaders, then you have to agree to the \$1 million. I do not agree with that.

I travelled all of the assemblies this summer. I do not believe that I had a \$1 million budget. I believe the Ministers here have access to all aboriginal leaders by phone at any time. They could meet. The government funds some of these aboriginal assemblies as well, portions of it, anyway.

It is really, really troublesome, Mr. Chairman.

For the Minister to say that we have been consulted all along is not entirely correct, Mr. Chairman. We would not be saying all that we are saying here if that was case, that we were well advised of what the government has been doing all along. We were not. If the consultation means that money gets allocated, sole contracts be given out, and all the road trips take place, then afterwards, if the Minister is just going to come and tell us "You have to approve \$1 million because we have all spent it," I do not believe that is the true meaning of consultation.

I am also troubled by unequal treatment of sorts of Cabinet Ministers here. I cannot remember all of the initiatives and strategies, but I believe Minister Ootes had to do a somersault and jump sideways to get his Literacy Strategy for \$1.2 million. We consulted through that process to death. Whether it is Social Agenda or anything else, all the other Ministers have to consult with the Members and have us included in the process. I find this to be a process where we have our hands tied and we are not allowed to do anything about it but to rubber stamp them.

Mr. Chairman, this is really a long-term project and I would not accept anyone suggesting that any reservation that I may have about this is due to my lack of vision or because I cannot see past my nose.

Mr. Chairman, there is a huge question about priority of the investment dollars. We do not have the money to strew around all over the place. The oil and gas project on its own is a humongous project. It is a \$6 billion project. It is a project that we cannot manage without the involvement of multinational corporations. By all accounts, the hydro project will be a hundred times bigger than oil and gas.

There is a limit to what this government can do. I would really encourage the Premier and the Cabinet Ministers, when they get together at the end of the week, to really hunker down and think about how they are going to spend their money. We cannot be all things to all people. We cannot have our shops opened up and spread so thin that we are just feeding the industry of consultants. I do not mean in any way that people who are working on this project -- I am not questioning their work or their integrity. However, I think Minister Handley and Cabinet should look at all of the strategies and initiatives in energy related areas.

I am still very confused about where the Energy Secretariat fits in and where this project fits in. To me, that is all to do with energy. We did a strategic and operational review of the Public Utilities Board. Mr. Robertson did a study on electrical generation. I do not know what came out of that at the moment.

We have the Arctic Energy Alliance doing work for various departments. We have energy and utilities support programs under Public Works and Services. We have a fuel rebate. We have millions of things happening and I am hoping that at the end of this process, the Energy Secretariat or somebody that makes sense will take this over and have some focus and a focused message about what it is this government is trying to do.

Another question there is we do not even own this hydro project. I appreciate that there is a lot that needs to be done but I do not think this government can be accused of not doing consultation with aboriginal leaders. I think that is a red herring. We have very close relationships with aboriginal leaders on all fronts.

I think this has a lot to do with devolution and resource revenue sharing and prioritizing. It could very well be dealt with on the agenda for the Intergovernmental Forum or something, a lot of different things.

I hope that the Minister takes this as a very strong notice that a majority of the Members on this side are highly agitated and irritated. We do not see this sort of schizophrenic energy initiative and secretariat and policy and strategies and everything else. I think I have said what I wanted to say. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

-- Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After the last responses from Mr. Voytilla, I had a chance to check the Financial Administration Act, specifically section 33. When dealing with special warrants, it says:

When the Legislative Assembly is not in session and the board reports to the Commissioner that:

a) an expenditure is urgently required.

The Minister has established that these funds were urgently required in order to meet the summer assembly deadline. Notwithstanding that, the thing was not approved until the 26th of September, but:

b) The expenditure is in the public interest.

I think that we could certainly argue that it is, but:

c) there is no appropriation or an insufficient appropriation to incur the expenditure.

Mr. Voytilla indicated that just in case the special warrant was not approved, they made sure that they spent enough money that could be covered by this appropriation and that they were not outside of that in case the special warrant was not approved.

It seems to me that a special warrant cannot be issued unless you know that there is no appropriation or an insufficient appropriation to incur the expenditure. Would the Minister speak to this? It does not seem like the proper usage of a special warrant.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Voytilla is much more familiar with the detail of the Financial Administration Act than I am so I will let him speak to it, since I do not have a copy here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the issue the Member is addressing is whether or not we had, in our view, the capacity to absorb the expenditures to date at the time that the special warrant was requested and approved, should that special warrant have been denied. It was our judgment that we

did. That obviously would have involved changing our expenditure plans in other areas over the course of the remaining part of the fiscal year to accommodate whatever we had spent and did not get reimbursed on the hydro project. It was our judgement that we could meet that obligation from existing funds if we had to, but that would have meant some changing of those remaining plans for the rest of the fiscal year.

With the approval of the special warrant, we did not have to change those plans but we did have the capacity, should we have needed to, to have changed our spending plans over the course of the rest of the year to deal with the amount spent to hydro to that date.

I do believe that is in accordance with the Financial Administration Act and we were operating within the normal bounds that guide our budgetary and expenditure approval process.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. Certainly I think all Members in the House would understand and the public can probably see that it is very easy to, if not get bamboozled by Mr. Voytilla, at least confused. I think no fault to him but it is just very confusing.

It seems to me also that he indicated that they certainly could have met the obligation from within and they were willing to change their spending habits, their spending commitments if the special warrant was not approved. It clearly states in here that there is no appropriation or an insufficient appropriation to incur the expenditure. That does not seem like it was the case, if in fact spending could be rearranged to accommodate this.

I do not know -- and it is very possible that I do not understand the Financial Administration Act very well, and I will admit that. I think it is something that I certainly hope the Auditor General takes an interest in and has a look at, just to provide us with some assurance that the Financial Management Board did not operate outside the guidelines of the Financial Administration Act in this instance. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. We are on Executive, operations expenditures, Financial Management Board Secretariat, special warrants, directorate, \$1 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): General accounting, not previously authorized, \$1,500,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Labour relations and compensation services, not previously authorized, negative \$78,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Executive, operations expenditures, Aboriginal Affairs, not previously authorized, \$140,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, special warrants, \$1 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized, \$2,962,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go to Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$119,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): That was negative \$119,000.

-- Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Emergency services, not previously authorized, \$153,500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$34,500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$485,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of \$325,000 to provide funding for forced growth expenditures resulting from significant increases to the cost of heating fuel and power in the Northwest Territories, I can understand the power situation because of the rate rider that was put on and has impacted government as well as the residents of the Northwest Territories. However, I go back to the line of questioning I had yesterday in this supp about the high cost of heating fuel. By their own information provided by the Minister, it shows that in fact, from January to September, there were no price changes in all the communities that were supplied by the POL, as we call it, division of Public Works and Services.

In fact, the communities that are private delivery of home heating oil, a lot of those communities actually had a drop in the same numbers. There were some communities that stayed relatively the same, a few communities went up, other communities dropped. Again, and from the comments made by the Minister and his staff yesterday, in fact, the dollars here are expended. We are going to run short. We need this money but by his own information, it just does not jive. Does he have new information as to the cost of heating fuel that is driving these expenditures and the request for more money for fuel? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the rack price is what the petroleum products division pays in Edmonton. They pay that based on the time it is loaded. While the rack price is fairly fixed, the petroleum products division is still dealing with the

need to transport the fuel. One of the main cost increases is on the transportation.

In this year, we have seen a three cents a litre increase over the previous year in the price of transportation of fuel. This varies, of course, from community to community. There is a range in here that we are talking about. There has been an increase in the cost of transportation that makes up the biggest piece of the increase that communities and regions have experienced. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I understand the communities serviced by petroleum products division, a contract is let out that includes transportation for a three-year period, I believe. Has there been a recent change in that contract?

I can understand those communities serviced by road but unless the information we were given, which showed the prices per community of communities serviced by POL and those that are on private, like Yellowknife, Inuvik, Aklavik, Norman Wells, those are rack price. You would see a fluctuation as the price goes up and down, as the market goes up and down correspondingly.

I still do not, unless the Minister has some numbers that we have not been able to see for this increase -- again, he is going forward from this point on and saying over the next number of months we will not meet our requirements when it comes to departments and providing for heat for different structures that the Government of the Northwest Territories has in its control.

Does the Minister have other information that committee members do not have as to the actual price? The information provided to us regarding our concerns in this area are a number of months old but they do not show such a dramatic increase. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I made reference to the fuel transportation increase that petroleum products division faces now. We have other information that was provided to the committee with regard to leases that come due at various times, so I will let Mr. Voytilla explain the issues around leasing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is information on the calculations specific to Public Works and Services. It is additional to the information that has already been submitted to the committee with respect to some lease information we are about to give you. The department is requesting funding of \$125,000 for the impact of the Power Corporation interim rate application on their operational power costs. That is based on actual consumption for last year in each community multiplied by the increase outlined in the Power Corporation's rate applications for the communities affected.

In addition, they are asking for \$200,000 to meet increased cost to the department's lease portfolio for both power and fuel.

The department, in substantiating their request, has provided a detailed list of all leases administered by Public Works and Services in Fort Smith and North Slave regions, including the base rents, O and M costs per year of projected increases. A few leases have recently come up for renewal with large increases in rent and operating expenditures related to fuel and power rate changes. For leases that have not been recently adjusted for those rate changes, estimates have been provided with respect to the lease escalation provisions that will be activated over the course of the remaining part of the year.

I would note that we did not have, at the time we did the calculations, all of the detailed lease information out of the Inuvik region, so we used some estimates based on the average lease escalation we are seeing in the rest of the Territories. So \$200,000 of the \$325,000 in Public Works is related to lease escalation costs associated with fuel and power rate increases that have been provided to the committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That response makes a little bit of sense in what we are looking at here, but when I go through this document, almost every department that has an increase that reflects Power Corporation increase costs across the board and some heating costs. It is the same in every department.

We are going to look at Health and Social Services next, \$378,000, when we get through with this section and the wording is identical there. It would have saved us a lot of time if there was a different scenario for each department, that that be included. It would save us a lot of time in that sense. To me, across the board, it seems like the government just wants to address a higher cost that has been looked and is about to come out.

I understand the lease situation. If they were a number of years old, then they would be impacted by some of that. So I thank Mr. Voytilla for that information and would suggest that maybe some better wording be put in these cases and maybe be prepared for other departments when this particular wording occurs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will say we appreciate the advice. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We seem to be focussing a lot of emphasis on the increased cost of heating, fuel and power. When are we going to see a decrease with regard to the energy costs in the North? Right now, a barrel of oil was almost \$29 and it is down to about \$20 a barrel. The cost of fuel coming to Alberta is about 51 cents a litre for gas. At what point are we going to see a reflection in the statements? When we talk about the world price of crude or whatever we calculate with regard to how we assess what the price is going to be at the pumps, is that going to be reflected in here? Is there a major decrease in the cost of fuel? If that is

the case, the cost of energy and the cost of heating fuel should be coming down. Where do we build in this scenario? The increased costs has fluctuated to a point where we had a major spike and all of a sudden, it is on its way back down. Where in this scenario do you see that turnaround, or see where this picture will be changed, knowing that it does to reflect the reality today of the price of crude being at \$20 a barrel?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I hope the price of fuel continues to go down. It has gone down recently in Yellowknife. I hope it will go down in other communities as the price of crude goes down.

When will we see the changes? It will vary from one community to another depending on when the purchases are made for the fuel for that community. It will depend on whether their fuel is being purchased through the PPD, if that was the case. They buy their fuel, in most cases, once a year and it is whatever they would have paid for it. So it would probably be quite a long time there.

In other situations, we may see it sooner depending on the price people have to pay for the bulk fuel. Of course, with the hydro, it depends on when hydro buys their fuel. That is reflected in their cost of running their operations. It is going to vary. It is going to take awhile but like the Member, I am optimistic that prices will continue to go down. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Knowing that there was going to be an increase from the fuel suppliers, and one of them is the Government of the Northwest Territories through POL, we in this House knew there was going to be a certain percent increase with regard to the cost of fuel that is sold in a lot of communities where we purchase fuel. So why at that time was that not built into the business plans of the different departments, knowing that was a set price made by this government? Do you not talk between departments and the POL to say exactly what the price of oil or price of gas is going to be next week or next month? It is a department of this government, yet very poor planning is done where you have to come through this process of asking for supplementary appropriation. That should have been built into the expenditures of the department knowing that was the case. Why was that not done?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, ideally we would like to see each department build that into their budgets. In some cases, departments were able to do it and in other cases, they just did not get the information or could not get the information on time to be able to do it. I agree with the Member. Ideally we would like to have all departments do it. Most of this information came late and some departments were not able to readjust their estimates. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: With regard to the expenditure, has the department looked at alternative fuel? You said it is based on fuel that is available. Right now, Arctic Dove, which is the Esso dealership out of Inuvik, has a vehicle that runs between Inuvik and Fort McPherson to distribute fuel in the community. It is almost 23 cents cheaper than what this government is selling it in the community. Surprisingly enough, the Co-op, which distributes fuel for this government, also purchases their fuel from Arctic Dove in Inuvik, yet they are the distributors for the Department of Public Works. If these companies have already taken it onto themselves, realizing there are savings they can find by going out and trying to find other retail distributors for diesel fuel and try to find ways of saving costs, why is this government also not doing that?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I hope we are doing that. I would think if we are not, either we do not know the specific arrangements, and I appreciate the Member's information on that, or else we are locked into contracts that we are not able to just walk away from. However, I would hope that we are able to take advantage of the best possible prices, as the Member suggests. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Is the Minister saying that the department made a bad deal where we got caught having to pay this extra price because we did not make a good deal on the purchase of diesel fuel and fuel products in the time frame that these expenditures were made?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I did not say we made a bad deal. What I am saying is we should take advantage of the opportunities where we can. If we enter into a contract for six months before a price drops, then it may be that in hindsight, we would have had a better deal. Hindsight is great but often, we are not able to take advantage of it.

The objective by government should be to take advantage of the best prices possible where we have the opportunity. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has the department looked at the possibility of meeting with different producers? Right now, we purchase a lot of our fuel products from the south. We bring it up by rail to Hay River and either distribute it by tanker or what not. At one time, there was a refinery in Norman Wells where we had the Norman Wells Area Proven Agreement, which had a set price that was based on a certain percentage of rate. At that time, we knew what the amount was. It was set, but because of doing away with that contract and going with that contract from an Alberta-based distributor, now we seem to be caught because we are dependent on that market and that it is a set price. It is not set like it was in the Norman Wells Proven Area Agreement, where it was a set price because there was a refinery and we knew exactly what the percentage was.

Has the department looked at talking to other distributors, other companies and the possibility of looking at that, instead of importing a lot of these fuel products, seeing what is the scenario if companies are willing to refine those products in the North and revisiting the Norman Wells Proven Area Agreement?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, we have looked at that recently. In fact, we have looked at the Norman Wells refinery. I am told that all of the refining equipment has been taken out of that facility. It is basically just a shell left there now. That one does not hold much hope immediately.

In a longer term, I agree with the Member. We will continue to find ways of cutting our fuel costs down to a minimum. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$485,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will not prolong this for very much longer, but I just went back to my office and looked at the information that the Minister provided us with regarding our questions around this area. Mr. Voytilla stated that there was some new information that we did not receive regarding base rates. Just going from the information they provided us, and the concerns are relatively the same, they gave us retail prices for home heating fuel in the Northwest Territories. They compared prices from July 2000, September 2000 to January 2001. I guess to me, it seems that the more you dig, you will get to the finer detail. Hopefully we will get to the details as put out properly instead of going through this whole process and spending a lot of time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: No comment. I appreciate the advice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$485,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$485,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Health and Social Services, directorate and corporate services, not previously authorized, negative \$50,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Primary and acute care programs, not previously authorized, \$1,470,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to know if the Minister has some different wording for the forced growth and expenditures resulting from significant increases in

the cost of heating fuel and power in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Voytilla to give us the detail on this one as he did with the other department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a reconciliation that we provided to the committee as part of the additional information. Health and Social Services had been able to build in on fuel price increases into the budget, \$74,000, which related to Stanton. They had that information in time to get it into the main estimates. They then accumulated the information for the balance of the Health and Social Services boards. That appeared in Supplementary Appropriation No. 1. That was another \$910,000 for health and social services facilities in the Northwest Territories.

This is the balance of the requirement this year that they are requesting. In total, their request is over a million dollars, about \$1,300,000, a million and some of which has already been submitted and approved.

This particular \$370,000 is \$131,000 for -- I believe the fuel price increase, they had not calculated before and received funding for, and \$247,000 relative to power rate increases. That is the additional information that we have for the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Primary and acute care programs, not previously authorized, \$1,470,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$1,420,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go to Justice, operations expenditures, services to government, not previously authorized, \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Public legal services, not previously authorized, \$223,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Community justice and corrections, not previously authorized, \$62,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$310,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go to the NWT Housing Corporation, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$1,300,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in this area, and I will go back to the Minister's budget address where he states that in fact, in this fiscal year, we are operating, and I go back to Hansard, page 1014, February 15, 2001:

In fact, this budget includes almost one million dollars in additional funding to the Housing Corporation to pay the increased fuel costs for public housing and a million to maintain power support programs.

So we have already, in this fiscal year we are in, increased our budget limits by a million dollars and now, through this, we are again seeking another \$1.3 million. I must say that the information the Minister provided us when it comes to actual prices of heating fuel and so on are somewhat dated. That just does not help the process. For example, we get information to help us look at this -- the petroleum products division retail price list, prices effective November 1, 1996. The latest one we have, sort of an up-to-date, goes to January 1, 2001.

I mean, we are getting one set of information when we raise this and we have to go through this process here to try to get more detail, so I would like to know in this one, what has -- give me some numbers that would set off the increases that are above and beyond the increase that were built into the budget that we are operating with in this fiscal year? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the budget for the Housing Corporation was increased by \$967,000, almost a million dollars, as the Member referred to the budget address. Since then, we have had approximately a million dollar increase as a result of the electrical rate increases that we could not predict at that time. Then there is an additional \$300,000 for additional fuel increases. I think the information we have here is consistent with what the Member has said. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What were the original estimates based on? What prices for fuel products was the initial budget based on? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the original \$967,000 would have been based on the fuel increases that we were aware of at that time, so it takes us back to late summer/fall of 2000. The increases since that time are for any additional rate increases or fuel price increases that we have seen since.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I still did not have any numbers. It is rather vague here. Do you have some numbers that you can present to the committee as to what the

department would have based its estimates on at that time, coming forward to the main estimates and the increases, the actual increases from that point that would justify this increase? In fact, for all the other departments as well? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for some clarity, the information we have on the Housing Corporation with respect to their additional needs for this year are the rate increases plus some updated consumption amounts based on the audited financial statements of the local housing organizations, because they give the contributions out to all the local housing organizations to pay the actual utility increases.

I would certainly note that we could provide the Member with the detail that he is requesting. We do not have it here today. It would be quite extensive, but we could certainly go through and show the detailed calculations by local housing authority that was done that underpins the budget estimates.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I fear that I could be drowned by paper here if I accept that offer. I am just interested in the actual amount that they would have based their fuel cost estimates on as part of their budget process. I am interested in what the fuel rates would have been then and what they actually are at the point of requesting this funding. That kind of information was what I am requesting. I do not need anymore of this 1996 stuff and stuff that is over a year old. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I will refer this to Mr. Voytilla, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The base that the Housing Corporation would have worked on when they made their first adjustment to their utility budgets, the \$967,000 that was in the main estimates for fuel price increases, would have been just shy of \$7 million. With the increase they got in the main estimates, their utility base was \$7.9 million. With this \$1.3 million increase now, that raises their requirements up to \$9,200,000. Our understanding is that what is incorporated in the main estimates are the rates that were implemented in September and January, so it should have been the POL rate increases. Most of the \$1.3 million, one million dollars of that is electrical requirements that has to do with the interim rate approval that was approved in April. The other \$300,000 is related to fuel, is related to updated consumption numbers by the local housing authorities. That helps. That is the basis and we can certainly try to get more of the specific numbers out of the Housing Corporation, if that would help.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and that information is helpful to a certain degree but hopefully, as the information that the Minister will provide will be, for example, what was the

cost per litre of home heating oil at the time they put the main estimates in and what is the cost per litre of home heating oil when you have come forward requesting this increase. We can do that with power as well, although the information on power is a little more accurate. It is on the home heating side and again, my questions, Mr. Chairman, are driven by the fact that the same wording is used again in this department: to provide funding for forced growth in expenditures resulting from significant increases to the cost of heating fuel and power in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, certainly the Member has made the point with regard to the wording in here. We will clarify it next time we have this kind of situation. We will provide the information. We will do it by housing association, which will be by community. We will try to keep it as concise as possible but it is going to be different for each housing association. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In that particular area, if the information that is going to be provided to Mr. Roland could be provided to me as well, that would be appreciated. I would also request the cost of delivery of the fuel products to communities and the prices that are charged to consumers in those communities.

The one question I have for the Minister is does the government, through the petroleum products division or through Public Works, do they buy fuel in bulk? If so, do they buy it for a period of time that covers two, three or four years at a time? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, through the petroleum products division, the government does buy fuel in bulk. It does buy it for a period of time. I am not too sure how many years it is for but the price varies from year to year. It is set, as I said before, at a rack price at the time that it is loaded. The prices can vary from one year to another. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is very similar to locking in a good interest rate or edging gold, for example. When was the last time that the petroleum products division bought their bulk fuel? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I believe the last time PPD would have bought fuel would have been during the summer for the barging season. I am not sure of the exact month but it would have been during the summer months and they would have paid the rack price at that time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This past summer was the last bulk fuel purchase? How long is that for, three years or four years? Why was the fuel purchased this summer when the prices were the highest? Did we run out of the three-year or

four-year term that we buy the bulk fuel for? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will ask the Minister of Public Works to answer this one. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, just for clarification, for those communities who are serviced by road, we buy bulk fuel normally in the winter. For those communities that are serviced by barge, we would buy them as close to the barge delivery time as possible, usually early summer or late spring. We have no choice but to pay whatever the price is at that time. We do not have the capacity to buy for more than one year normally because we do not have storage capacity. We are subject to annual purchase.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That explains quite a bit for me because I was under the impression that we did buy bulk for a number of years and I was questioning based on that false information, I guess.

Mr. Chairman, the price fluctuation at the pumps was on products that were controlled by the government. Having said that, I have one particular question that is very dear to my heart and dear to my constituency. Does Lutselk'e subsidize other communities when they buy their fuel because of cost of transportation? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. I would like to remind you that we are on the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation here and we do not want to get too far away. I will let Mr. Handley comment on that.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The current pricing policy by petroleum products is to average the price of the product. They do not break it out by community, although it is my understanding that petroleum products division is looking at the viability or the feasibility of breaking the price out for each community. In that case, communities would pay whatever the actual cost is for their fuel delivery. As it is now, it is averaged. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that is a very good initiative the government could take and it would clear up a lot of misconceptions out there. I encourage them to do this as quickly as possible. When people buy at the true cost, there seems to be more appreciation. With that, I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, not previously authorized, \$1.3 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Transportation, operation expenditures, airports, not previously authorized, \$444,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Sorry, that was \$445,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Highways, not previously authorized, \$258,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ferries, not previously authorized, \$122,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Motor vehicles, not previously authorized, \$2,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$827,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, operations expenditures, resource management and economic development, not previously authorized, \$7,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$7,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Executive, capital investment expenditures, Financial Management Board Secretariat, directorate, special warrant, \$182,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized, \$60,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Labour relations and compensation services, not previously authorized, \$78,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, special warrants, \$182,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized, \$138,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Municipal and Community Affairs, capital investment expenditures, regional operations, special warrants, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I get clarification with regard to the \$100,000? Was that because of the contract that was let to complete the work with regard to the water treatment facility in the community? Could you give me a breakdown of what that \$100,000 is for?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the \$100,000 was not related to the contract the Member is referring to at all. It is made up of two things. One is the increased cost of the water delivery truck and also additional cost for realignment of the road to the filling station. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister tell me if there is any requirement for other supplementaries to come forth with regard to the completion of this project?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there is no more requirement for any further supps. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Is the Minister absolutely sure there are no more supplementaries coming forward on this project?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am absolutely sure that the information the Minister of MACA has given me is absolute on this one. There is no need for any more supps. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister tell me outright, will this project be concluded within the next two months?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes. I am told it will be completed within the next two months.

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

MR. KRUTKO: The information I received, it is supposed to be concluded by the end of this month. Has that now been stretched to two months?

-- Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley, did you want to respond to that?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Member asked me if it would be completed within the next two months and I said yes, it will be completed within the next two months. The

projected completion is by the end of this month. I expect that we will meet that target. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, special warrants, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, special warrants, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Justice, capital investment expenditures, community justice and corrections, not previously authorized, \$834,000. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would this be regarding fuel increases to the contractor?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, to our knowledge this has nothing to do with fuel increases. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister if it is common practice to increase contracts for a quarter of a million dollars? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is for the whole project. It is very common on large projects like this to see change orders and need for redesign, site development costs and so on to be different than what was estimated. Initially, before construction starts, the best is an estimate and design is best that can be.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we have projects of this size, there are competitors out there that bid on contracts and \$834,000 is a sizeable amount. I would like to ask if this \$834,000 is within the bid or would still be lower than the next contractor's bid? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: As I said before, this is for a whole project. There are multiple contracts, like a number of contracts, so the increases were in a number of areas. The site costs, development of the site came in at \$240,000 over what was estimated. The tender cost for the construction of the facility was over budget by \$300,000. The utilidor was over budget by \$108,000. There was an increase in architect fees due to redesign of the facility for \$150,000. Then there is miscellaneous things for about \$36,000. This covers a whole number of contracts. It is not one contract to one firm. It is a number of different contracts. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Would any of these contracts within that \$834,000 meet a competitor's bid if they were to come back to us and challenge it? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, if the question is whether the various contractors who experienced higher costs, whether their bid now with this adjustment would have been higher than the next bidder, I do not know. I would guess that because this was by tender, because all the bidders would have faced these same cost overruns, then it would not have made any difference. The lowest bidder is probably still the lowest one because I am assuming that the second lowest one would have had these same cost overruns. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Would the Minister and his department be able to share the information with us of the bidders, how low they were or how high they were, if they meet or whatever?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, just a correction. These are not cost overruns right now. The project is not that far along. So these are the amounts that the bids came in over the estimates. In that sense, to answer your question, the lowest ones are still the lowest because this applies to everyone. I would be happy to give the Members the same breakout that I just referred to here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Can the Minister tell me which department did the estimates?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this project is managed by the Department of Justice through community justice and corrections. They would have done this in consultation with the department of Public Works and Services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Which department's responsibility is it for the estimates? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, basically when it comes to architectural or engineering expertise, that resides in the department of Public Works and Services. Public Works and Services works closely with each of the client departments who

are responsible for managing the projects. This has to be a joint one between the two.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you very much. Is it common for estimates to be that much out of whack when the project is only \$6 million? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, typically we would not have this high of an increase. This is a project that was originally estimated at \$5.4 million and to have an \$834,000 increase is not usual. However, we are not dealing in usual times. We do have a very much heated up economy, particularly in Inuvik. So the bidders are putting in higher bids because they are busier. Their cost of doing business is higher so this is a bit unusual. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you. Would the high cost be due to southern companies bidding on these contracts and the high overhead costs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I do not think that it is due to southern companies having higher overhead costs. I think that it is due to everyone who has bid on this bidding higher than what was estimated. Everyone is suffering the same situation of an overheated economy, high demands for skilled workers and so on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Public Works and Services and crossover seem to be synonymous. I do have a question related to this one though. The \$834,000 that has been requested here, \$234,000 is reprofiling. Is it a common practice to take reprofiling and departmental dollars through supplementary appropriation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, I think that there is a requirement that we do that. If we are basically spending money that is projected in a multi-year project for the next fiscal year and spend it this year, then we would have to bring it back here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We learn something new every day. The total budget of this work that we are looking at is approximately \$6.1 million. Is that the budget that we started off with?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the original budget was somewhere between \$5.3 million and \$5.4 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: The cost increases that we are seeing in the \$834,000 that we are looking to add on to, this is all because of higher cost of labour. Am I correct in that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned before, the big piece is higher bids than what was expected. Then \$150,000 of it is an increase in architect fees do to a redesign of the facility. It is a combination of those two.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is getting late into the evening but I do have one last question. Not particularly relating to this item but it is a related matter in generality. Being the Minister of Finance, and your trusty sidekick, Mr. Voytilla, does he see this as a trend that is developing within the Government of the Northwest Territories, where bids are coming in higher than anticipated costs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, Public Works have recently sent out an advisor indicating that they are expecting to see about a 10 percent increase in costs. That is due to heated up economy competition for skilled workers, contractors who are busy and are not hungry for new projects. So we are expecting that this is happening. It is happening here. It is probably happening in other parts of Canada right now, Alberta in particular. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess that we are learning from this trend and anything that we have approved in our capital projects we can anticipate higher costs than what has been identified to date. Am I correct in assuming that, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we never know for sure until we get the bids, so things can happen. Certainly with projects that were estimated a year and a half ago on the situation, then being out for tender in a different economic circumstances, then yes, we will see increases.

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

MR. KRUTKO: With regard to the increase in the architect fees in redesigning the facility, \$150,000, was after the contract was let that that increase came in with regard to the specs that were given when the contract was bid on, or is that after the fact?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think those architect fees for redesign took place before these bids came in. The original design was estimated to be too expensive and would increase the price of this project even more. The project was redesigned to try to keep the cost down. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. The Minister mentioned that because of all the competition in the Inuvik region and work and what not that people are not really bidding on these jobs, but the two jobs mentioned lately were with companies from outside the region who received these contracts. Local contractors that bid on them were not successful. Because of that, you are now having to come back for more money.

From the arguments that they made in their bids, it is pretty clear that the local business community realized that their bids were going to come in a little higher than southern companies because the cost of doing business in Inuvik is going up. The cost of subcontractors with respect to power and electrical has gone up because of the demand, but the contracts that you mentioned were won by companies that are not local to the region. They are Yellowknife-based companies.

I would like to know, because of what you stated, now realizing that if you took these amounts and put them into the bids that did come in, I think a lot of the local contractors that did bid on these jobs, and if you use this increase in the margins that you are using, they would have been in the ball park for those bids.

I would like to ask the Minister, because of the amount of increases we have seen, is it because of poor planning on behalf of, say the Department of Public Works with regard to realizing there were those increases in the works, that the local contractors were telling the Department of Public Works, were telling the Departments of Justice and MACA, that there are increases? You have to consider that the price you are asking for is not doable. Have you looked at those arguments to realize that the local contractors were in the ballpark and the people that are getting these contracts are not local? They are coming in low and now we are in a situation where we are having to come back to do all these adjustments to bring their prices in line. Has the department looked at that to see exactly if that is the trend that we are seeing here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, just to be clear, these amounts that we have here that I gave before are not on top of what the lowest bidder had bid. This is the amount that we require in the budget in order to meet the lowest bid. Anyone who bid and had a higher price than this was clearly higher. This is not an adjustment in any way.

I think what we have found out here is what Public Works have told us that the bids for these projects -- even the lowest bid through an open tender -- are going to come in higher than we had anticipated a year or so ago when we did the estimates because of the heated up economy. I am sure everyone, including the southern companies, were facing this same cost of doing business. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. With regard to the cost breakdown, you mentioned that the tendered costs for the construction of this facility were over budget by \$300,000. Knowing that you needed an additional \$300,000, why was that not looked at before the contract went out, realizing that the actual contract came in higher from what you appraised the price at? The point I am trying to make is, are we as a government underestimating the prices of these projects in the Inuvik region? By doing that, we are having to come here again and trying to get our money just to bring up that cost and realistically trying to recognize that there is an increase in costs in development in the Inuvik region, and probably in the Northwest Territories, for that matter.

As a government, is that because the planning or the design and engineering work that is going on within this government is underestimating the reality of what is out there?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in any situation where we are tendering, we do not know what the actual cost of that contract is until we open the envelope. In this case, clearly the tender costs for this project were over budget by \$300,000. In that situation, when the estimates were done when the project was designed, those estimates were lower than what the actual cost of the lowest bid was. I think that reflects a change in the economy in Inuvik.

I hope the government, and I expect that Public Works is continually refining its estimates to reflect the actual economic situation we are facing so that anything they are doing right now would reflect the heated up economic environment we currently have. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is definitely a problem in the Inuvik region and I think it is more than just underestimating. I think we have to do a thorough review of exactly what is really going on in the Inuvik region and the office in the Inuvik region on these estimates. We cannot continue to see this type of initiative where groups are arguing with people, saying, "This is our price and either you come in at this price or you do not get the contract."

I think that because of that a lot of companies in the Inuvik region that bid on these contracts are really having second thoughts about bidding on government contracts. We realistically have to get our feet on the ground in relation to what is really happening there.

I would like to ask the Minister, do you do reviews with regard to these types of unforeseen increases that are known to the contract community, but as a government, it seems like it has not set in yet? I think we cannot have these types of estimates put out by departments of this government for different projects where we are hundreds of thousands of dollars apart from the actual costs associated with the projects when they are coming in. As a government, are you doing a review to ensure that is not happening?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, we will do everything we can to make sure that that is not happening. I

believe that Public Works are continually assessing their estimates compared to the actual costs. In fact, that is why they sent out an advisory. If there is a problem in the Inuvik region though, then I am sure that one will be identified and looked at. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Is the Minister's department going to basically do anything to look into this to ensure that there is no -- my concern is that we as a government are underestimating our projects in that region. I think we have to know why.

Why is it that the government and the Department of Public Works, with their engineering department, underestimate the amounts we put forth with regard to tender documents or contracts? We realize these people are coming in way over budget.

My concern is we are seeing it in a lot of initiatives. We had the bridge project at Campbell Creek. We are looking at \$900,000 that has moved from one project to another. Now with regard to this project, we are seeing another \$800,000. Those are large spreads with regard to unforeseen expenditures. We should maybe ask the Auditor General to do a review on why that is.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I will ask the Minister of Public Works to comment on this, since it is his department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are two important points that have to be taken into consideration with regard to this project. The original pricing of this project was for Hay River. The plan was initially that this building was to be built in Hay River. That played a large part in what it would cost to build it in Hay River versus Inuvik.

The other thing to take into consideration was that the time that the project was put into the budget was two or three years previous to when it actually happened in Inuvik. Inuvik is now experiencing a large boom, so to speak, as a result of oil and gas activities. All three departments, Public Works, Transportation and Housing, are experiencing increases of up to ten to 15 percent increases in our projects in the Inuvik area. We put out this notice to departments so that they can expect this in the future on when to undertake capital projects.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Justice, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized, \$834,000. Total department, \$834,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the comments from the Minister of Public Works, using the argument that this building was designed for Hay River and that was the price that was set at, anybody with an idea of the North would realize that Hay River does not have permafrost, for one thing. Inuvik does. Those costs have to be associated with any projects developed in the region.

If anything, you would have thought the department would have caught that before they even put it out to a public tender, knowing that there was that cost associated with it.

Using the argument that this was supposed to be built somewhere else and it ended up in a different place, those are things that you look at with regard to the geographical differences between certain areas in the Northwest Territories, from the south end to the north end, looking at the logistic costs associated with getting goods and services to those different sites, to and from southern Canada and what is the market like in any particular area.

It looks to me like this has been a poor planning job by this government with regard to what has happened. With the arguments raised by the Minister of Public Works, it sounds to me like someone either was not doing their homework or we just totally left out the crucial aspects of doing work in the Inuvik region compared to Hay River.

Has the Minister looked at that with regard to why that argument was used, that because it was designed for a particular place, that now those costs are associated with the redesign? That should have been done before it got to a public tendering process. Why was it not done?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Public Works is a service department. We operate with what funding is given to us by the departments that are sponsoring the project, in this case, Justice. Justice had only so much money in their budget for this particular building. That is what was given to Public Works to operate on. I believe what Mr. Handley described as the breakdown of \$800,000 shows in there that was a cost involved in having to take into consideration a different type of design for the building and the base of the building. So those were all reflected in those costs there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Handley, would you like to add to that?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think that we can look into, as the Member has asked, how these projects were estimated. We can see whether this is an anomaly or whether this is a trend. We want to have estimates as accurate as possible as well. So we will follow up on the Member's suggestion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To set the record straight, the Minister of Public Works stated that the reason for this cost increase was because the building was first designed for Hay River.

In fact, I recall in the 13th Assembly when this issue came up, there was no design at that time for a separate facility so that is not a correct response. The design has only been developed when they split the young offenders and female and male offenders facilities. That is why you have the male one here in Yellowknife and a separate one up in Inuvik.

At that point, there were no plans. There was nothing on the books. An issue came about as a result of the fire marshal's recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. For the record, we have to straighten that out. It is not the fact that the building was designed for a specific location. The design occurred after a decision was made to proceed with the project. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. That was a comment. Justice, capital investment expenditures, not previously authorized, \$834,000. Total department, \$834,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Page 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2001-2002, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Schedule, part I, operations expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for operations expenditures, \$8.364.5 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, I just want to put on record my concern with a number of the initiatives that came through here and hope if any more supplementary appropriations come forward, that they would reconsider anything that would come forward as supplementary appropriation in the sense of special warrants and that that would be considered. I am not satisfied with the response we got in the sense of FMBS and that increase, as well as the information that has come lately in the fact of the line item that was said to be a response to the high cost of fuel. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Operations expenditures, total supplementary appropriations, operations expenditures, \$8,364,500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Capital investment expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for capital investment expenditures, \$1,254,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Total supplementary appropriation, \$9,618,500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2001-2002, to the preamble.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Does the committee agree that Bill 14 is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Bill 14 is now ready for third reading. We are going to take a ten-minute break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee back to order. We are dealing with Tabled Document 42-14(4), Report of the Independent Commission on Members' Compensation. General comments? Mr. Braden.

Committee Motion 30-14(4): To Adopt TD 42-14(4) (Carried)

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To this report, I have a motion that I would like to make. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommend that Tabled Document 42-14(4) and the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Members' Compensation contained therein be adopted by the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Braden, are you making a motion? The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. General comments? Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In a related matter to the report of the independent commission is an item that the commission looked at but declined to make recommendations on. This is in the area of pensions and specifically, a supplementary pension plan.

The commission declared that while it was originally requested to consider this, the report states that it is not in the mandate of this committee to overturn decisions of past Legislative Assemblies. That responsibility lies clearly with the Assembly itself.

Taking the finding of the independent commission into account, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Assembly wanted to make some action on this. As a follow-through to that, I am prepared to put forward a motion which will direct some action through the course of the Assembly. Mr. Chairman, I would like to make the following motion.

Committee Motion 31-14(4): To Institute a Supplementary Pension Plan (Carried)

I MOVE that Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly be offered participation in a supplementary pension plan offering the following benefits:

1. Members have to contribute;
2. Members have to apply to join, participation in this plan is not compulsory;
3. Members' pensions would be calculated at two percent; and
4. Eligibility for a pension to be four years or one full term of an Assembly.

AND FURTHER, Mr. Chairman, that the Board of Management prepares the required amendments to implement this motion and that they be presented to the Legislative Assembly during the next session. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I would like to request a recorded vote.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Braden, Mr. Steen, Mr. Handley, Mr. Allen, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Lafferty, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Bell and Mr. Nitah.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): All those against, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Miltenberger, Ms. Lee, Mr. Dent.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): All those abstaining, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Antoine, Mr. Roland, Mr. McLeod.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Those for, 10; those against, 3; abstentions, 3. The motion is carried. Does the committee agree that consideration of Tabled Document 42-14(4) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The next item on the agenda is Bill 8, Motor Vehicles Act. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he has any comments. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, for your consideration. During the 2nd Session of the 14th Legislative Assembly, this Legislature considered Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. During its review and consultation of Bill 5, the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development received and noted concerns with the current Motor Vehicles Act, specifically the lack of statutory authority in respect of overloading of vehicles with passengers.

The standing committee noted that this overloading results in the lack of proper seat restraints for occupants of the vehicle. As Minister of Transportation, I committed to look into this matter. Very simply, Mr. Chairman, Bill 8 proposes to remove some of the few remaining exemptions for wearing a seatbelt in a motor vehicle. Specifically, these amendments will require any passenger travelling in a motor vehicle shall wear a

seatbelt. Motor vehicle equipment design has developed over the years that all seating positions in a vehicle today are now equipped with seatbelts. This amendment requires passengers use them.

We now have over 30 years of working data for proving beyond the shadow of a doubt the effectiveness of seat belts in preventing injuries and deaths in automobile accidents.

Unless we choose to disregard the evidence, there is not much room for debate on the constructive and beneficial nature of this amendment.

Secondly, Bill 8 will amend the Motor Vehicles Act to prohibit the carrying of passengers in a box of a pick-up truck. The bill will now include legislation that will permit a municipality, settlement or an unincorporated community the authority to pass a by-law permitting a person to ride in the box of a truck that is being operated within the community at a speed less than 25 kilometres an hour.

The bill will also allow band councils, settlements, and unincorporated communities to request an exemption where circumstances are satisfactory to the Minister of Transportation to approve an exemption.

Mr. Chairman, it is important to understand that the intent of Bill 8 is public safety. A vehicle operator assumes responsibility for all occupants in his or her vehicle. Children or other occupants should never be placed into a situation where their safety is jeopardized.

These past weeks, I had the opportunity to appear before the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development to discuss Bill 8. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the standing committee and members of the public for their review of the proposed amendments.

Mr. Chairman, I trust the members of the committee will agree that the amendments proposed in Bill 8 are straightforward, sensible and sound. In closing, I would ask the committee to give them its approval. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Does the Chair of the standing committee that reviewed the bill have any general comments? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development reviewed Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, at its meetings on October 29 and November 1, 2001.

This bill amends the Motor Vehicles Act to remove some of the few remaining exemptions for wearing a seat belt in a motor vehicle. The bill does allow for exemptions to drivers of a bus, emergency or enforcement vehicle.

The bill as originally drafted also removed the exemption that allows persons to ride in the box of a truck in certain circumstances.

The committee would like to thank the Honourable Vince Steen, Minister of Transportation, and his officials who appeared before the committee to present the bill and respond to the issues raised by the committee.

Members of the committee would also like to thank Mr. Percy Kinney, chief coroner of the Northwest Territories, for his very helpful comments concerning the dangers of high-risk behaviour and injury prevention.

Some committee members expressed concern for the needs of the residents of our smaller communities. It was felt that communities should have the power to permit riding in the box of a truck within their boundaries as the transportation needs in those situations can be quite different than for larger centres.

For these reasons, amendments to the bill were proposed which would permit a community to pass a by-law or regulation permitting persons to ride in the box of a truck when the vehicle is being operated at 25 kilometres per hour or less. The committee considered whether all communities in the Territories would have the capacity, either by community by-law or request to the Minister, to effect the exemption on a local basis. The committee is satisfied that all communities have the ability in one of the two methods outlined in the amendment.

The committee also considered whether the bill should be amended to include unincorporated communities or band councils respecting the ability to pass by-laws or regulations for this exemption. However, such an amendment would accord a capacity to these communities that they do not otherwise have under other governing legislation.

Mr. Chairman, these motions to amend Bill 8 were passed by a majority of the committee and the Minister concurred with these amendments. Committee members may have additional comments or questions on this bill during the review in committee of the whole.

The concludes the committee's comments on Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I would like to offer the Minister the opportunity to bring in witnesses. Mr. Minister, would you like to bring in witnesses?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree the Minister may bring in witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses in? Mr. Minister, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I have with me on my right, Peter Vician, deputy minister of Transportation; Gary Walsh, director, road licensing and safety, Department of Transportation; and Mark Aitken, director, legislation division, Department of Justice.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intent of this bill was very straightforward and long overdue to catch us up with the rest of Canada in what is really a very common sense choice that people have to use seatbelts. As the Minister has said, there is no shadow of a doubt this makes a difference. It saves lives and helps prevent injury.

Where I as a committee member had to stop and think about this was to reflect on the concerns raised by my colleagues from the smaller communities in the Northwest Territories, especially the off-road communities where pick-up trucks are very often the transportation mode of choice, and that we would really be, sort of by virtue of modernizing our legislation and making it even more common sense, we would in fact be imposing something on the people in those communities that was quite unfair and would make them law-breakers.

This was an area that concerned me. I think just about everybody in the North has had the occasion to be very grateful of a pick-up truck ride from a cold airstrip or a rainy shoreline to a community. These were aspects that were felt to be unavoidable, but a compromise through allowing municipalities, if it is their wish, to exempt themselves, is I think a very good one. It helps demonstrate, perhaps even in a relatively small way in this case, this Legislature does want to keep in mind the interests and the priorities that exist in the smaller communities. I think this was a good proposal to put forward and I compliment the Minister and the department for accommodating this.

I do have a question related to this, Mr. Chairman, and that is could the Minister outline for us just what steps would be taken to inform municipalities of the option that they have and how they would go about making an exemption that would suit their own communities? What kind of an information program will the department be putting together for municipalities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for his comments supporting the bill. The department is planning to do consultation with the communities. I am going to ask my deputy, Mr. Vician, to expand on that statement.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Transportation, in bringing forward legislation, would provide both communities and the general public with broad information and specific information regarding the change in legislation, in this case, the removal of the exemptions and the restriction in riding in the back of a pick-up truck. This would be done with letters to each of the communities in the Northwest Territories explaining the option available with regard to bringing forward by-laws, and similarly to the general public through a media advertising and some pamphlets that would be issued broadly to the public. This would ensure that there would be broad communication as with previous amendments the department has brought forward through the Motor Vehicles Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Vician. General comments. If there are no further general comments, do you agree we go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 1

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 5(1). Page 3, 5.1. It is on page 3. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just looking at Clause 5(2)(b). I was wondering about the wording there. I am not sure if I am reading it wrong or on subsection (1)(ii) -- a truck being operated within a municipality or settlement at less than 30 km an hour been made permitting a person to ride in the box of a truck and...is that worded right or am I missing something there?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Could you point out where you are at, Mr. Delorey?

-- Interjection

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 3, 5.1. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 8 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 8 is now ready for third reading. With that, I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Thank you. The next bill to deal with is Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Wildlife Act. It is a private Member's bill. The sponsor of the bill, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Committee Members, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to discuss Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Wildlife Act. Mr. Chairman, the purpose of Bill 12 is to reduce the period required to achieve resident status for purposes of harvesting wildlife from two years to six months.

Currently, the Wildlife Act defines non-residents as people who have lived in the Northwest Territories for less than two years, the most stringent residency requirement found in any provincial or territorial wildlife statute. By moving to the

Northwest Territories, people are immediately eligible to transfer their current driver's licence for a Northwest Territories driver's licence. After three months, they qualify as residents for Northwest Territories health care and after three months, they may purchase a sports fishing licence as residents.

People can live in our communities, pay income tax to the territorial government, vote for community council and their MLA, but they must wait two years before being residents under the Wildlife Act.

The current Wildlife Act is over 20 years old. My constituents and I have heard for a long time that a comprehensive review of the Wildlife Act, including the residency requirements, would soon be done yet it never seems to come to conclusion. For over ten years, successive governments have been talking about completing a comprehensive review of the Wildlife Act. As everyone here knows, the consultation process is underway.

Mr. Chairman, I am not convinced that we will see a new Wildlife Act during the life of the 14th Assembly. For that reason, I decided it was time to bring this minor amendment forward now.

I initially became interested in reducing the residency requirement after several constituents, who are either RCMP officers or members of the Armed Forces, complained to me that they wanted to fully enjoy the outdoor experience offered in the Northwest Territories, but were often transferred before they had the opportunity to hunt. In several other provinces in Canada, RCMP and DND members are given special exemptions, but it appears those exemptions were put in place before the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was proclaimed.

I know many RCMP and DND members seek northern transfers because of the wilderness experience that the northern lifestyle can offer. However, not being able to hunt may make it more difficult for us to attract personnel to the North. I have received a letter from the outgoing commanding officer of the RCMP, noting that the number of volunteers for northern services is declining. He makes the point that allowing the RCMP the legal right to enjoy the privileges of an NWT resident would assist in marketing the North to attract volunteers.

Mr. Chairman, this is a quality of life issue for more than RCMP or DND personnel. I have often heard Members in this Assembly talk about the quality of life in the North as one of the advantages that we need to use to attract health professionals. Being able to fully enjoy the outdoors by hunting as a resident is part of the quality of life that we need to be able to use when trying to attract professionals to the Territories.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has stated that the development of a new Wildlife Act is a priority. During session last June, the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development advised the House that the most optimistic new wildlife legislation would be brought forward by the fall of 2002. In talking about that proposed time table, Mr. Handley also said in the House that revising the Wildlife Act is a very complex process and noted that other priorities and other legislation could affect the timing.

A couple of weeks ago at a constituency meeting here in Yellowknife, Mr. Handley told the audience that while he was

still aiming for introduction of legislation in the fall of 2002, if more consultation was required, he was willing to allow time for it.

Again, I am not convinced that we will see new legislation during the life of this Assembly. In the meantime, I propose that we do the right thing immediately and make a simple amendment to our current Wildlife Act, an amendment that has no impact on aboriginal harvesting rights and should have no impact on animal populations, since the government still has all of the tools to ensure conservation of the herds.

Mr. Chairman, conservation is achieved by regulating the number of animals and the areas where game may be harvested, not imposing an arbitrary residency requirement. Conservation issues should be addressed on a species by species basis as the need arises. There are many tools in wildlife legislation to do this. Quotas set for non-aboriginal residents, for example. Those do not depend on residency, which disenfranchises people across the board, not just for a species that is in trouble.

Each year, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development uses a system of licences, tags, quotas, seasons and wildlife management areas to regulate the level of resident hunting. The wildlife harvest is constantly monitored in this manner. As the number of resident sports hunters increases or decreases, the hunting regulations are adjusted to ensure that animal populations stay healthy. This is the way to ensure conservation, not by imposing unreasonable residency requirements.

Mr. Chairman, it is also important to note that changes in the residency requirement will have no impact on the holders of general hunting licences, or GHLs. The holder of a GHL may hunt virtually without restriction throughout areas of the Northwest Territories that do not have settled land claims. Aboriginal people hunting for food will still have first call on animal populations. Only when there will be sufficient numbers of animals after the aboriginal harvest are quotas set for resident sports hunters. That situation will not change with this amendment. This amendment will be compatible with and have no effect on land claim agreements or aboriginal hunting rights. The amendment will only impact resident sports hunters.

Mr. Chairman, aboriginal people have a right to hunt. Non-aboriginal people who have to purchase a resident sports hunting licence do not have a right to hunt, but hunt as a privilege. Governments can change the hunting privileges enjoyed by non-aboriginal people without constitutional impact. If that privilege to hunt ever starts to interfere with aboriginal peoples' ability to harvest wildlife for food, resident sports hunters would lose some or even all of their privileges to hunt under our existing Wildlife Act.

To put it another way, RWED has to look at how many animals can be harvested in order to ensure that the population stays at a healthy level. The harvest by aboriginal people comes first and then they assess what the excess population is that can be made available to commercial or sports hunters. If there are only 2,500 caribou over and above the number needed by aboriginal people, 2,500 caribou tags must be divided up among the number of sports hunters who apply for caribou tags.

Government has a constitutional obligation to protect aboriginal harvesting opportunities. Those rights are given priority in law

and the GNWT would be obliged to reduce resident harvesting through quotas if aboriginal harvesting was threatened. If the government did not meet these legal obligations, legal action could be taken by aboriginal governments.

If there were no animals over and above the number that aboriginal people need, current legislation gives RWED all the tools they need to issue no caribou tags to resident sports hunters if animal populations require protection. If there were only 100 animals available for resident sports hunters, a draw system, such as that used now for bison, might have to be introduced. The committee heard from resident sports hunters at the public hearings that that was understood and accepted.

Mr. Chairman, we would have to assume that RWED would take no regulatory action and simply let resident harvesting adversely affect aboriginal harvesting to believe that this bill would have any impact on aboriginal harvesting. If RWED meets its legal obligations to aboriginal people, Bill 12 cannot impact on aboriginal harvesting opportunities. Mr. Chairman, if there is a concern that RWED cannot or will not meet those legal obligations, that concern should be addressed and corrected.

Some have brought up a concern that our population shifts may impact on the sustainability of the harvest. Mr. Chairman, the population of the Northwest Territories has grown over the past ten years by about 1,000 people, or about 3.6 percent. In that same period, the number of resident sports hunting licences issued has dropped by nearly 25 percent to just over 1,600. There is a declining demand on animal populations by resident sports hunters already.

Mr. Chairman, over the past two years, we have had 4,733 people move to the Northwest Territories. Just 3,665 of those were 15 or older. Of a total population of about 21,000 non-aboriginal people in the NWT now, only 7 to 8 percent purchase a hunting licence. If we take 8 percent of the new people in the Northwest Territories over the past two years, which assumes that none have arrived in the last six months, we could be talking about adding 290 extra hunters with the adoption of Bill 12. However, that ignores the fact that even more people left the Northwest Territories than moved here, so we likely lost more resident sports hunters than we could have increased with the adoption of Bill 12. Our high birth rate is the only thing that accounts for growth in population in the Northwest Territories.

It is important too to remember what is required to be classified as resident. Someone cannot work in a mine and maintain a residence in Leduc and be considered a resident. A person who works on a pipeline and lives in a camp for six months still does not meet the definition of resident. Massive non-renewable resource development will not significantly increase our population. People have to really move to the Northwest Territories to be considered residents.

Mr. Chairman, right now, resident sports hunters harvest about 10 percent of the caribou taken each year in the Northwest Territories. By adopting Bill 12, that number will not be changed significantly.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that Members will agree to support this bill.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. I would like to call on the Chair of the committee responsible for reviewing the bill and to make any recommendations on the bill. At this time, I will call on Mr. Roland, Chair of the GED committee.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development conducted a comprehensive public review of Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Wildlife Act, in Yellowknife on October 18 and November 1, 2001. Bill 12 is a private Member's public bill sponsored by the Member for Yellowknife Frame Lake, Mr. Charles Dent.

The committee also heard comments on this bill during meetings held in a number of other NWT communities. During the public hearing process, committee members heard from the following stakeholders: in Fort Simpson, Mr. Duncan Canvin, a resident; in Fort Smith, Mr. Wayne Sterling, a resident, and Mr. Clayton Burke, vice-president of the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce; in Norman Wells, Mr. Winter Lennie, chair of the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board; in Yellowknife, Mr. Charles Dent, MLA for Frame Lake; Mr. John Donihee, legal counsel for Mr. Dent; Mr. Gordon Hamre, a Yellowknife resident; Mr. Barry Taylor from the Yellowknife Shooting Club; Mr. Jonas Antoine, representing the Deh Cho First Nations; Mr. Clem Paul, president of the North Slave Metis Alliance; Mr. Ian McRae, also a Yellowknife resident; Chief Charlie Furlong, Gwich'in Tribal Council; Mr. Bill Erasmus, National Chief of the Dene Nation; and Mr. Lorne Schollar, representing the NWT Wildlife Federation.

The committee would like to thank Mr. Dent and his legal counsel for presenting the bill. The bill would amend the Wildlife Act to reduce the period required to achieve resident status for the purposes of harvesting wildlife from two years to six months.

During discussion on the bill, some members expressed concern that the amendment may infringe upon land claim agreements, compromise current wildlife and harvesting management practices and unnecessarily complicate the concurrent review of the Wildlife Act. The sponsor of the bill advised the committee that in his opinion, the proposed amendment would not infringe upon land claim agreements. Territorial legislation must not be inconsistent with provisions of land claim agreements.

Many stakeholders and some members stated that land claim agreements require mandatory consultation with claimant groups regarding any changes to harvesting or wildlife management in their regions and that the sponsor of the bill did not conduct the required consultation with the claimant groups. The committee notes that the mandatory requirement of consultation applies to the government and not to a private Member sponsoring a bill.

A number of presenters and committee members also expressed concern that a decrease in the residency requirements may result in more hunters and subsequently less game for aboriginal harvesters and other long-term residents. Many aboriginal and long-term residents are dependent upon game as a food source. The inclusion of additional resident sport hunters may compromise that food source.

The presenter of the bill replied that if the privilege to hunt ever interfered with aboriginal peoples' ability to harvest wildlife for

food, resident sport hunters or non-aboriginal hunters would lose some or even all of their privileges to hunt under the existing Wildlife Act.

Finally, a significant number of the presenters and committee members were perplexed as to why the amendment was proposed at this particular time. They noted that a comprehensive review of the Wildlife Act is already underway and further consultation is scheduled during the next two fiscal years. The sponsor of the bill explained that the Wildlife Act review is a lengthy process and this amendment will allow more residents to enjoy harvesting and hunting rights without further delay.

Mr. Chairman, the committee was divided in this matter and following the committee's review, a motion was carried by a slim majority to report Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Wildlife Act, to the Assembly as ready for the committee of the whole. Additional comments or questions of Members may be posed as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I would like to ask the presenter of the bill if he is going to be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, no, I do not have any witnesses.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Members know, there is a comprehensive review of the Wildlife Act in progress with an anticipated completion of that task by the end of this Legislative Assembly. We are now in a public review consultation stage. This is the second review we have undertaken. It is a very thorough exercise. We are looking at beginning to draft legislation as early as next spring and bringing it forward next fall. I am optimistic that this is going to be completed within two years. I do not share the same pessimism that Mr. Dent does that we are not going to be able to complete this task within the life of this Assembly.

Bill 12 has created a lot of confusion with the public. People did not understand that this was not a piece of government legislation. I had numerous letters from people objecting to it, asking why we were picking out this piece and dealing with it in isolation with the rest. I finally had to send a letter out to many people saying this is separate, that this is a private Member's bill.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think picking out specific, favourite pieces is a healthy way to approach a comprehensive review of a piece of legislation. I think it threatens a lot of the coordination that is held together as you do a comprehensive review. In fact, it may jeopardize the public support we have had so far for the overall comprehensive review of the act. That could in itself jeopardize our ability to complete the revision of the Wildlife Act during the life of this Assembly.

I believe we must support the legislative review we have all agreed to as Members of the Legislative Assembly. We cannot each be taking out a piece that we would like to see move ahead more quickly. I think we all have to support the timetable of having this piece completed during the life of the Assembly.

Mr. Chairman, if we were not undergoing a comprehensive review of the Wildlife Act I might feel differently, but because

we already have an exercise in place, I cannot support picking out pieces and dealing with them in advance of the overall review. For that reason, Mr. Chairman, I am going to be voting against this particular bill.

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

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have been a member of the Governance and Economic Development Committee and had the opportunity to go throughout the Northwest Territories and hold public hearings on several bills. This has been one of them. The two bills that brought out the attention of people is Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Wildlife Act and the highway improvement toll. Both bills received overwhelming opposition, and we all know where the highway toll bill is at now. I believe that is where this amendment to the Wildlife Act should go -- the same coffin, Mr. Chairman, the same coffin.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The current Wildlife Act is out of date and certainly in need of an overhaul. The government has made a commitment though, Mr. Chairman, to develop a new Wildlife Act and to have this legislation finalized during this session of this Legislative Assembly, the 14th Legislative Assembly. I am very encouraged by what I have been told by Mr. Handley on this approach and with the timetable that he has committed to. There is a comprehensive public review underway and it is touching base with all stakeholders throughout the Northwest Territories. Meetings and workshops have been held in most communities, including Yellowknife, to draft a new Wildlife Act.

I certainly support the need for updating this legislation. Since the time that Bill 12 was first introduced, I have had an opportunity to check up on the government's approach to this and to review the updated information package that RWED has put into place. Based on this new information, I am satisfied that the concepts embodied in the bill before us now are being considered by the department and the advisory group. As a matter of fact, it has a number of options in the document called "Drafting a New Wildlife Act" on resident hunting licenses.

I am satisfied that the consultation is broad and that it is thorough. If this review was not going to be forthcoming in this Assembly, I might feel differently, but I am confident that it will be coming forward. It is important, in my opinion, that all stakeholders reach consensus on this. We know that in the Territory, we work on that basis on this issue, as well as other issues. The process established by RWED and the advisory group is the appropriate and coordinated way to do it. We must allow the department and the advisory group to be able to finish their work and for this government to bring forward a new Wildlife Act, Mr. Chairman.

I feel that the appropriate process is to follow the work being done by the department and by this government to incorporate any changes. I specifically feel that way at this point because of the time frame that seems to be achievable for us now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. To the bill. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think Mr. Dent has done a very good job of researching and presenting this bill, Bill 12. I commend him for his efforts. However, I do not believe the Member has the resources to really give us the comfort that although this bill seems to be worded so that it is geared towards hunters in the Yellowknife area, and probably would be geared for hunting caribou, we have to realize this bill goes across the board and affects all the different regions.

I have a lot of concern because I do not believe we have been able to take the moose population, for example, and go out there. There is no mechanism in his tool bag to tell us what that population is. We know in the regions that moose are harder to get, woodland caribou are harder to get. In the region I represent, the area of hunting is becoming smaller. The larger snowmobiles, easier access to snowmobiles and faster boats, all make our hunting areas smaller. Some of us have hunting areas that border other regions. In my case, in the communities that I represent, we border along the Dogrib Nation, the Akaitcho Territory and South Slave regions. So no matter which way you go to hunt, you are going to run into people from other communities, other areas. So we have to remember that this bill is aimed at the short-term or new residents, and not at the long-term resident hunters. There is an opportunity for people to hunt and it is just a small population. However, it will impact us in terms of activity and it will affect us across the board.

I had an opportunity to talk to several people in my riding and many people feel that six months is not long enough for people to move here from a different area, from different cultures and different histories and different traditions to come here, to live here amongst us and to gain a respect of our land, of our people, of our culture, of our traditions. So therefore, I have a lot of problem with this, especially to compound that with the fact the Wildlife Act is currently under review. A comprehensive review is underway and I feel that this attempt to introduce this bill at this time is an attempt to short-cut the system and I do not appreciate that.

We also have to remember that there are many land claim negotiations underway, many self-government negotiations still in process. This is an issue that is on the table for them. If that is the case, then there should be a mechanism for aboriginal people to have a vote, especially the ones who will be affected, that have processes in place. They should be allowed to have a say in the matter and the process that has been introduced by my colleague just does not allow them to be consulted and have a say, so I am going to be voting against it. I cannot support this bill. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. To the bill, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too have some real problems with regard to this introduction of this bill at this time. We have an obligation to consult. There is a process in place. For me, the big issue on this one is the whole aspect of looking at wildlife, the human activities that happen in the North and also looking at the ability of ourselves as a government and as people to manage our resources and to have the tools to ensure the protection of our wildlife.

Yes, everyone would like to have the Wildlife Act amended yesterday but it has been a long term. As Mr. Dent states, it has been 20 years. A lot has happened in the North in the last

20 years. We have seen some major impacts with regard to how activities happen in the North. We have entrenchment of people, roads, activities in the Northwest Territories that have an effect on the environment, on our resources, especially on wildlife. We have a lot of outdated laws and regulations. For me, if anything, the big thing is the enforcement abilities of ourselves as government, as wildlife officers to do an adequate job to ensure the protection of our wildlife by way of establishing legislation.

Right now, someone can go out and break the law with regard to the Wildlife Act by poaching, hunting out of season or even where it pays to break the law, knowing the penalties we have in our legislation are so weak that it pays to allow an outfitter or big game hunter to take the other game because he knows for the amount of money he will bring in, the penalties we have are so small that it does not affect them. Under the legislation, there is nothing we can do about it because the way the legislation is drafted, it does not do justice.

I think we have to allow for the process to take place so we do not just deal with one little issue, such as the resident thing, but look at the overall Wildlife Act to ensure that we do a thorough review, take the time, do it right. For Mr. Dent and the people he says he represents, the people who are classed as not having that ability, for them to be able to have an opportunity, for them to air their concerns at the public review process that everyone else is taking advantage of right now.

The public hearings today are taking place in the Beaufort-Delta region. Those processes are ongoing. We have to realize that we do not want to undermine a process that has been long overdue. You have to realize that the issues at hand are a lot bigger than just the residency clause. We have to look at the enforcement side. We have to look at ensuring that the quota systems we have are fair and just. Also, we have to ensure that the wildlife officers and the people we depend on to ensure the protection of wildlife and protection for future generations have the tools to do their job. Unless we make some major sweeping amendments to the overall act, other than just one amendment, it does not really justify the cause.

I do have a major concern with regard to Mr. Dent's amendment, where he says there is no real impact with regard to aboriginal hunting rights and aboriginal claims rights. That is where I have a problem. Being a negotiator with the Dene/Métis claim process, and then the Gwich'in claim and then the Sahtu claim, this section of the land claim agreement, the wildlife sections of all three of those processes was the primary concentrated effort by the First Nations for negotiating rights in the Northwest Territories. For them, it was crucial that they have control, they have a say on wildlife harvesting and they want a management say that is meaningful. They want to be responsible to manage wildlife and have a system in place that is there to ensure the integrity of wildlife in the Northwest Territories will be looked at with regard to how people will be able to allocate licences. What type of licences are going to be allocated? How will quotas be set? How much of a species can be taken? We have to protect the health and well being of those species for future generations.

I will use an example. We can sit here and say we still have a lot of wildlife species. We talk about the Porcupine Caribou herd. In 20 years, the Porcupine caribou herd, the size of the herd 20 years ago from where it is today has dropped by 50,000 animals in 20 years. So if one herd can drop by that

large a number, by 50,000 animals, think of where we will be in the next 20 years. I think we have to plan long term. We cannot just be shortsighted and focus on one thing. We have to focus on the whole aspect of wildlife and as legislators, we have to do this right and realize this is the only chance we are going to get to do a thorough review of the Wildlife Act in the Northwest Territories, to bring it in line with the rest of Canada and also bring it in line with other jurisdictions.

If you break the law, you will get fined \$100,000. In the Northwest Territories, you break the law, the most you can get fined is \$10,000. It pays to break the law in the Northwest Territories. I think it is important that we focus on those types of things.

With regard to land claim agreements, it is clear that the powers of the boards that are established through land claim agreements will have the ability to establish policies and propose regulations to this Legislature to clearly state how wildlife harvesting will take place by a person, including the class of person. So you people who come up here for two months or three months, you can have a process in place through this system that they are going to have through the wildlife board reviews that people will be able to hunt, not use the excuse I cannot hunt because I am up here -- for them, it is a means of managing the wildlife. That is also being able to have that opportunity for First Nations, aboriginal groups and the wildlife boards to ensure there is a means of being able to control the population of the herd by establishing quota systems and wildlife enforcement.

I think on this one, we do have to take the time and we have to look at all aspects, not just focusing on strictly an application process, saying it is not going to affect anything because it is only such a small majority. We have to, through land claim agreements and aboriginal rights, ensure that we do not undermine the process.

I think the First Nations government and the Premier of the Northwest Territories, and even the Minister of Indian Affairs, should seriously look at what implications there are if there are no allowable efforts that an individual Member of the Legislature can overrule a constitutional and protected agreement by making an amendment to a process, without having to consult with those people that they will affect directly, by making piecemeal amendments to take out certain sections of a specific act that has to be amended to bring on land claim agreements, which override the ability of those land claim agreements to do what they were set out to do, such as manage wildlife and also establish policy and procedures to allow for harvesting activities to take place in land claim areas.

I think that it is important that we take the time, we allow for the process to take place. Mr. Dent and the people he is speaking for have an opportunity to due process. They should take advantage of the public process that they are able to go to and state what their concerns are on the residency requirement, say exactly where they want to go.

That is where I am coming from. I think we have to allow for due process. We cannot simply make an amendment here because I think that it is going to be a disadvantage for the people of the Northwest Territories by not allowing due process. By making a simple amendment, I think we can jeopardize the relationship between ourselves, the First Nations governments and claim agreements that have been

constitutionally negotiated and are protected under the Canadian Constitution. With that, I will not be supporting this amendment because I believe that there is a process for it to follow and we should follow that process.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Ms. Lee general comments.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I expected that there might be more people waiting to speak. I just wanted to say a few things to put on the record. When this bill was up for second reading, I supported the bill because I was answering to some of the constituents in my riding who are employed with the RCMP as well as the DND. I had stated my reasons for supporting it then. Also, I wanted to take it out to the public and have an opportunity to have a discussion on it.

I was a member of the Committee who had public hearings on this and it has become a lot more complex, this bill, than I had expected. We had presentations, as the Chair of the Governance Committee had indicated earlier, from various aboriginal leaders. It was an opportunity for me to learn a lot about the environment, which this bill has to consider.

I want to thank the Member for Frame Lake for the work that he has done in bringing this forward. I know there is a pocket of people in Yellowknife, and probably throughout the Territory, who would like to see the residency requirement and the time reduced. However, I want to put on the record that I am going to vote against this bill for a number of reasons.

One, I do believe the process we have going in terms of holding public hearings on the amendments or establishing the new Wildlife Act to accommodate the provisions and conditions that are being set out in the ongoing land claims and aboriginal self-government negotiations has to be respected and reflected.

I want to be clear that I support the intent and spirit of this bill. I do believe that I still would like to see a situation where the people who move here from the south could come here and hunt as early as they can elsewhere. I still believe that people are not going to all of a sudden go out and hunt animals after six months or two years just because the licensing is allowed. I think this is an exclusive thing for those who are into this sort of thing. However, for those who respect nature and who want to engage in hunting, it is very near and dear to their hearts. So I respect the desire for those who want to be able to hunt as soon as possible.

I just think this is not good timing, in light of all that is happening in the Territories. I am not interested in creating a very deep gulf or a difference of understanding between this government and the aboriginal government at this juncture.

I also want to add that to my surprise, I have been approached by a lot of Yellowknifers, long-term Yellowknifers -- non-aboriginal, to be specific -- who have stated that they do not agree with changing the residency requirement to six months. It was a surprise to me because I would be lined up for a coffee and there were more people talking to be about this bill than even the highway commercial truck permit fee.

This has not been easy for me, but I have cased a vote for and against and based on what my constituents have been telling me, in light of the fact that there is a question about process that had to be followed in a bill like this that affects the Wildlife

regulations in the Territory, and in light of the respect that I have for how deeply offended the aboriginal leaders are about this bill, I have to come to this conclusion. I do still believe the intent and purpose of this bill really does not interfere with the aboriginal government's power to control. I will just close my rambling on by saying I am going to vote against this bill. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In speaking to the bill before us, it has been a difficult process. I come from a family that for years have survived with subsistence harvesting as a main part of our diet as we grew up as children backhome in Inuvik. My father still today goes out and takes part in harvesting activities and trapping and hunting, and my brother continues. I have many aunts and uncles who take part in a yearly activity, whether it is beluga whale hunting or caribou hunting, moose hunting. As well, I have a lot of long-term Northerners born in the Territories who take part, not to the same degree as the Inuvialuit or the Gwich'in or the other aboriginal people of the Territories.

It is still difficult when we come to an issue like this and listening to the people who spoke and presented to the committee made the decision no easier.

At second reading, I supported this bill to get it to the process of going through the public hearing so that we could get more input from the people of the Territories, and that we did, Mr. Chairman.

For myself as a Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, having two claimant groups settled in the area and having established their wildlife management regimes and having those in place, I do not have as much concern. However, I also hear other Members where negotiations are still ongoing, that there are some concerns there.

During committee process, I found myself in another difficult position -- being chairman of the committee when the vote, as I stated in our report, was a slim majority. It was slim majority because it required the chairperson to break a tie. For allowing again, public process, I supported moving it back into committee of the whole. Then I stated at that time on the record that I did so not because it was my personal agreement with the bill, but the fact of following convention as chairperson. I did inform them that my opinion would change once we got to this scenario when we came to the committee of the whole process.

Again, in stating that, the bill as it stands, and listening to a lot of the people in the Territories, going from two years to six months was just too much. As well, the concern with consultation with aboriginal groups was a very significant one. At one point, I requested a legal opinion from our Law Clerk, who was with the committee, as to our responsibility as a committee when it comes to consultations with land claim groups that have claims in place and that require consultation on any change to the Wildlife Act. Upon receiving information back and an opinion, it was clear that in fact, when it comes to the act itself, the law itself, the committee has the ability to carry on.

However, the emphasis lies on the government, that being Cabinet and specifically the department, to ensure that groups

are informed. I think we need to clarify that very clearly so that we do not have another situation where a private Member's bill may come in and cause so much concern with process. With that opinion, Mr. Chairman, I found and understand our position is we can move forward on this. There are concerns out there that again the time limit is too much of a change and we actually heard the otherwise, that some groups would rather see the time be lengthened and that some courses be taken before a new resident of the Territory will be allowed to go and hunt. That as well could be as much controversial, in that sense.

To the bill itself, Mr. Chairman, as the bill sits, I cannot support the bill. That is why in looking at and reviewing the bill, I had requested some amendments be worked on and as we go clause by clause, I will be presenting two amendments to this bill. I will address it in this way, Mr. Chairman. Again, the concern of the timing and the amount of time going from two years to six months was too much, and again, I am trying to address the concerns of my constituency and be fair.

As I stated, when I spoke to this bill at second reading, it is a difficult position on one hand to look at my own ancestry and put a position forward, but then as well, to look at my responsibility as a Member elected to this Assembly by people who cast their vote in an open system. I feel I have to try to work with both ends, traditional as well as the population and society as it changes. We need to adapt to a certain degree as well. So I have looked at the six-month category and as we go through this and go into the clauses, I will make an amendment that will increase the time line to go in between what is proposed and what is existing. I am suggesting that potentially we look at a 12-month period.

Another area is trying to make sure we cover the consultation phase properly. With that, I would propose again as we go through this, I would add another clause to the fact that this bill, if it is passed, that it does not come into force until June of 2002. That would give the department time to consult and find out if this is something that could even be looked at.

I also hear from the Members here and I understand. Again, it is very controversial in the sense of the processes we are involved in. It is a difficult position but I think there is a need to try to address this in one form or another. That is why I have had some work done in looking at amendments to the amendment that is being proposed by Mr. Dent. I guess it comes to times like this when we, as a majority, will decide on how things go. I will respect the majority of this House. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments? Mr. Braden

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I am going to speak in support of the bill. I think Mr. Dent has fairly extensive history with this issue and that he has acted in the best interest of his constituents in bringing this forward. I share that constituency base and I feel that I have a support and obligation to help see this through. The discussion has been very, very helpful to me, Mr. Chairman, even as a resident of 35 or 36 years now in the Northwest Territories and part of that in the Yukon.

The attachment and the values accorded to wildlife I have felt was always something I understood. This whole process has really helped to illustrate the depth and the scope that our

people attach to wildlife and access to it. It was very illustrative to see how aboriginal and non-aboriginal people regard this. There is an equal degree of intensity on this, but coming from very divergent, a sense of values and ideals.

One of the things I would like to stress is that as a jurisdictional area, the bill does not, to my understanding, impose anything at all that would inhibit the access of aboriginal people to wildlife. These are rights and privileges that they already enjoy. They have been hard won over the years and should stay in place. The jurisdiction here though is in Crown lands, outside of those specially negotiated areas and from my perspective, Mr. Chairman, had a lot to do with the access of all Canadians to a resource that they can get enjoyment from, that they can get sustenance from. The restriction of two years residency on any Canadian to have access to this resource, I felt in agreement with Mr. Dent, was excessive and we could afford to open this up. So it is on that principal, Mr. Chairman, that I find I can continue to support this bill.

The argument of process and how this initiative was skirting the already extensive and well-established consultation process that was going on into the Wildlife Act is a powerful argument and one that I cannot really challenge. It certainly did seem to be an initiative from the point of view of those involved in the consultation process and from the government side, to be something that was an interference.

In that respect, I want to acknowledge that process is in place and is one that should not lightly be tampered with. I will return to that particular principle of the idea that this bill is an initiative that really does grant something that all Canadians should have access to. I think it was just in this morning's CBC newscast that there was a story, I believe, from Inuvik that talked about a resident of Inuvik, a relatively new resident of Inuvik from Newfoundland, who felt so strongly about this and was so upset that he could not go out and get a moose in the NWT that he went back to Newfoundland, got a moose and brought it back to the NWT. That is a very interesting illustration of the value and the significance that some people put on wildlife. As I say, Mr. Chairman, it really has been illustrated for me how strongly people feel about this.

We have had many, many different positions put down. I hope the discussions we have had and the positions that people have taken will not polarize the larger discussion on the review of the Wildlife Act. It seems that the overall residency clause is one that will still be open after this debate tonight in this Assembly and I do hope that everybody still continues to have an open mind. Even though a lot of fur has been flying on this one and a lot of feathers ruffled, we have locked a lot of horns - should I keep going or should I stop there?

This is a very useful debate and a significant one and it is not over yet, but there is that very strong principle of access that Canadians should have to the resource. With that, Mr. Chairman, I will conclude my remarks in support of the bill.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Braden. I have Mr. Bell. General comments.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Dent for coming forward with this proposal. I know he personally spent a lot of time and effort on this, doing the research and compiling the information that Members see here before us. I would like to thank him for that. I know it has been a long time in getting this together.

I have a couple of points that I would like to make in speaking to this. I will acknowledge, as the government has been clear to point out, that there is a process underway. They are conducting a review of the Wildlife Act. Unfortunately, this is about a ten-year process and I, like some of the speakers who have presented here today, am not convinced that this review will be concluded before the end of this Assembly. I do not think the government can give us any assurance and I do not think that this will be the case. It is unfortunate that newcomers to the North are inhibited by not being able to hunt.

On the one hand, there are very good reasons why people should at least have spent a meaningful amount of time here so that they do understand the land and cultures of the Northwest Territories before they go out to hunt. On the other hand, the time should not be so onerous that people who have spent a significant amount of time here still are unable to hunt. We do have the strictest regulations for residency in this area in the country, as I understand.

Another point that was made earlier that I agree with is that conservation is achieved by regulating the number of animals in areas where game may be harvested, not by imposing an arbitrary residency requirement. I think this is true. If we want to talk about conservation, and if there are issues about conservation, it is up to this government to investigate and use some of the tools at its disposal to make sure that wildlife species are not at risk, and to make sure that aboriginal people who rely on animals for subsistence come first. I think that this government has an obligation under the Wildlife Act to do just that. If there are concerns about that, certainly this government has to look at that.

I do agree that, as the act states, it is implicit that if the privilege to hunt ever starts to interfere with aboriginal peoples' ability to harvest wildlife for food, resident sports hunters would lose some or even all of their privileges to hunt under our existing Wildlife Act. That gives me some comfort that as long as we monitor the situation, adding more hunters -- as long as we do not go crazy with the number of animals that can be harvested -- should not be a concern.

The one thing that I would like to make clear, Mr. Chairman, is that I do not think six months is a significant amount of time so that people do have an appreciation for the area and the culture in the Northwest Territories.

Like Mr. Roland, I agree that a longer period of time, somewhere in the middle, probably a year, would be more acceptable to me. Certainly a coming-into-effect date later next year would also be more agreeable so that there is a chance to do some consultation and let people know exactly what this means. The government can take it out there and reassure residents and reassure all the people of the Northwest Territories that this does not mean there is going to be a run on the number of animals harvested.

Mr. Chairman, I would not support the bill in its current form but I would support it if we expanded the residency requirement to a year instead of six months and looked at a date in the summer for a coming-into-effect date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been aware of this private Member's bill and have not had the opportunity, like some Members, to hear some of the public input on it. It has not been something that has been brought to my attention by constituents. However, just listening to the debate here in the House tonight on it, some of the arguments that have been made on both sides are not entirely rational to my way of thinking. I hear that perhaps extending the residency requirement from six months to 12 months is somehow going to affect the applicant's knowledge and respect for the land, and somehow affect the kind of respect that they would show when they are out there hunting. That to me is just not a rational kind of argument.

On the other hand, I hear the concern of some of the aboriginal presenters to the committee, thinking that even two years is not long enough for somebody to be here to gain access to this kind of a privilege. On the other hand of that, there are ways and means of managing the inventory of the herds and the numbers so that we are not into a situation where we are depleting the herds or animals inventory. It seems like that is not really an issue or a problem either. I do not know. Some of the arguments that I hear being brought forward here tonight are a little bit shaky.

I think that although sports hunting is not something that is very dear to my heart, I can understand why some people coming here would think that this would be a great opportunity for them. I know of young people who have come here, even to teach school, that have come from other provinces and probably could make this their home, that could be a drawing card for them if they had access to hunting rights.

This is a tough one because of the process that is already underway as well. I am not overly optimistic that this is something that is going to happen, this revision to the legislation in a timely fashion, so I guess I am going to go with the compromise here tonight and go with the suggestion that Mr. Roland has made that perhaps going from two years to six months is too much of a leap. If it is any consolation to the people who are concerned about the residency to go to a one-year requirement, I could see that being a compromise and serving the interests of those who would like a shorter waiting period and hopefully also respecting the interests of those who feel six months is too short.

I will support the bill with the amendments that have been put forward by Mr. Roland. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Delorey, general comments.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as everybody knows, I seconded this motion when it first came forward to this bill. I would like to thank Mr. Dent for all the work that he has done in bringing this private Member's bill forward. He has done an awful lot of research and did a very good job in presenting it to us.

I was also on the committee that went around the North doing public consultation on this bill. I know that in Yellowknife, there was a large turnout here for comments on the bill. It certainly was not totally negative. There were a number of groups represented in support of this bill.

I have also been talking to a number of people in Hay River, where I come from. I must say that for the people who have come forward and talked to me on this bill, I would have to say that it was pretty well 50/50 as far as supporters of this bill and people against it.

However, some of the things I have heard on the negative side of this is they did not want it to happen because what it would do to them -- and I am talking here about resident hunters who have already been here for over two years -- their opposition to it was just the fact that if more hunters come along and the game population drops down, they would be affected by it, so a not-in-my-backyard type of thing, I guess.

I have other problems with the opposition to this bill for reasons of the number of hunters that it would create and the number of animals that would be taken from it. There are things happening in the Territories that when I look at it, especially when you go in the Norman Wells area and you see plane loads of hunters getting off all dressed in camouflage outfits, going in simply because they have a lot of money and are willing to pay, can go in the bush and kill game, pretty well guaranteed that they are going to get some of our best wildlife. I guess, to the same extent, resident hunters or non-resident hunters that want to pay large sums of money can go out, pay an outfitter, go out and hunt.

So to me, that does not tell me that it is a case of not having enough game or that more hunters are going to deplete our game populations. It simply tells me that if you have the money, you can do it, whereas a resident who has been here for whatever the required amount of time is, if he cannot afford to do it, then he is going to be left out. That creates a problem for me.

When we say that conservation is a big issue, I think conservation is something that we are responsible for. RWED or the aboriginal groups that are controlling game on their lands, if they have the proper quotas in place and the people to enforce the amount of hunting that is going on to supply the data, how much game is being taken and what is sustainable, then I think that is our area. I think the government should have good data as to what game we have and how much game is being harvested.

I have been in the Territories for 32 years and I have done some hunting in the Territories but I do not hunt anymore. I think what Mr. Dent has said about the number of resident hunters decreasing, I go along with that because I have seen it. I have also seen though that the game populations have been dropping, especially in our area. I can remember I rode on trains for just about 30 years between High Level and Hay River. We used to see an awful lot more game than what we do now, especially woodland caribou.

At the same time, I would not say that the reason that the game is no longer there or the game populations have dropped, I cannot rightfully say that those reasons are all because of resident hunters. As a matter of fact, I know that is not the reason, or not totally the reason.

We also heard from people that have presented to us that you cannot manage wildlife. Wildlife manages itself. All we can do is put regulations in place and make sure that the amount of harvesting that we are allowing, from whoever it is, whether it is a resident or a non-resident or aboriginal, if we are allowing

over-hunting, then we will deplete the game that we have. As far as the management of it, they will manage themselves.

I know there is a concern about saying if we reduce the residency to six months or a year, that it is going to create a huge influx of people coming just to hunt. I just do not see that. Right across the country, if you go, you will see the number of hunters are dropping, especially in the younger generation. There is not the interest in hunting that there used to be. It is the same in Nova Scotia. There is still a lot of game down there but there just are not the hunters that there used to be.

As far as people coming into camps that are coming on eight-month jobs, I do not see where they would have any chance of being a resident anyway. There is still criteria they have to meet to become residents. I just do not see where that would be a big thing.

I know though that when we encourage people to come to the North and work here, we do not hesitate to encourage them to buy houses and pay taxes and contribute to the economy and the Territory, so I tend to think that if we penalize them for a year by making them wait to hunt for a year or so, that would be long enough. I think that as Canadians, we all have the right to move around and enjoy wherever we choose to settle down or live, whatever there is to offer there. I think we have a right to enjoy some of that.

Maybe six months is a little bit short. I would be quite willing to support a one-year residency clause. If that amendment comes through, I would be supporting that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to say that I do not support the bill. I have talked with my leaders in my communities. They gave me the option of supporting it or not supporting it. They left it up to me. I have also talked to the elders. The elders say that there is a process happening right now. Two of my communities have seen the group that came into town. They have talked to them and they have told them what they wanted.

The people out there want the process to go ahead and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development to go as fast as they can in making this process go ahead and finalize it and make the amendments to the act if there are going to be any changes.

Also, from personal experience, I can tell you that there are more hunters out there. Maybe the people in the larger centres do not see that because they do not hunt anymore. I have to say that just from experience alone, just last weekend I went to go out and get some firewood. I saw hunters almost every kilometre on the road towards Providence. They could be out there hunting bison, moose, woodland caribou, I am not sure but they were there.

Just counting the 290 people that Mr. Dent has in his report here, if you put 290 people between here and Rae, you would have about three hunters per kilometre, never mind the ones that already have GHLs. Now you put that on the Ingraham Trail, how many would that get you? Over a thousand people on the weekend hunting out there.

Just counting that, I cannot support that. As for the person in Inuvik that had to go to Newfoundland to get moose meat, that guy is making too much money. To top it off, it is illegal to haul meat across the border. That is all I have to add to it, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Maybe it is something that the Minister can check into. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have to commend the Member for his determination in bringing the bill forward, even though he knew that there was a lot of opposition to the proposal. I think it may have served one good thing and that is to highlight the need for review of the Wildlife Act. That seems to have been a message come out from the general public very strong that they would like to see that act brought forward for amendment. I noticed that the government is working on that.

I have a couple of points to bring out on the bill. I note that neither the committee nor the Member toured my riding to get input on this bill. I note that there is a meeting in Paulatuk right now this evening on amendments to the bill and I know that a lot of people are wondering why we are trying to vote on this here when they are still trying to think about it over there. So there is obviously going to be confusion of that nature for a while, until this is resolved.

In the Member's overall statement, he recognized the fact that the same discussion took place 20 years ago. I took part in a lot of those discussions. I do not hear much different concerns being expressed then as there are now. It is very much similar concerns, both for and against. In the end, after long debates, the decision was to go to two years. I have been a professional hunter for many years -- all my life, as a matter of fact. I do not think that I would feel confident in moving to a new area and hunting in that area in less than two years. I do not feel comfortable to go into Fort Smith and start hunting buffalo. I have never done it. I would not be sure that I would be qualified to do it, even though I have been hunting all my life. The same; I question Mr. Miltenberger's ability to hunt polar bear down in my area.

There are a lot of points, Mr. Chairman, that are not really being brought out at this time. Hopefully, they will be brought out as the department does its consultations. I cannot go along with a suggestion of less than two years.

I know there are very serious considerations to go away from two years to any amount. I believe that time lines should be different, even in some areas. As a matter of fact, there are different time lines and there are different regulations for hunting different species right now. All this has to be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, I do appreciate the Members efforts in bringing to the attention of this government the need to review that bill as soon as possible.

With that, I will be voting along with Cabinet to oppose the bill. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Steen. General comments. Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman I am not going to support the bill or suggest an amendment because of the overwhelming opposition to it in my constituency when I

toured. As well as reading the different letters from different leaders, who have spoken to me on this item.

First of all, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley, is right that a lot of people out in our communities look at the Legislative Assembly and lump us all under government. They do not differentiate between ordinary MLAs and the Cabinet. I had to tell them that this is a private Member's bill. Mr. Dent put this forward and this is an issue that has been out floating around this House as far back as I can remember. There is no support for it in the past to deal with it and I would like to commend the Member for bringing it forward, although I am still not going to support it.

The reason for that is like I stated when this motion was put forward a few months ago. The current Wildlife Act is undergoing comprehensive review that will lead to a new Wildlife Act. There is extensive consultation going on now in the communities. Aboriginal First Nations, Metis from different communities, from different band councils, the different regional aboriginal government organizations have agreed to participate in this review. There is a problem that we have here as government that while already doing a review of the total Wildlife Act, whereas a single issue benefiting a single group that has very wide ranging ramifications for the whole area of wildlife and aboriginal rights is thrown into there because of treaty issues, it is going ahead of the process. There is a review going on and people in the review are wondering, are we just wasting our time in this review of the Wildlife Act while this is going on? What are you guys doing there in government? I have to remind you that we are all lumped together as government.

I have to tell them that we set out on a process and we should stick to it. Both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people have contributed to this review of the overall amendment to the act.

I just wanted to make that point that there is a process in place that we have to stick by. My concern has always been this; if any research has been done to try to determine the future development in the North and how many new workers are we going to have and what kind of impact is it going to have on the existing wildlife population, there is no real research that has been done to try to determine how many new individuals will qualify for this reduction in waiting time and what impact it is going to have on hunting and people who are currently hunting.

The fear of aboriginal people is that through the treaties in 1921, which were signed 80 years ago, the agreement for allowing a government of the Crown going on to our land was that we would always have our hunting, trapping and fishing rights protected.

Even today, with the impact that we have, like Mr. Delorey said, there was a decline in wildlife, caribou and moose in the Hay River area. You look at Hay River, it is getting to be fairly populated already. That is just a tip of the iceberg on what you are going to see in the future. That already has an impact on the Dene who live in the Hay River area and how far they have to go to get caribou and moose now to put food on their table.

We have not really determined what the impact of other uses of wildlife, especially the Dene and the Metis people, the Inuvialuit people are going to have on this. There are a lot of things that we still have to look at in terms of a management side and administration side and the impact it is going to have.

That leads me to the land claims that are still outstanding. There are the Deh Cho process. That is there. There is a letter from the Grand Chief of the Deh Cho First Nations, Mike Nadli, who is saying that this issue must be addressed through the Deh Cho process negotiations. The issue is that they have not agreed whether the GNWT has jurisdictions over hunting and wildlife management in the Deh Cho. The Wildlife Act was imposed on them so the leadership there have not really agreed to it or submitted to it yet. This is clearly a fundamental issue of First Nations jurisdiction.

Eighty years ago, the treaty was signed, 1921, and the Wildlife Act is 20 years old. So 60 years after the treaty was signed, this Wildlife Act was put into place. It was a heck of a debate. If you research it over the two-year residency clause in the past, as Mr. Steen was saying, there is a very serious, deep concern on what does that mean to the trust relationship that is there? Dene Nation National Chief Bill Erasmus is questioning why we should be considering new and separate legislation outside of the review already underway? He goes further to say that this type of process breaches on disrespect and violation of the longstanding treaty relations that we have with the federal and territorial governments and hinders the trust factor within that relationship.

He goes further, suggesting that there has to be full input by residents of the Northwest Territories to willingly demonstrate to work together on such proposed legislation. The public should be invited to participate in the current overall review of the Wildlife Act, which would fully ensure full consultation.

I agree with that notion that there is a process in place that as a government, we initiated. This Bill 12 is premature and it is not supported by the majority of the people I represent in my region, as well as the comments that I heard and the feedback I received from the other aboriginal leadership that I have talked to. I just wanted to include that as my comments on this bill. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have waited to respond to some of the issues that have been raised until I thought that all Members had concluded and before we go into the clause by clause. I guess I would have to say Minister Handley accused me of being a pessimist. After you have heard the comments around the table tonight, I would say I was an optimist if I am coming forward with this legislation right now.

However, what I would like to do first of all is just respond to the concern that Mr. Handley first raised, which was the issue of the process that is underway right now and why I would be moving forward with this. If you look back into Hansard, March 25, 1993, you find the Minister for Renewable Resources talking about a comprehensive review of the Wildlife Act of the Northwest Territories, that at that point had been underway for some time.

If you move on through Hansard to November of 1993, there has been a change in the Ministers. Now, the Minister is the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi. At that time, in responding to a question about the time he was going to take to revise the Wildlife Act, Minister Kakfwi said, "This has been something

that has been worked on for at least the last six years that I have been around."

So in 1993, the comprehensive review had been underway for six years. Why have I chosen to move ahead with one little aspect of it? I think that, Mr. Chairman, answers the question, is that this comprehensive review has been underway in various forms, various manners for that long. For ten years that I have been a Member, I have seen the process undertaken. I think that after ten years, in another eight years, Minister Handley has not been a Member yet for quite two, but perhaps when he reaches ten years, he will not be quite as optimistic about what government consultations will be concluded in the next two years either. Given the experience with what I have seen, I have very little confidence that he will be anywhere near as confident then as he is now.

As Minister Ootes pointed out, part of what we have to try to do here is have all stakeholders reach consensus and that is what has caused us to take so long. The first go-round when Minister Kakfwi was talking about it having been six years, that was -- at that point, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement was eight years old. It was eight years after that final agreement before the government was even looking at doing something on it. It took six years of consultation to try and get somewhere on it.

Talking about looking at how things were being done, there never really was a consensus reached on it. What the government finally did was they took the wording on wildlife from the final agreement and just brought it into the Wildlife Act. There was never any consensus reached by all the stakeholders about how to address it in a comprehensive way.

My concern is that we are going to wind up with that same sort of situation here. I think that, as Minister Ootes says, we have to try and reach that consensus. It is very important. We have a responsibility that you, Mr. Chairman, have pointed out, to consult and to respect what has been negotiated in agreements with aboriginal governments to make sure that sort of process is followed through. We do have to make sure that there is a sincere attempt to reach consensus. We cannot be rushed.

I do not think we can say with any sense of certainty that it is going to happen in the next two years. If the time is not right, then it will take longer than two years. I think we have to respect that is what is going to have to happen.

I think part of the problem has been -- probably the biggest problem has been because there is, I believe, a very emotional, visceral reaction to anything that has to do with wildlife among many northern residents. I have come to understand that better through this whole process.

I have obviously been unsuccessful at convincing a number of people that all we are talking about here is non-aboriginal people's privileges. This government has a legal responsibility to ensure that the boards that you talked about, Mr. Chairman, are respected in their views when it comes to hunting rights in the Northwest Territories.

We are talking about only the animal populations that are left over after the rights of those who have the right to hunt are protected because those of us who are non-aboriginal do not have that right.

It is something that if there is a situation where there would be any interference with the number of people to be out there hunting, or if there would be any interference with aboriginal people's ability to hunt, then the treaty and legal rights would have to be respected and that could cut into the privileges of non-aboriginal people. That might mean that they do not get to hunt anymore. That is really what it might mean.

I think clearly Minister Antoine talked about how people perceived this in his region and talked about, I think he said wide-ranging ramifications over wildlife and treaty issues. Again, that obviously indicates that people have not been convinced that we are talking about is a small number of animals that have to be divided up among those in the Territories who have a privilege to hunt. If it ever gets to the point where those who hunt with a privilege start to interfere with those who hunt by right, then those who hunt with a privilege will lose that privilege.

I guess that is where I maybe failed in this bill. Part of that comes back to again, it is something that you brought up, Mr. Chairman, was consultation. I agree that it is absolutely imperative that there be consultation on changes in wildlife legislation. I think that is set out in all of the agreements that have been set.

As Mr. Roland pointed out, the legal advice that I had and that his committee also received, that responsibility falls on the government. An individual Member does not have the resources to undertake the sort of consultation that needs to be done.

For that reason, I welcome the amendment that Mr. Roland has proposed. A coming-into-force date I think would allow that sort of thing to happen. It is obviously an issue we are going to have to deal with here in terms of private Member's bills because given the number of agreements we have in the Territories, what is the process for consultation? Private Members cannot be expected to undertake the consultation that is required and yet we should not be limited from being able to bring forward proposals for legislation. Every Legislature in the Commonwealth allows private Member's bills to come forward and be considered.

So what happens here is that we have run into a bit of a problem with our process because private Members do not have the resources to undertake the sort of consultation that is now envisioned in a lot of these agreements.

I think maybe because there has been a failure for people to recognize the difference between rights and privileges of some people, it is going to be difficult to move this one along as quickly as I think it should be. As I said, I have been elected for ten years. I first asked the Minister of Renewable Resources about this issue I think nine and a half years ago and was assured that the comprehensive review was underway and I would see the results before the next election.

Well, two elections have come and gone since then. I am afraid that there is going to be a third election come and go before we get anywhere on this thing. That is why I thought that given the legal advice that I had, Mr. Chairman, that said that this change would impact only on non-aboriginal people and not on aboriginal people's rights, I felt it was something that could be severed from the rest of the consultation process and move on.

I am prepared to accept and support Mr. Roland's amendments, both of them, as a compromise to see if we move this along. I guess all I can say, Mr. Chairman, is that I hope Members will give it some consideration.

One last thing I should say has to do with a comment made by Mr. Lafferty. There are perhaps some resident sport hunters who might be categorized as having a lot of money and therefore able to purchase meat without needing to hunt it, but I could certainly take Members from this House around my constituency and introduce you to people who depend on being able to hunt for food and who depend on country foods quite a bit in order to ensure that they have a healthy amount of food.

I think it is worth remembering too that our food basket rates and income support were set with the understanding that people would be able to supplement that food with country food. There are a number of people who are disqualified from being able to do that with our current regulations.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Any other general comments? If not, does the committee agree to proceed with a clause-by-clause review of Bill 12?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to get clear here. I am hearing nays, yeas, and ways so I am wondering which way to sway.

-- Laughter

I would like to ask for clarification from the House to see exactly who is in favour of proceeding clause by clause and those who are not. I do not know the process here but maybe we could have a show of hands for those people who want to proceed and those who do not. All those in favour of proceeding clause by clause, raise your hand. All those opposed to proceeding clause by clause, please raise your hand.

The nays have it, so with that, sorry, Mr. Dent, the committee does not wish to proceed with the clause-by-clause review of Bill 12.

As a result, we will move to the next item. Committee Report 7-14(4), Committee Report on the Review of the Chief Electoral Officer, 1999 General Election. Mr. Bell, as Chair of the committee, do you have any opening comments? Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: No, Mr. Chairman, I do not have any opening comments, but I do have several motions that I am prepared to move at this point.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Do any Members have general comments on this matter? If not, we will deal with the recommendations by the Chair of the committee. Mr. Bell, do you have a motion that you would like to present?

Committee Motion 32-14(4): To Repeal Section 32 of the Elections Act (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that section 32 of the Elections Act be repealed and that Members or spouses and dependents be enumerated and vote in the constituency in which they reside.

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

Committee Motion 33-14(4): That Elections NWT Develop a Permanent List of Electors (Carried)

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that Elections NWT develop a permanent list of eligible electors with appropriate privacy safeguards.

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

Committee Motion 34-14(4): That Elections NWT Develop an Automated Enumeration Data Entry and Retrieval System (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that Elections NWT develop an automated enumeration data entry and retrieval system.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 35-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act to Reduce the Nomination Period to Five Days (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to reduce the nomination period to five days.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 36-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act Respecting Candidates Withdrawing Their Nomination (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to provide that a candidate may withdraw their nomination up to 5:00 p.m. on the nomination day.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 37-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act to Repeal Revision Day and Substitute Revision Period (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the requirement for the Chief Electoral Officer to designate a specific day as revision day be repealed and be substituted in the Elections Act with the designation of a revision period.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 38-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act to Eliminate Photo Placards (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to provide that the photographs of candidates who supply photos appear on the ballot;

AND FURTHER that the requirement to provide photo placards be discontinued.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 39-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act to Provide Write-in Ballots for Voting by Mail (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to allow the Chief Electoral Officer to provide write-in ballots and voting by mail.

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

Committee Motion 40-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act Respecting Advance Polls (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE this committee recommends that advance polls no longer be held in communities where the returning officer is located, and that the Elections Act be amended to provide that advance polls be held between the hours of 12 noon and 8:00 p.m.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 41-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act to Eliminate Proxy Voting (Carried)

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to eliminate proxy voting.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 42-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act to Permit Returning Officers to Vote (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to permit returning officers to vote at territorial elections.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 43-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act to Establish Special Mobile Voting Stations (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to allow the returning officer, with prior approval of the Chief Electoral Officer, to establish a special mobile voting station for eligible electors residing in a hospital, health facility, senior citizens home or confined to their home for medical or mobility reasons.

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

Committee Motion 44-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act Respecting Refund of Candidates' Deposit (Carried)

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to provide that candidates who file their return respecting election contributions and expenses within the required 60-day period have their deposit refunded.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 45-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act to Provide for a 28 Day Electoral Event (Carried)

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to provide that the length of an electoral event shall be 28 days.

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. Bell.

Committee Motion 46-14(4): To Adopt the General and Technical Recommendations in CR 7-14(4), pp 10-11 (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the general and technical recommendations set out in pages 10 and 11 of the

Committee Report 7-14(4) be adopted by the Legislative Assembly.

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. Is there anything else, Mr. Bell?

MR. BELL: Not at this point, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Committee Report -- Mr. Bell.

Committee Motion 47-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act to Provide for the Appointment of a Deputy Chief Electoral Officer (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have some motions that were not formal recommendations contained in the report, so they are outside the report. The first one, Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE this committee recommends a provision for the appointment of a Deputy Chief Electoral Officer be included in the Elections Act.

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

Committee Motion 48-14(4): To Amend the Elections Act Respecting Returning Officer Appointment Expiration (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE this committee recommends that the Elections Act be amended to provide that the appointment of a returning officer expires 365 days following polling day.

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

Committee Motion 49-14(4): That the Chief Electoral Officer May Re-Appoint a Returning Officer (Carried)

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Chief Electoral Officer have the option of re-appointing a returning officer.

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

Committee Motion 50-14(4): That the Preliminary List of Electors no Longer be Posted (Carried)

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the preliminary list of electors no longer be posted in a public place.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a question. Why is this being put in place, or requested, to remove the voters' list from the public place? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): To the motion. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The preliminary list of electors, as I understand, contains addresses, phone numbers, these kinds of things and it was felt that it was not appropriate to have it posted in a public place. In fact, a lot of this information was considered private.

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

Committee Motion 51-14(4): That Special Ballots be Available (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that special ballots be available upon issue of the writ and be available until 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, the second day before polling day.

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

Committee Motion 52-14(4): That Candidate Returns be Available for Public Inspection (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that candidate returns no longer be tabled in the Legislative Assembly and instead be available for public inspection at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

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

Committee Motion 53-14(4): That An Elector May Decline to Vote (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that an elector may decline to vote and have that refusal recorded on the ballot and in the poll book opposite their name.

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

Committee Motion 54-14(4): That An Elector Must Swear or Affirm Eligibility to Vote (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I MOVE that this committee recommends that an elector must either swear or affirm their eligibility to vote as opposed to simply producing identification.

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

Committee Motion 55-14(4): That An Elector May Vote in Polling Division Where Resident (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that an elector may vote in the polling division of which they are resident on polling day, notwithstanding that their name appears on another list of electors;

AND FURTHER, that the elector will be required to complete and take an oath of eligibility and provide their former address.

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

Committee Motion 56-14(4): To Repeal Section 51(3)(a) of the Elections Act (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that section 51(3)(a) of the Elections Act be repealed along with all references to and exceptions to ineligibility.

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

Committee Motion 57-14(4): That the Poll Clerk Shall Witness Deputy Returning Officer Providing Assistance (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that only the poll clerk shall witness the deputy returning officer when providing assistance to an elector and marking their ballot.

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

Committee Motion 58-14(4): That Mail-in Ballots be Changed to Special Ballots (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that the committee recommend that special voting opportunity titled "mail-in ballots" be changed to special ballots and that new regulations covering the use of special ballots be developed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Bell.

Committee Motion 59-14(4): That Incarcerated Electors Vote by Special Ballot (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that an eligible elector who is incarcerated shall vote by special ballot. Polls will no longer be conducted at correctional facilities.

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

Committee Motion 60-14(4): Eligibility of Electors in a By-election (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that in the case of a by-election, an eligible elector must be resident in the electoral district from enumeration day or a day determined by the Chief Electoral Officer until polling day.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): 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 Committee Report 7-14(4) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will now move on to Committee Report 10-14(4). Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have further motions that deal with the report on deferred items. Mr. Chair, I am prepared to move those motions at this point if there are no comments.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two motions dealing with deferred items.

Committee Motion 61-14(4): To Amend the Rules of the Legislative Assembly to Add Rule 27(3) (Carried)

The first one, Mr. Chairman:

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended to provide that the item reports of standing and special committees shall be listed as item 4 on the orders of the day on Thursdays.

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

Committee Motion 62-14(4): To Amend Rule 85 (2)(c) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that Rule 85(2)(c) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by deleting "including the office of the Legislative Assembly" after "responsibility of any standing committee."

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): 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 Committee Report 10-14(4) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion to report progress is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 14, Tabled Document 42-14(4), Bill 8, Bill 12, Committee Report 7-14(4), Committee Report 10-14(4) and would like to report progress with 33 motions being adopted, that Tabled Document 42-14(4) and Committee Report 7 and 10 are concluded, and that Bills 14 and 8 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The motion is in order. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Braden. Did I say North Slave? The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden. Sorry about that. It has been a long day. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

I have been requested to advise the House that in reviewing the documents that the honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi, tabled today, which were recorded as Tabled Document 77-14(4), one of the six documents was listed as anonymous. The rules and precedents do not permit tabling of anonymous documents in the House. Therefore, the document has been removed and is not part of Tabled Document 77-14(4). The rest of the documents are considered tabled.

The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake rises on a point of order, Mr. Roland.

Point of Order

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a point of order respecting Tabled Documents 69, 70 and 71 tabled by Ms. Lee and Tabled Document 78 tabled by the Premier today. The rules state that any Member may provide the House any document which is required to be tabled by statute or which may be in public interest. On review of these documents, I am unable to ascertain how they are in public interest and the Members purporting that the tabled documents must, in my view, Mr. Speaker, must be able to establish in what fashion these documents are in the public interest, as they are certainly not documents which are required to be tabled by an enactment or a statute.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I have a grave concern that with the tabling of these documents, of whether these are of legally protected or solicitor-client privileged documents. In reviewing these documents, Mr. Speaker, they clearly were prepared to contradict or influence the debate on the report of the Special Committee on Conflict Process. It appears to me that these documents could be detrimental to the interest of the government as a whole.

I am not completely familiar with what type of documents are permitted to be tabled in this House. My concern is that at least

three of these documents may be documents resulting from the legal advice obtained or authorized by Cabinet. Are these Cabinet documents? Are they privileged documents? If they are privileged and that solicitor-client privilege has not been waived, are all legal opinions provided to this government on this matter now available to anyone who may request them? Did the Member for Range Lake have the appropriate permission from the clients to release these documents? Were they aware of the potential consequences to this government as a whole?

Mr. Speaker, my point of order is how is the public interest advanced by these documents and whether these types of documents, in these circumstances, are documents which can be properly tabled in this Legislature. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is raising a point of order under Rule 43, tabling of documents. To the point of order. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not initially intend to do this, as I figured after the commotion that we have gone through, it was time to get on with the process. However, it seems that this is continued by actions taken in this House and I cannot agree with this. The Commissioner, the Honourable Glenna Hansen, has been advised by legal counsel for the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. The Speaker has advised all Members of this Assembly that there may be litigation pending or arising out of this matter. The Premier has today, and another Member has yesterday, tabled documents that comment on this process. Has the Premier received advice from his deputy Attorney General as to whether these steps may adversely affect or prejudice this government, which is almost certainly to be party to any litigation? Has the Premier considered in any respect the interest of the government as a whole, rather than simply his own interest or that of his immediate staff?

In addition, this matter is one that we had hoped was concluded by the report of the committee, the motions of the House and the motion in front of it respecting the Premier. It was clear the wish of all concerned, including the public, is that we move forward with the business of government. Why is it that the Premier insists on returning to this issue and relighting the fire of controversy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. I would just remind Members that the point of order that was raised is about tabled documents and the specificity of it was that in the area, it states "which may be in the public interest," so just confine your debate to that and not go too far away from it. To the point of order. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had made some comments in July about the concerns I had with the issue at hand. I spoke again as a witness. I spoke also to the report recently and indicated, I believe in Hansard, that my comments were based in part on some of the legal comments and advice I had received. I believe it is in the public interest to share that because my comments, as made in Hansard in the House on the debate, were based on this document that I have now tabled. It is in the public interest to share that, since my comments and my views were based in part on that legal document, the legal comments I tabled today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. To the point of order. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to make a few comments on the point of order raised. Mr. Speaker, the first issue with respect to public interest, I would like to state that in my Reply to Opening Address when I addressed this House, I indicated at the end of my statement that I will be making some documents available on my website. I can advise you, Mr. Speaker, that I have been asked for those copies and it is a promise I made to the public and I wanted to be able to keep that because I do believe there is an interest out there to hear further about what it was I was trying to make under my parliamentary privilege, to speak and opine in this House.

The second aspect of public interest is with respect to making available a forum in which people could make their opinions or positions known when it affects them. As a Member of this House, one of the documents that I tabled is from my constituent. When I am asked to do it, I feel that is within my duty to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know exactly what the meaning of the public interest under section 43 of the rules is but I do believe that it is written in very broad terms and that, given the consequences and implications of that report, I believe very much that it is in the interest of the public opinion to make available as much information as possible.

The second item I want to speak to is with respect to solicitor-client privilege, or privileged documents. As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that where there is any solicitor-client privilege, it is waived or eliminated whenever the person who is in possession of that document waives that privilege. By virtue of the fact that this came into my possession, it was delivered to me and I was asked to table them by those who are the owner, or who have control of that property, I do believe that waives any kind of solicitor-client privilege that there might have been or any of the privilege that one might want to assert.

A third issue that I want to make, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this point of order, is that Mr. Roland mentioned that we have been advised in this House that there may be litigation. It may be that -- I know that Ministers in this House, when they are asked about questions regarding issues before the court, that we are not to comment on them. As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, there is no legal action. I do not know if that constitutes cases where tables cannot be made available. As far as I know, as of now, there is no such action.

I do not believe that having a legal action in itself constitutes a bar from tabling it. Even if that is the case, there is no legal action happening and I do not believe that should be the cause for barring tabling of documents.

The final point that I want to make is the fact that I think it was made abundantly clear in the way the report was presented, the power and authority under which the committee reported the recommendations was under what is called parliamentary privilege. The biggest element of parliamentary privilege is that the Members here are absolutely, 100 percent totally protected from any adverse consequences that may arise out of any activities in this House. There are no adverse implications here for any Members in this House other than maybe political adverse implications, which is not at question.

I do not think there are any Members here who are going to be adversely impacted in terms of how they could conduct themselves as Members or in terms of their parliamentary privilege here to represent their constituents. I do not see there being any basis for thinking that this was in any way to negatively impact the privilege of the Members. I think that it should be made very clear, Mr. Speaker, whenever there were any objections, either in the process of the committee or during our debate, it was pointed out over and over again that the committee had the power and the privilege, under the parliamentary privilege, to make whatever recommendations or actions or options made known to us.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that I as a Member have the equal amount of parliamentary privilege. I have the duty and responsibility to represent my constituents as well as the general interest of the public at large. I do believe that, under any test, under any measure, these documents and tabling of these documents for the purpose of making the information available to the general public would pass any kind of test of public interest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the point of order. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of points in relation to the point of order that I would like to make quickly, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are technical, a couple of them are technical and some are not. I guess I will start with the ones that are not.

First, right off the bat, Mr. Speaker, I had hoped that we had moved past this and could put this behind us, move forward and carry on with the good work that we have to do as a government before us. I do not think it helps us at all to continue to rehash these arguments now in the media. Apparently, we are not moving as quickly ahead as I had hoped we were.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, is to client-solicitor privilege and whether or not that can in fact be waived. If these were Cabinet documents or legal opinions paid for by Cabinet, I am not certain that it would not have to be Cabinet then that waives that privilege.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, we have all been notified through the Commissioner and through yourself that there may be litigation pending. It is possible that some Members of this House, some members of the committee, the government, maybe the Premier, others could be named in such legal action. It seems to me at this point that it would not be appropriate for us to continue to pile on more documentation at this stage and essentially either aid or hinder the possible cases that may come before us.

As Ms. Lee has indicated, there may be political fallout here but certainly our rights are not being infringed. I have never been assured that if I were named in a lawsuit in this matter that my legal costs would be covered. I am not sure that they would, Mr. Speaker, so I do have some concerns and I am not reassured by Ms. Lee's comments here today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the point of order. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, whether or not this is in the public interest is an interesting question. What

has been tabled are obviously legal opinions and on the face of them, they appear to have been prepared to provide points for debate opposing the committee report, which has now been adopted by this House. I would have thought that on the adoption of the report, the item is concluded and this is, in effect, an attempt to re-debate an issue that has been decided by the House. I find that a bit troubling. Whether or not it is in the public interest, I would argue that alone would say that it is not.

I also think it is not in the public interest to table documents that may be used in a legal action against the government. I think it is unseemly to be taking that kind of action before we know just what sort of legal action might be faced in this issue. We had been warned that legal action might be forthcoming and I do not believe that it is in the public interest to either aid or hinder a case before we know what is going to wind up before the courts.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, if you do find that these documents were tabled in the public interest, it also opens up an interesting question. Minister Ootes, for example, has been questioned. There have been numerous requests for him to provide a legal opinion that justifies the clawback of IBAs, for instance. We have always been told that those legal opinions are not available for tabling.

Mr. Speaker, if you find that it is in the public interest for this legal opinion to be tabled, then I would argue that you would have to find that it is in the public interest for all of our legal opinions to be tabled when the government has them so that we all have the benefit of that background knowledge. That background knowledge should not be something that is kept only for one or the other side here. If it is truly in the public interest, it has to be in the interest of all of us to see all the legal opinions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the point of order. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the second opportunity. My motive in tabling the document, as I have said, is pretty clear and simple. It is a support document that I referred to in this House that I based my comments on. I felt compelled to share it since it is important for me to show that I take advice and that I always have some basis for the comments I make, either as a Member of the Legislative Assembly or as a Member of the Executive. Since I have made my views known and they were subject to some criticism, I want Members to know and the public to know that they were based in part on legal comments and advice I received, which I simply wished to share. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. To the point of order. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again in the public interest, I question the fact that we can take public monies to pay for opinions that are for Cabinet and then have them released in his House to potentially be used against us. In fact, we were advised that there may be litigation pending. To still proceed with this makes no sense, as I see it, in the public interest, using public dollars to pay for an opinion, then to table them and for them to possibly be used in lawsuits against this government.

I would like to know, did the Premier have advice on this before he proceeded with this? Did the deputy attorney general give advice in this matter as to whether this was appropriate or not? Again, in the public interest, we are expending public dollars to pay for the opinions that were received and now tabled in this House.

Mr. Speaker, we went through a process and most Members had the opportunity when they were speaking to the committee motion, and in the House, the report, and the motions/recommendations, all Members had an opportunity at that time to do so and they did so and quite strongly, I might add. In fact, at that time, they had an opportunity to move forward with those documents.

Why at this late date and why in this manner, especially when we were all advised of the possible pending litigation out there? It does not make sense that we would be using public dollars to possibly be used against our own government. I think this needs to be reviewed and these documents, I believe, should be pulled. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Any further debate on this point of order? The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to speak on the tabled documents. I read the tabled documents and I see them just as a submissions that should have been given to the committee before it was brought to the committee of the whole. The way I read them, they were almost photocopies identical to what the submissions were from the lawyers. That a colleague of ours from this side of the table could table Cabinet documents does not seem right. It makes you want to question what do you do in the House when you work together on one side of the House? After all, you have to be careful. I have to say that these pieces of information should not be tabled. They should have come to us before the committee as a whole. They should have tabled them or even used them and we could have dealt with them then.

It seems to me now that we are going through the whole process again. It seems to me like maybe next week, I am going to have a whole gallery full of my constituents here again. We are repeating the process that we dealt with and we thought was settled. To have documents like this before us again when we are going to possibly have a legal case here, that is not right. I think these documents should be pulled or else maybe we should reopen up the whole case again. Thank you.

Speaker's Ruling

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Any further debate? Okay, then debate on the point of order is closed. It is not an easy decision to make off-hand because of the nature of the issue. However, there are certain things that do guide the Chair and the Chair has heard from both sides, so to speak, and is of the opinion, based on what has come out in the debate, that by tabling these documents, the honourable Members have had permission to do this by the authors of the documents and that there are certain responsibilities, along with consequences, of tabling documents that by doing so, this becomes public information. The consequences that flow out of that will be theirs.

The Chair is satisfied that the tabling of the documents is in order and that the documents will be allowed to stay tabled. That is the ruling. The honourable Member has no point of order.

Who has their hand next for what? The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 14, notices of motion.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 14, notices of motion. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Bell, notices of motion.

REVERT TO ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 18-14(4): To Amend Rule 85(2)(c) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, November 8, 2001, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Rule 85(2)(c) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by deleting the words "including the office of the Legislative Assembly" after the words "responsibility of any standing committee".

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Bell.

Motion 19-14(4): To Amend the Rules of the Legislative Assembly

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, November 8, 2001, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by adding the following after Rule 27(2), 27(3), the daily order of business in the Assembly on Thursdays shall be:

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

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
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

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

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to Item 16, motions.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to Item 16, motions. Are there any nays? There are no nays, Mr. Bell.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Bell.

REVERT TO ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 18-14(4): To Amend Rule 85(2)(c) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures has recommended an amendment to Rule 85(2)(c);

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly has adopted the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Rule 85(2)(c) of the rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by deleting the words "office of the Legislative Assembly" after the words "responsibility of any standing committee."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All

those opposed? The motion is carried. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion to amend the rules. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Bell.

Motion 19-14(4): To Amend the Rules of the Legislative Assembly (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures has recommended the rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended to allow the item Reports of Standing and Special Committees to appear as item 4 on the Orders of the Day on Thursdays;

AND WHEREAS, the Legislative Assembly has adopted a recommendation of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by adding the following after 27(2): 27(3), the daily order of business in the Assembly on Thursdays shall be:

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

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking consent to proceed with Bill 8. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Steen, you may proceed.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 8: An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the third time.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to deal with third reading of Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2001-2002. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The honourable Member is seeking consent to proceed with Bill 14. Are there any nays? Mr. Handley, you may proceed with your bill.

Bill 14: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2001-2002

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2001-2002, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 14 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills.

I understand that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills and prorogue this session. Mr. Clerk, would you please attend to and escort the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories into the Chamber.

ASSENT TO BILLS

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Glenna Hansen): Please be seated. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, Members of the Legislative Assembly, as we prepare to conclude the Fourth Session of the 14th Legislative Assembly today, I would like to take a moment to remember the late Sarah Simon, who passed away this week in Inuvik.

Mrs. Simon was a respected lady, particularly to the Gwich'in people, but really to all of us who came to know and cherish her in her hundred years. Mrs. Simon spent her life serving others. Her dedication, commitment and humble spirit was a shining example to all of us who work for the betterment of others.

I also want to formally congratulate Mr. Cal Mains on his appointment as the Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Mains is a long-term resident of the Northwest Territories, having arrived in 1950 as a young police officer in Aklavik and retiring for the final time in 1987 in Hay River. I am sure that he will embrace his new role as Deputy Commissioner with the same commitment that he has demonstrated through his many other contributions to our NWT communities.

In this Legislative Assembly, I congratulate you for electing the honourable Member for Thebacha to a position on the Executive Council. Soon after you arrived here as the elected Members, you met in Fort Providence to formulate and define your vision for a better tomorrow for all residents in the Northwest Territories. The vision reflects a common belief that NWT residents must benefit from economic and social development in their regions and that you will pursue this development in the interest of the people you represent.

Next month in Hay River, at roughly the halfway point in your mandate, you will take the time to review this vision and refocus yourselves and your plans to meet those goals, first identified early in your term.

When you return in February, you will be required to pass a budget. The government will also be introducing new human rights legislation. This legislation has been developed following extensive consultation and will create a new system for promoting and protecting human rights that is designed for the Northwest Territories but meets the standards established elsewhere in Canada.

On the brink of unprecedented economic growth in our region in the face of an economic slowdown across our country and in the wake of national and international events that have shaken our world, strong, decisive and above all stable leadership is needed and demanded by NWT residents. It is incumbent on all of us to provide this leadership.

I urge you to take the months ahead of you to fully prepare yourselves for the work that this will entail. Enormous challenges and unprecedented opportunities still lie ahead. Your commitment to the people of the NWT is to work in partnership with each other towards a vibrant, unified and prosperous territory that we can all be proud of.

I would like to commend the 14th Assembly for taking steps to ensure that National Aboriginal Day, June 21st, is celebrated in the Northwest Territories as a statutory holiday. Our territory is the first region in Canada to recognize the contributions of

aboriginal people in this manner. It speaks, I believe, to our ability to serve as a model for nation building for the rest of Canada. More immediately, it proclaims to our nation that the values, traditions, language and cultures of the Dene, Inuvialuit and Metis people define who we are as a territory.

As you prepare to leave this Assembly this evening to return to your communities and people, may God grant you travelling mercies and continue to watch over you, your families and constituents throughout the Christmas season.

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

- Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Education Act;
- Bill 6, National Aboriginal Day Act;
- Bill 7, Powers of Attorney Act;
- Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act;
- Bill 11, Architects Act;
- Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2;
- Bill 14, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2001-2002; and
- Bill 15, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2000-2001.

I wish to announce that the Fifth Session of the 14th Legislative Assembly will convene on Tuesday, February 19, 2002, at 1:30 p.m. As the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I hereby prorogue the Fourth session of the 14th Legislative Assembly. Mahsi.

-- PROROGATION

The House adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

