



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 1

14th Assembly

HANSARD

Tuesday, February 19, 2002

Pages 1 – 20

The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Tony Whitford

(Kam Lake)

Hon. Stephen Kakfwi

(Sahtu)

Premier

Executive Council

Minister Responsible for

Intergovernmental Affairs

Minister Responsible for the Status of

Women

Hon. Jim Antoine

(Nahendeh)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

Minister Responsible for the

Intergovernmental Forum

Minister of Justice

Hon. Roger T. Allen

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Minister of Justice

Minister Responsible for NWT

Housing Corporation

Minister Responsible for Public

Utilities Board

Minister Responsible for Youth

Hon. Joseph L. Handley

(Weledeh)

Minister of Finance

Minister Responsible for the Financial

Management Board

Minister Responsible for the Northwest

Territories Power Corporation

Minister of Transportation

Minister Responsible for the Workers'

Compensation Board

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger

(Thebacha)

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister Responsible for Persons with

Disabilities

Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Jake Ootes

(Yellowknife Centre)

Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment

Hon. Vince R. Steen

(Nunakput)

Minister of Public Works and Services

Minister of Municipal and Community

Affairs

Mr. Brendan Bell

(Yellowknife South)

Mr. Bill Braden

(Great Slave)

Mr. Paul Delorey

(Hay River North)

Mr. Charles Dent

(Frame Lake)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. David Krutko

(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Leon Lafferty

(North Slave)

Ms. Sandy Lee

(Range Lake)

Mr. Michael McLeod

(Deh Cho)

Mr. Steven Nitah

(Tu Nedhe)

Mr. Floyd Roland

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David M. Hamilton

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

Clerk of Committees

Mr. Dave Inch

Law Clerks

Ms. Katherine R. Peterson, Q.C.

Mr. James R. Posynick

Sergeant-at-Arms

Ms. Nicole Latour-Theede

Editors of Hansard

Rich Archer

Sue Ireland

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1
OPENING ADDRESS	1
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	2
1-14(5): PREMIER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE (ANTOINE)	2
2-14(5): NOTICE OF BUDGET ADDRESS (HANDLEY)	2
3-14(5): SESSIONAL STATEMENT (ANTOINE).....	2
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	3
IMPACT BENEFIT AGREEMENT PAYMENTS AND THE INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAM (LAFFERTY)	3
RECENT ACTIVITIES IN HAY RIVER (DELOREY)	3
DAY CARE FUNDING LEVELS (DENT)	4
TRANSFER OF DIAND POSITIONS TO THE NWT (ROLAND)	4
FORMER OLYMPIANS SHARON AND SHIRLEY FIRTH (LEE)	4
HARMONIZATION OF INCOME SUPPORT AND PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMS (KRUTKO)	5
THE POVERTY GAME (BELL)	5
TRIBUTE TO KOLE CROOK (GROENEWEGEN)	5
THE POVERTY GAME (BRADEN)	6
CONDOLENCES TO FAMILIES OF RECENTLY DECEASED TU NEDHE RESIDENTS (NITAH)	6
YOUTH PARLIAMENT DELEGATE LESLIE MERRITHEW (OOTES)	7
DEH CHO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE (ANTOINE)	7
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	7
ORAL QUESTIONS	8
NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS	18
BILL 1: HUMAN RIGHTS ACT (ALLEN)	18
BILL 2: APPROPRIATION ACT, 2002-2003 (HANDLEY).....	18
BILL 3: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC SERVICE ACT (HANDLEY).....	18
BILL 4: AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT (STEEN).....	18
ORDERS OF THE DAY	19

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, February 19, 2002****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

PASTOR CONNIE LANDSTROM: Let us pray together. Gracious and almighty God, today, as the Legislative Assembly begins again, give to those whom You have placed in these seats of honour and power a sense of Your peace and Your presence.

Help them to seek the unity of their people and to promote it. Enable them to feel the suffering of human kind and to work to alleviate it. Encourage them to pursue the truth of human history and to learn from it. Give to them the blessing of sound judgement, the skill of making wise decisions, the patience to act in due time and the tact for being mutually helpful.

We pray for these servants of Your people. Keep them faithful to the office to which they have been charged. Strengthen them, uphold them, guide and direct them each day as they deliberate and debate, as they plan and vision for the present and the future of the Northwest Territories.

Lord, give them council and aid that they may preserve the integrity of this Territory. Give them courage and godly wisdom, oh God, for these are men and women with much power. Permit them to experience the joys of noble service, completed for a grateful people.

May God's grace and peace be with all of you in full measure, from God the Father and Jesus the Saviour, amen.

SPEAKER (Mr. Tony Whitford): Thank you. Please be seated. Colleagues, I understand that her honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to enter the Chamber to give the Opening Address. Mr. Clerk, would you please attend to and escort the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories into the Chamber.

ITEM 2: OPENING ADDRESS

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Glenna Hansen): Please be seated. Mr. Speaker, Deputy Premier, Members of the Legislative Assembly, welcome back to the Assembly.

A new session is upon us and I am sure all Members share in a strong commitment and sense of optimism as we approach the work ahead.

The days are getting longer and the sun once more warms our lands. This time of year invites a fresh perspective and renewed energy.

Adding to this energy in many of our communities has been the excitement of regional competitions and play downs leading up to this year's Arctic Winter Games.

This is a pivotal time for the athletes vying for the right to compete at these games. What began as a dream has begun to materialize. Hard work and determination is reflected in concrete and measurable results.

For those athletes, who will represent the Northwest Territories in Nuuk and Iqaluit, it is time to come together as a team and to renew their effort and commitment to the dream they set out months and maybe years ago.

I am sure you all join me in wishing each and every one of these individuals good luck.

In many ways, your paths are similar to those of the Arctic Winter Games athletes.

You also worked hard to realize the vision which you collectively identified about two years ago. You also are at a pivotal point in your vision of a better tomorrow for the people of the Northwest Territories.

As we begin the Fifth Session of the 14th Legislative Assembly, you must find a renewed effort and commitment to complete the agenda you have set for yourselves.

I listened with interest to Premier Kakfwi's address to the people of the NWT on January 10th.

I was particularly impressed by the commitment given by this government to balancing economic success with the needs of both the environment and people of the NWT.

In the weeks ahead, you face the challenge of balancing these needs with the financial capacity of our Territory. This will be a critical task.

But like the athletes, who will compete next month in the Arctic Winter Games, you can draw on the strength of your accomplishments so far.

The economy of the Northwest Territories is strong.

The possibility of significant equity in the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline is very real.

There is strength and unity in our people and their governments; a growing confidence in partnerships and collaboration; and a new sense of optimism within our youth.

Each of these are key steps towards the completion of your agenda -- and each has been achieved or strengthened by your unity toward a common goal.

I encourage you to maintain this ability to work as one body, one government and one voice as you continue to seek the consensus on which this Legislative Assembly is based.

As you prepare to once again use this forum to address and debate the issues of government on behalf of all people of the NWT, I will encourage your constituents to join your work towards a self-reliant Territory of healthy, well-educated and experienced individuals, families and communities.

Each of us can do our part to improve the quality of our own lives and the lives of others. By focusing on our commitment to our families and children; by encouraging and supporting the importance of education and training in the futures of our youth; and by promoting and practicing healthy lifestyle choices every day.

I would also like to advise all residents of the Northwest Territories that on your behalf as the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I have sent condolences to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, on the passing of her sister Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon.

During this session, government will be introducing the following bills entitled Appropriation Act, 2002-2003 and Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2001-2002, for consideration by this House. The government considers these bills essential to the good conduct of government business and as such, I recommend their passage.

I now declare the Fifth Session of the 14th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories open.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated. Good afternoon, colleagues and special guests in the gallery. Prior to proceeding to the orders of the day, I would like to, on behalf of all Members, thank her honour, Commissioner Hansen, for attending to this opening of the Fifth Session of the 14th Legislative Assembly and for her opening address to us. A very special thanks goes out as well to Mr. Bill Gilday and the 17 members of the choir from the Sir John Franklin High School. Thank you for singing our national anthem so beautifully. It is always a delight to have you visit our Assembly.

I would also like to express our profound gratitude to the members of the Detah Drummers, and to thank them for their gift of music to us today, and to Pastor Connie Landstrom for serving as our chaplain today. Thank you for your prayer and for your words of inspiration to us.

I would like to welcome all Members back from a well-deserved but busy break. We can also look forward now to four weeks of productive and important work in this Chamber.

Orders of the day, item 3, Ministers' statements. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 3: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 1-14(5): Premier Absent From the House

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi will be absent from the House for the remainder of this week to participate in the Canada Trade Mission to Russia and Germany with the Prime Minister and other Premiers. He will

be back in the House on Monday, February 25th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Minister's Statement 2-14(5): Notice of Budget Address

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the Budget Address on Wednesday, February 20, 2002. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 3-14(5): Sessional Statement

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Premier, I would like to welcome everyone back to the Legislature.

I would like to reflect upon the first half of our term to review what we have done and where we are going.

Mr. Speaker, in January, 2000, all Members of this Legislature met in Fort Providence and decided upon a plan of action. That plan, called Towards a Better Tomorrow, is based on what our constituents wanted us to do.

This government took this vision and translated it into six priorities which guide the strategies and policies we have been developing.

Early on, our government realized that implementing our agenda and achieving our potential would depend upon the investments we were prepared to make.

The investment decisions took some courage because of our fiscal situation, but we knew it was right and would produce results.

Mr. Speaker, our constituents expected that we would work in partnership amongst ourselves and collaborate with our counterparts in other governments and organizations.

Our constituents also asked that we give them an open and accountable government.

Our memories from the previous government and division have given us a much better appreciation of public debt, government deficits and the need for governments to live within their means.

So, Mr. Speaker, where are we after the first two years of our four-year term?

Since January, 2000, we have taken our balanced agenda and built solid foundations to support the six priorities of our vision.

We remain committed to implementing this strong agenda, which has been refined based on input from Members and our constituents.

We remain committed to the need for investment not only to take advantage of economic opportunities, but to continue improving the quality of life for all constituents.

We continue to work in partnership amongst ourselves and are committed to making this partnership more effective during the remainder of our mandate.

We also remain committed to collaborating with other governments and non-government organizations who are also working to improve the lifestyles of our constituents.

In closing, I would characterize the themes to guide us during our last two years of our term as:

- A balanced agenda and fiscally responsible budget;
- Working in partnership and collaboration;
- Continuing to invest in the NWT and its residents; and
- Recognizing our fiscal capacity.

I also want to close by thanking our colleagues on the Accountability and Oversight Committee and standing committees for the constructive approach taken in reviewing main estimates, legislation and public policy issues.

We have achieved several objectives in our collective vision and will continue to work to complete the agenda we set up in January 2000 in Fort Providence. I believe we are all up to the challenges ahead. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Antoine. Item 3, Ministers' statements. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 4: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Impact Benefit Agreement Payments and the Income Support Program

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is on an issue I have raised in the House a number of times, and have also written the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Mr. Speaker, impact benefit agreement payments that my constituents and other aboriginal groups receive are clawed back by this government from their income support payments. Mr. Speaker, these payments are given to the aboriginal people for loss of use of their lands. These payments are given under the treaty agreements dealing with aboriginal lands, but this government has chosen to consider them unearned income and income that should be taken from the people who need it the most -- those who are on income support.

Mr. Speaker, because this government has the new harmonization initiative, my constituents and aboriginal people in the North will be negatively affected even more. It has been over one year since I have asked the Minister to make a decision on this, but to date have not received any decision yet. At the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement on Recent Activities in Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I join yourself and the rest of my colleagues in this Chamber for what I hope will be a very productive session. We as legislators have some very interesting and complex issues to discuss over the next several weeks and I look forward to some very lively debate.

A number of activities have taken place in Hay River over the last few months and I would like to take this opportunity to share some of these with the Members of this House. In late November, the Hay River Kiwanis Club hosted the international president of Kiwanis, Mr. Brian Kunat. It was quite a coup for the Hay River Kiwanis Club to host this international president. Mr. Speaker, my sincere congratulations go out to all members of the Hay River Kiwanis Club, and particularly Mr. Ed Dakin, club president and my constituent, who did a superb job of organizing Mr. Kunat's visit to Hay River.

In December, Mr. Speaker, Hay River hosted Members of the Legislative Assembly as we held our caucus meetings there. I was very pleased that my community could host these meetings and I want to thank my colleagues for choosing Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to our meetings, my colleague Jane Groenewegen and I hosted a community meet-and-greet. This was a chance for the community of Hay River to meet the MLAs from around the Northwest Territories. The meet-and-greet was a resounding success with over 200 people in attendance. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Katlodechee Drummers, the Filipino Dancers, the Harry Camsell Choir and Diamond Jenness Handbell Choir for providing entertainment. It was wonderful and very well received.

Speaking of entertainment, Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that the highlight of the evening was watching Premier Kakfwi, Minister Handley and Sandy Lee as they attempted to perform their version of Filipino dancing.

Mr. Speaker, in December, the Honourable Roger Allen, Minister of Housing, attended a meeting with the Hay River Seniors Society. At this meeting, Mr. Allen announced his intention to have an independent living facility for seniors erected in Hay River. I am very encouraged by Minister Allen's news. I have worked very closely with the Hay River Seniors Society since becoming an MLA and I think it is high time that this government devoted more resources to our ever increasing seniors population.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to report that things were reasonably quiet over the holidays and I was able to spend some time at home with family and friends. It certainly was a most refreshing break.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, your time for your Member's statement is up. Mr. Delorey.

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

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

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, tragedy struck in January of this year as Mr. Kole Crook of Hay River was killed in an airplane crash that also took the lives of two sisters from Tulita and a pilot from Nova Scotia. Mr. Speaker, Kole was a very young man of such promise and truly an accomplished musician. He spent thankless hours performing throughout the Northwest Territories and Canada. He was a talented fiddler who was always willing to share his gift. He will be truly missed and my sincere condolences go out to the family.

Mr. Speaker, in mid January, Minister Miltenberger came to Hay River to meet with the workers at the hospital and lay out his action plan to address their concerns. I understand that these talks are ongoing and I look forward to some very positive outcomes in addressing their concerns.

Also in January, I had the privilege of attending the launch of a wonderful book entitled "So That Our Voices Are Heard." This book is about forest use and changing gender roles of Dene women in Hay River and I encourage Members of this House to obtain a copy.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement on Day Care Funding Levels

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, recent media reports have quoted Minister Ootes as saying that we can expect to see more funding for day cares in the Northwest Territories. I certainly hope those reports were accurate and if so, I congratulate the Minister. Financial support for day care has not kept up with inflation. Rates have not changed since the early 90s. The increases are long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, day care funding is a big issue across the territories. Facilities in both Yellowknife and Hay River have recently run into financial difficulty, but I know many facilities across the Northwest Territories are constantly struggling to make ends meet, often through bingos, raffles and bake sales. Mr. Speaker, we have nearly 3,700 pre-school age children in our territory. As this government's early childhood development plan notes, the most critical time in a child's development is before they turn six. An investment in good childcare yields a two-to-one payback in economic benefits. Our kids' future is too important not to make this investment.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Social Programs, of which I am a member, has consistently asked that more funding be put into early childhood programs like day care. Minister Ootes' response is welcome. Now we will be watching tomorrow's budget to see if the new funding will be sufficient to address the shortcomings in the current system.

However, Mr. Speaker, increasing funding for day care will not likely solve all of the problems. The department also needs to provide better support to boards and organizations that run day cares. I hope the Minister will also develop a process to provide training for volunteer boards in areas like accounting and

administration. We will all reap the benefits of such an investment.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the volunteers who sit on boards for day cares and the generally underpaid staff who work in the centres. We owe them our gratitude for a job well done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Dent. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement on Transfer of DIAND Positions to the NWT

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first let me start by sending greetings back to my wife and children. Mr. Speaker, as is well known, jobs are the back bone to a healthy community and economy. Mr. Speaker, the issue that I raise today is to speak on the news that came across the Northwest Territories that the Department of DIAND was looking at transferring jobs to the Northwest Territories. There will initially be 20 jobs and possibly 50 jobs, which is a remarkable turnaround when initially a study was done by that department and said that no jobs would be coming to the Northwest Territories, so it is good news indeed.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is where these jobs will end up in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, it is well known that the activity that is increasing here in the Northwest Territories centres largely around oil and gas development. In fact, a billion dollars worth of activity over the next couple of years, including the two previous, will be done in the Beaufort-Delta region. So, Mr. Speaker, my issue is that I will pursue this government to ensure that as those jobs from DIAND move North, they move North to where the activity is, not just to the headquarters where development seems to happen around government. In fact, we can dig out numerous jobs and growth in this government since division to show that headquarters has done rather well in growing over the last number of years.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that as jobs move to the North, whether they be through this government or the federal government, that those positions are put in communities that can use the jobs as well as provide for the work that is done in the regions, not that everybody has to come to Yellowknife to see someone from government, or get their permits or applications in. In fact, I think it is time for this government to take a page out of what happened in Nunavut and look at some devolution of jobs and those responsibilities to the communities. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be questioning the appropriate Minister. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement on Former Olympians Sharon and Shirley Firth

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the Olympic Games that are underway in Salt Lake City, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and

congratulate all participants and medal winners thus far of the 2002 Olympic Games.

I believe this is also a good time to recognize our very own NWT Olympians, the Firth sisters. Originally from the Mackenzie Delta, Sharon now makes my riding of Range Lake her home.

Until the bronze medal won by Beckie Scott in cross-country skiing in Salt Lake City, Sharon held the record for the best showing by Canadian women skiers. I might also add that of the seven medals that Canada has won so far, five have been won by women, one by a man, and the other gold by a man and woman pair. So as the sign says, Canadian girls rule.

By fortuitous coincidence, I had the opportunity to drive with Sharon to Fort Resolution from Hay River last week. I learned that the Firth sisters were four-time Olympians, representing Canada in 1972, 1976, 1980 and 1984 Olympics. Knowing what an honour and how tremendously difficult it is to make it to the Olympics even once, I am astounded at the lack of profile we are bestowing on the Firth sisters.

I was really happy to hear Sharon Firth speak up against the bad habit of smoking by youth and the athletes to a great impact. I believe everybody heard it, Mr. Speaker.

She has a lot of credibility to speak on behalf of the young people and athletes and I would really like to see the government make the point of making the most of Sharon Firth as the NWT's ambassador for young people and athletes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement on Harmonization of Income Support and Public Housing Programs

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak today on the changes coming. I believe the changes coming are to the detriment of our elders, disabled, and single parents, and people who live on fixed income.

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the harmonization of income assistance and public housing.

Mr. Speaker, I have a real problem with the way this program is being delivered and being imposed on people without really understanding what the implications this program will have on our elders and our seniors who presently live on a fixed income by way of a pension, or a disabled person who may be in a housing unit who may have a disabled pension because of their disability. The same thing applies to senior mothers with children who may be on part-time employment and who may not meet the required needs that they presently try to offer to and exist on. In most cases, people are struggling out there to maintain the pensions that they get, the disabled pensions, and the income that single mothers get to raise a family and also try to find a job.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the timing of the implementation of this program, April 1st, is being rushed. I feel that it is unjust to not ensure that all bases are being covered and that an evaluation

process is in place so that clients understand that they have a right to appeal. There is a Tenants Act which ensures that notification is given before any increases or any rates are put in place. What happens to those people who do not meet the requirements of the new amendments made with regard to incomes? Where do those people go in the communities that do not have housing available? Right now, the vacancy rates in most communities are at zero. People are on a waiting list of 70 to 80 people, yet they are overcrowded in houses where they have, in some cases, up to eight people living in one dwelling. Where do those people go?

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister questions because I have a real problem with the changes taking place and being imposed on the people most at need. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 4, Member's statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on The Poverty Game

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you are aware, yesterday in the Great Hall of this Assembly, the Social Planning Coalition, along with the Standing Committee on Social Programs, hosted a session of the poverty game. Mr. Speaker, it is a board game in the style of Monopoly but, as should be apparent, it involves very little money.

The Social Planning Coalition approached the committee a couple of weeks ago with suggestions that we host this game in the Great Hall. We thought it was a great idea. The purpose was to heighten awareness of poverty and around the issue of income support. It also gave Members and other invited guests from the community a chance to see the kinds of decisions income support recipients are faced with on a monthly basis.

Mr. Speaker, it was enlightening to say the least. The character I played, a 36-year old mom with four kids, ran out of money two-and-a-half weeks into the first month.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Standing Committee on Social Programs has lobbied hard for additional money for income support. Last year, along with the rest of my colleagues, the members of the Accountability and Oversight Committee, we were able to see \$700,000 in funding restored to the income support budget. Mr. Speaker, we continue that effort and tomorrow we will see if the government has been listening.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you indeed to all my colleagues who came out to support the Social Planning Coalition.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 4, Member's statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement on Tribute to Kole Crook

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to Kole Crook who, as I am sure everyone knows, passed away on New Year's Eve. He was 27 years old. Kole was an extraordinary young man.

This was so evident, as literally hundreds of people from many communities and all walks of life gathered on the Hay River Reserve to pay respect to his memory.

To say that Kole loved music does not adequately describe what he conveyed and how he made people feel when he entertained and performed for groups large or small. He communicated through his music.

He was an avid outdoorsman. The first thought I had when I heard that a small plane had gone missing with a pilot and three passengers, and Kole was one of them, was that if they survived the impact, Kole would be able to take care of them.

Kole was not attracted nor motivated by the comforts or convenience of modern living. He had a deep understanding of spiritual things and I believe that is what gave him the perspective of someone who seemed to have lived much longer than 27 years.

Kole truly had his priorities figured out. His life was a demonstration of his respect for his creator, his genuine love of people, his remarkable knowledge and reverence for the land, and his fun-loving sharing of his God-given talents, which included music and story-telling.

Kole will always be missed by his family and those closest to him, and to them we continue to offer our sincerest condolences. We thank them for sharing him with so many people. I believe there has never been a funeral which brought so many people together from so many places in the history of our Territory. Hopefully, this demonstration of how many lives Kole touched will sustain and comfort his family in the years ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 4, Member's statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement on The Poverty Game

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the heels of the statement by my colleague, Mr. Bell, I would also like to talk about the poverty game that we staged here in the Great Hall yesterday. Along with other members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and the Ministers of Finance and Education, Culture and Employment, I took up the invitation of the Social Planning Coalition to engage in this. My persona, Mr. Speaker, was a woman named Barbara who lives in Fort Good Hope. She is a 36-year old woman with four children; twin boys, age 14, a daughter, 10, and a son, 8. As Barbara, here is my financial situation, Mr. Speaker.

I receive \$851 in salary, plus some federal child benefit, which was clawed back, by the way, by this government. I received another \$1,045 in food and \$125 in clothing from the Income Support Program. My monthly income was \$1,665 with a family of five in a community where the cost of food is almost double that of Yellowknife.

What initially struck me -- and something that I learned through this game, Mr. Speaker -- was the complexity of filling out the paperwork. There were 18 pages that clients have to go through. It is really hard if you have lower literacy skills just getting all of these papers together.

It again forces me to taking a look at real life choices through Barbara's point of view. Whether to buy my daughter new boots for 20 bucks or used ones for ten. Whether to declare the \$300 that I got from a boyfriend and thus cheat the system or try to borrow \$20 for milk at the end of the month only to find out that my friend was just as broke as I was.

Individuals at all levels are facing more and more difficult choices, Mr. Speaker, as life becomes increasingly complex. It is particularly true if you are living on income support and on the edge of poverty. An increasingly complex set of choices and decisions have to be made everyday and it again reinforced the message for me for government to provide every opportunity for a sound education, and for each individual to take the responsibility to stay in school and take advantage of it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the people from the social coalition for bringing this game to us.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Member's Statement on Condolences to Families of Recently Deceased Tu Nedhe Residents

MR. NITAH: (Translation not available). Mr. Speaker, just a quick translation. I am happy to be back with you and my colleagues in the House. We do have significant work ahead of us in this session and in future sessions until the end of our term, but I want to look back and express my condolences to people who have lost loved ones.

Some colleagues have mentioned Mr. Crook and other members of the Northwest Territories. I could mention a few, but I will keep mine to my constituency. On behalf of Tu Nedhe, I would like to express my condolences to the Mandeville family for the loss of Dotty Mandeville who passed away recently due to illness.

We all look for examples of how to live our lives. I think Dotty was a great example of how to live, if you are a young person looking for examples. Kole is another one of them.

Recently we lost an icon in the CBC Chipewyan programming. Ms. Evelyn Cook, who has been providing Chipewyan language programming for CBC North for as long as I can remember, passed away on Saturday, very sadly as well.

You and I, Mr. Speaker, attended a wedding of her son who married his wife at the foot of his mother's bed in the hospital room. It was a very sad moment and at the same time a very happy moment. I would like to congratulate Austin and Susan on their commitment to each other and their willingness to do it in such an environment. I am very proud of them and I would like to express my sincere thankfulness to him and Susie on behalf of all the people of Tu Nedhe.

I look forward to discussing the major issues facing us in the next couple of weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement on Youth Parliament Delegate Leslie Merrithew

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to extend my congratulations and my thanks to a young Yellowknifer who represented my constituency and my Ministry in the recent Youth Parliament. Leslie Merrithew did a fantastic job, as did all the other young parliamentarians who were here for the Youth Parliament, debating the issues that face us all here in the Northwest Territories.

Even though Leslie was the youngest, she certainly held her own amongst the others. She praised the Side Door for Youth, which is an important project here in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. She also provided a good explanation of the pupil-teacher ratio as the Minister representing the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

It is great to see a young person such as Leslie having such a good grasp of the issues and understanding the intricacies of government programs. Leslie says that she really enjoyed her time here as a member of the Youth Parliament. She said it was fun and that the experience definitely helped her understand the issues here in the Territories.

Her stint as a parliamentarian inspired her, and I believe she is applying to become a page here in our Legislature and no doubt we will see her again. When she finishes high school she has an interest in mathematics. She wants to become a high school math teacher and possibly some day become a politician. Mr. Speaker, I hope this House will join me in offering congratulations to Leslie Merrithew and all the Youth Parliamentarians who served us so well a couple of weeks ago. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement on Deh Cho Economic Development Conference

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Legislative Assembly gives us an opportunity as MLAs to speak of different issues in our constituencies. Mr. Speaker, there was a conference last week in Fort Simpson that was hosted by the Fort Simpson Tribal Council, which included the Metis Local and the Village of Fort Simpson. This was the Deh Cho Resource Development Conference.

The theme was assessing opportunities and maximizing benefits. This built in many concerns on current and potential development in the Deh Cho in the areas of oil and gas exploration, pipeline development, mining, forestry and our traditional economy with a focus on sustainable development.

Over the past few years, the communities in my constituency of Nahendeh, which is part of the Deh Cho region, have experienced a slow down. It is important to increase capacity so that everyone in the region and community can get ready and participate.

There is growing consensus that the Northwest Territories Delta gas reserves will be developed before the Alaska gas reserves and the people in the Deh Cho are sitting on 40 percent of the right of way. They want to concentrate on maximizing the benefits from any potential resource development such as pipelines.

They want to do this by assessing communities to identify any short-term or long-term training opportunities and initiatives. They want to ensure that the social and environmental dimensions of development are incorporated in all discussions prior to any resource development. There is a high level of interest by the people in the communities. They want to be involved and they want to have support for any development that is going on for the aboriginal people as well as the businesspeople in the communities.

All in all, it was a very successful conference. I think this is the first of its kind in the Deh Cho and Fort Simpson. I think there is room for a lot of other conferences in the future. It is the beginning for the people in the Deh Cho to see what they have to do to maximize the benefits from resource development. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Thank you. Item 4, Members' statements. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

At this time, I would like to recognize the Honourable Ted Hughes, the Acting Conflict of Interest Commissioner, in the gallery. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to recognize Chief Rick Edjericon and Chief Peter Liske with the Yellowknife Dene Band.

-- Applause

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

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to take the time to recognize Chiefs Richard Edjericon and Peter Liske from the Yellowknife Dene First Nation. As always, I also recognize the people of Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e at this time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a rare privilege for me to recognize just about my entire family in the Legislature today. Earlier my daughter Carmen and an exchange student, Karen Hatner, from Sweden, were in the choir from Sir John Franklin School. Sitting with us today are my wife, Valerie, and my mother, Esther. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: You did not miss too many. Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure this afternoon to recognize two of our pages from Inuvik Twin Lakes, Dwayne Drescher and Renie Edwards, and also three lovely ladies sitting in the gallery: my wife, Vanessa, and Betty and Sue. Welcome to the gallery.

-- Applause

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Mr. George Tuccaro, who is now semi-retired and greatly missed on CBC Radio and Television. I would like to wish George all the best on his retirement and we will have to see you entertaining us here and there and everywhere, but you will be there. All the best.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Tuccaro, the voice of the North. Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce an executive assistant who started with me, Mr. Phil Mercredi.

-- Applause

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great deal of pleasure for me to introduce someone who is with a tremendous organization, the Salvation Army, we are all familiar with it, Captain Karen Hoelt from Yellowknife.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Any further recognitions of visitors in the gallery? Thank you. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all the Members to recognize and thank those people who have taken the time out of their busy day to come and see their Legislative Assembly in action. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 1-14(5): Harmonization of Income Support and Social Housing

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Housing regarding the harmonization of income assistance and public housing programs.

Mr. Speaker, my concern with this harmonization is the timing. This harmonization is supposed to take effect April 1st. Knowing that the notification has just been given to the clients and tenants, I would like to ask the Minister, with regard to this

process, do you believe that is adequate time for such an implementation, realizing the implication this has on the residents of the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 1-14(5): Harmonization of Income Support and Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are cognizant of the problems that exist in the communications strategy. We are working on a new action plan. We anticipate that we will be able to defer the implementation date -- at least, we are proposing -- until October 1, 2002. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 1-14(5): Harmonization of Income Support and Social Housing

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for that. I believe a lot of the clients who depend on social housing would like some breathing space to ensure that they have due process in place to allow them to ensure that they are being heard.

I would like to ask the Minister, is there going to be an appeal process or some process for notification, that if a client feels unjustly imposed on where a major increase may affect their pensions or the cost of living, will there be a process in place to ensure that due process takes place, where a client can appeal this process if they do not accept what is being imposed on them?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 1-14(5): Harmonization of Income Support and Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, in the implementation process, we hope to re-evaluate the administration of the program, where we will be able to set out some specific guidelines, where the clients may appeal if there is no satisfaction to their application. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 1-14(5): Harmonization of Income Support and Social Housing

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me, will there also be a process spelled out regarding eviction of individuals who may not meet the requirements of these changes?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 1-14(5): Harmonization of Income Support and Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, hopefully we can evaluate in the context of previous policies and make sure that those policies will be upgraded as well to meet the demands as raised in this question. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 1-14(5): Harmonization of Income Support and Social Housing

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister assure us that before any drastic changes are taken or this program has been implemented that they will allow for full debate on this issue in the Legislative Assembly?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 1-14(5): Harmonization of Income Support and Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe we heard the message yesterday that we need to re-evaluate the communications strategy to this policy. We are prepared to do that. As I indicated earlier, we are prepared to propose a deferral. The balance of the program or policy will certainly be taken into consideration. Thank you.

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

Question 2-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments as Income

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Not only is the Department of Education, Culture and Employment clawing back the money for IBA payments but now they have the Housing Corporation supporting them and clawing back more money from the IBA payments.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, he had his department looking into getting the legal interpretation -- what does he have for me now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 2-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments as Income

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Legal advice was provided to the department and I had the department look at examining the policy base and what inter-jurisdictional is done and our view of the various forms in other areas, of how they treat income from various sources. The result was that IBA should continue to be considered as unearned income, Mr. Speaker. IBAs are considered a private contract in regard to the relationship between a contractor and a developer and the

Dogrib people, in Mr. Lafferty's case. Education, Culture and Employment has no way of knowing the details of that, so IBA income is paid directly to individuals and such income will continue to be considered as income. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 2-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments as Income

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if he has any legal documents to show what he just said? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 2-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments as Income

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The original legal documents were provided to Cabinet, which I cannot share. Also, there was advice given to the department in this respect. I believe it was verbal advice. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 2-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments as Income

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government, we are supposed to be representing everybody in the Territories. Simply by saying it is a Cabinet document does not sit right with me. I would like to ask the Minister if he and his department cannot make a decision on this issue, would he consider looking at changing his portfolio, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. I am not sure if that is a proper question. I will allow the Minister to respond to it if he chooses. Mr. Minister.

Further Return to Question 2-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments as Income

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the question is here.

MR. SPEAKER: Your last supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 2-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments as Income

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am just trying to get a simple answer. If he was not comfortable with the department, then somebody else may be able to do the job better.

My final question is will he look at changing a simple regulation that is made by the territorial government where treaty entitlement is recognized by people all over Canada and the Government of Canada? Can he look at a simple regulation change? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 2-14(5): Impact Benefit Agreement Payments as Income

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have looked at the regulations, Mr. Speaker, and the advice provided is that this should continue to be considered as unearned income. Thank you.

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

Question 3-14(5): Housing Shortage in Yellowknife

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today focuses on one of the most serious issues here in Yellowknife, our housing crunch. My question is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Vacancy rates have dropped from about 5 percent three years ago to virtually zero today. Rents have increased about 9 percent over the last two years. I appreciate the Minister informing this House, Mr. Speaker, of how recent developments on the federal infrastructure program and funding that will go out to provinces and territories, how might that additional funding be applied to assist in alleviating the crucial housing situation here in Yellowknife? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 3-14(5): Housing Shortage in Yellowknife

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, if I may, the affordable housing initiative will alleviate some rental housing shortages in the Northwest Territories, especially in the urban centres. Hopefully an investment of \$25,000 per unit would help put more affordable housing into the major centres, as well as the non-tax-based municipalities. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 3-14(5): Housing Shortage in Yellowknife

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek some clarification on that. Is there a \$25,000 funding opportunity for people who want to build houses in tax-based communities in the NWT? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 3-14(5): Housing Shortage in Yellowknife

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the point of clarification, yes, we are prepared to assist at a capped amount of \$25,000 per unit for either new construction of

rehabilitated units, or a number of other units. That may help alleviate the housing shortage. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 3-14(5): Housing Shortage in Yellowknife

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is this program available right now or are details still being worked out for its implementation? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 3-14(5): Housing Shortage in Yellowknife

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to advise the Members here that this program will come into effect on April 1st of this year and will run concurrently for four years. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 3-14(5): Housing Shortage in Yellowknife

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the other areas related to this is the availability of land. It is one thing to be able to assist people to build houses, but if the land is not available we have a bit of a catch-22. In terms of providing infrastructure, that is water, sewer and this kind of thing, is there anything the department or its partners can do to bring some additional options to the City of Yellowknife for infrastructure? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 3-14(5): Housing Shortage in Yellowknife

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot speak with regard to community infrastructure such as water and sewer, but specifically to the construction of new houses, I am going to have to try to get back to the Member on that question. Thank you.

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

Question 4-14(5): Day Care Training Program

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, following up on my Member's statement earlier today. Mr. Speaker, most day cares in the Northwest Territories are operated by boards made up of volunteers, and volunteers need training and support. Most of the volunteers who are on boards right now are not professionals in accounting or administration. Will the Minister initiate a training program for day care board members?

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

Return to Question 4-14(5): Day Care Training Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this was one of the issues that arose during the concerns expressed about the viability of day cares and their concerns with respect to being able to operate in an efficient manner. I have asked my department to ensure that we follow up with the concern about board competencies, board training and so forth, so there will be some follow-up on trying to provide assistance to the boards in the Northwest Territories. We are looking at more than just day cares, but day care is an area of my concern, so I have asked them to specifically look at that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 4-14(5): Day Care Training Program

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to hear that the Minister is following up on the issue but I did not hear a clear commitment that he would make sure that a program of support was initiated. So I will ask the Minister again, is he making a commitment to initiate a program that will support board development for day cares?

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

Further Return to Question 4-14(5): Day Care Training Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course the comment on the program of support may have some interpretation, so I have asked my department and instructed them to come forward with suggestions on how we can tackle this particular issue and bring me recommendations of how we can proceed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 4-14(5): Day Care Training Program

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that goes beyond just Yellowknife or Hay River, which are two communities that made the news recently with significant problems. Will the Minister ensure that if he has a program developed it is available throughout the Northwest Territories in all communities?

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

Further Return to Question 4-14(5): Day Care Training Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the honourable Member is absolutely correct. It is not just a large centre issue. There are issues in Inuvik, Fort Smith, Hay River,

Yellowknife and Fort Simpson. All of the communities may be very impacted by this. Yes, it will be across the board and across the Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 4-14(5): Day Care Training Program

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when will the Minister report back on the results of his department's advice to him on the development of such a program?

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

Further Return to Question 4-14(5): Day Care Training Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I intend to report back before the end of session.

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

Question 5-14(5): Relocation of DIAND Positions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed at this time to the Deputy Premier, in line with my Member's statement on jobs moving to the North. I think it needs to be said that the timing of the notification from the federal government is a good one. It is good to see jobs coming to the North. In working with the federal government, I hope that this government is looking at the issue of where they would put new employees in the Northwest Territories.

I am not sure to what degree we can influence the federal government, but it would be nice to know that we as a government would lead by example in the sense of putting jobs where the activity is centered, so I would like to know from the Deputy Premier, have they had any discussions with the federal government on the positioning of these jobs? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 5-14(5): Relocation of DIAND Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a very good initiative that the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake is raising, regarding DIAND moving some of the newer positions they are creating to deal with the growing oil and gas industry in the North to the North, rather than establishing them in the south. This is a good move. The question of where they are going to be located is a good question. We as a government have not received any notification from the Minister of DIAND, the Honourable Robert Nault, on exactly where these positions are going to be located.

What we would do here is take up the question. Perhaps some of our staff and officials may have had preliminary discussions, we do not know. Officially, at our level, we have not had any discussion on this matter yet. We will try to follow up on this question and see where we can take it.

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

Supplementary to Question 5-14(5): Relocation of DIAND Positions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Deputy Premier indicate what time lines are out there for the establishment of any of these new positions that will be coming to the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 5-14(5): Relocation of DIAND Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: We have not been notified when the time lines are for putting these positions in the North yet. We have not been notified on that yet. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 5-14(5): Relocation of DIAND Positions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Deputy Premier inform us if this government has a position already established as to new jobs in the Northwest Territories and where they might go? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 5-14(5): Relocation of DIAND Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. We just had some informal preliminary discussions and we do not have an official position on it. However, the direction we are going right now is if any new positions are going to be developed in the North, and positions in the North from the federal government, it should be where the activity of the industry is.

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

Supplementary to Question 5-14(5): Relocation of DIAND Positions

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is definitely good to hear. Can the Deputy Premier inform us if that stance is also taken within our own forces? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 5-14(5): Relocation of DIAND Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. It would be a Cabinet decision if we would be moving these positions but certainly it would be a good initiative to follow up on. Thank you.

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

Question 6-14(5): Comparison of Graduate Rates

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment in the area of education. Our honourable colleague talked about the document Towards a Better Tomorrow, where we talk about improving the lives of people in our communities.

Colleagues in the House talked about the board game where they acted like people in need. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, those people who are in need are people in our smaller constituencies in our aboriginal communities. Mr. Braden hit the nail right on the head when he said lack of education is one factor.

I ask the Minister, what is the comparison of graduation rates between smaller communities and larger centres such as Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 6-14(5): Comparison of Graduate Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have that information at my finger tips here. I will get it for the Member. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 6-14(5): Comparison of Graduate Rates

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate getting that information. I would argue that the comparison is very different. There are certainly more graduates coming out of the regional centres such as Yellowknife than there are in the smaller communities. I wonder if the department has an understanding of why that is, Mr. Speaker. Why?

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

Further Return to Question 6-14(5): Comparison of Graduate Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: I think that is a question that would require some research. I can ask my officials as to what information they have in respect to that, Mr. Speaker, and we can all surmise what that might be. The question is, what information do the officials have on that? I will obtain that if that is available, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 6-14(5): Comparison of Graduate Rates

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When can we expect that information, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 6-14(5): Comparison of Graduate Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize that the Member is interested in the information so I will ensure that it is expedited quickly and we will certainly have it within ten to 15 days. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 6-14(5): Comparison of Graduate Rates

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a wonder to me why we do not have the level of graduations from our smaller communities when we cannot even answer why there is a difference between the high level of graduations in regional centres such as Yellowknife and smaller communities. This process has been going on for the last 20 plus years. If you do not have that information now, when are we going to get it?

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

Further Return to Question 6-14(5): Comparison of Graduate Rates

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I committed in my previous answer, we will get whatever information we have and provide it to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 7-14(5): Decentralizing DIAND Positions

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow up to Mr. Roland's questions on the federal government jobs that are going to be moved from Ottawa to Yellowknife, the Deputy Premier responded that they have not been notified yet of where these jobs are going to go. It has certainly been in the media. It has also been stated that the federal government has bought property in the downtown and is talking about building buildings.

I am surprised that the government would not be somewhat more proactive, as opposed to waiting to be notified where these government jobs are going. I would think they would take it on themselves to contact the federal government, find out where they are going and then apply our policy which should be in place in terms of decentralizing these positions.

Can the Deputy Premier please tell me if the government does not agree that you should take a proactive approach to ensuring that not all these jobs go to Yellowknife and some will go to communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 7-14(5): Decentralizing DIAND Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when this whole debate evolved a couple of years ago, of trying to move the existing positions in Ottawa to the Northwest Territories and that did not happen, the Minister of DIAND, Robert Nault, at that time made a commitment that if there were any new positions that were to be created, we would move them to the North.

In our preliminary discussion with him, we raised the fact of, can we start looking at some of the outlying communities, the regional centres, where the activities are, where we can put these positions? The indication there was that he would look favourably at that.

With news that these new positions are finally being created and they are going to be moving up to the North, I think it is timely for us to pursue this.

The second part of our initiatives is to try to see if some of these initiatives can go to the regional centres. I think that is what we have to do. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 7-14(5): Decentralizing DIAND Positions

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been a few months now since we knew that these positions are going to be moving to the North. Can the Deputy Premier tell me what actions have been taken to date by this government to determine numbers, types of jobs, and potential location for them? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 7-14(5): Decentralizing DIAND Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. I do not have that detail, Mr. Speaker. I will get the answers and get back to the Member.

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

Supplementary to Question 7-14(5): Decentralizing DIAND Positions

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: So for the record and for clarity then, the Deputy Premier will confirm that the position of this government is that these jobs should not all be located in Yellowknife? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that is what the honourable Minister answered. However, for clarification, the honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 7-14(5): Decentralizing DIAND Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, we have not taken a formal position as a Cabinet. We will do whatever we can during our discussions to make sure we can split these jobs around, if we

can do that. We do not know what positions they are and how many. We have to find that out as well. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 7-14(5): Decentralizing DIAND Positions

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a final comment and question then. We just do not want the train to leave the dock without us here. I just think that a certain amount of time has already lapsed. This is something that I believe that our government should take a very proactive position on. I hope it will not languish now that it has been raised here and that we will hear back very quickly from the government as to the actions they have taken on this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, I did not hear a question there, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Deputy Premier indicates that he has heard a question. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 7-14(5): Decentralizing DIAND Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, the concern -- we will not languish on this issue. We will pursue it. Thank you.

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

Question 8-14(5): Meningitis Vaccinations for Students

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently, I had a constituent contact me concerned about the high number of meningitis cases in Alberta. He was specifically concerned and wondering whether or not we were going to vaccinate students heading south for school trips or for educational purposes. I am wondering if the Minister of Health can clarify our current position on this. I know in the past, people were expected to pay the \$75 themselves. What is the current status? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 8-14(5): Meningitis Vaccinations for Students

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of vaccinations is a very important one. The information I have is that we will be covering the cost of vaccinations for students travelling south, either for trips or for school. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 8-14(5): Meningitis Vaccinations for Students

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since many people may not be aware of this, I understand it is in fact very difficult to

contract meningitis. In fact, Alberta residents are being vaccinated for free, so it would be very difficult for our students to in fact contract this. Can the Minister reassure us that this is the case?

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

Further Return to Question 8-14(5): Meningitis Vaccinations for Students

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My information is the same as the Member's, that many of the people in Alberta, students included, have been given free vaccinations, and that if we take precautions here, it should be very difficult to in fact contract meningitis. Thank you.

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

Question 9-14(5): Separate Divisional Education Council for Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the honourable Minister for Education, Mr. Ootes. As you know, Mr. Speaker, Hay River had an ongoing issue with the local DEA and their efforts in pursuing their own board. I was wondering if the Minister could update us as to where he is now, where the department is with negotiations with Hay River on that specific issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 9-14(5): Separate Divisional Education Council for Hay River

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the requests made of me in regard to the possibility of a DEC after a study was done regarding the fair treatment of Hay River in regard to being a member or being a non-member of the DEC, was that what would it cost to establish a DEC in its own right? I have provided that information, Mr. Speaker, to the Hay River DEA as well as the DEC, and there is substantial cost involved in order to establish a separate DEC.

Additionally, I informed the DEC, who is my appropriate channel of contact, that if there was a possibility of some discussion of commonality to discuss with me concerning representation, then I would be more than willing to do so. I did not receive word back. Initially, that is what was wanted but I did not receive word back that they could proceed on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 9-14(5): Separate Divisional Education Council for Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am under the impression that the Hay River DEA requested a joint meeting with the South Slave Divisional Education Council, the deputy minister, and members of the Hay River board. In a

response to them, it was suggested that this could be costly and it was not a good expenditure of school's limited resources. Would the Minister confirm that he considers this to be a waste of money, to meet with the local Hay River board and members of the South Slave board to discuss Hay River's issues?

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

Further Return to Question 9-14(5): Separate Divisional Education Council for Hay River

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, it is certainly not. I do not consider it a waste of money and I would be more than willing to meet. What I did indicate to the DEC was could I get some message back if they were interested and had agreement amongst themselves that we should meet on this subject, but I did not get word back from the DEC. I have met with the DEA directly, but I also need the cooperation, as the Member can appreciate, to meet with the DEC. I did send them a letter approximately a week ago, Mr. Speaker, because they were meeting on the weekend. I thought that would be a time that they may wish for me to come forward. There was a proposal to look at various possibilities, but the DEC did not indicate back to me to attend. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 9-14(5): Separate Divisional Education Council for Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the Minister could clarify whether he has been requested to facilitate a meeting between the parties involved and actually agreed to that meeting, then withdrew his agreement to meet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 9-14(5): Separate Divisional Education Council for Hay River

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, originally, I did receive a comment from the DEC that perhaps there should be a meeting, but we verbally contacted them back and I asked them if there was any possibility for them looking at a proposal by the Hay River DEA. The word I got back from the chair was that no, there was not an interest in that by the other members.

What I did then was send a letter to the chair of the DEC suggesting that if they wanted me to come, could they please put the issue on the table. I encouraged them to continue the process of rebuilding relations and I wrote to them to meet with the DEC about any proposed change in government or any other function that is agreed upon by the DEC and all DEAs in the division, and I would be more than willing to come and meet with them on that. I received no word back on that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 9-14(5): Separate Divisional Education Council for Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This has become quite a contentious issue and is doing nothing to better education in the Territory. I was wondering if the Minister could inform us as to whether the members of the South Slave board have anything to gain, and why they would be opposed to Hay River wanting its own board to deliver education to the students in Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 9-14(5): Separate Divisional Education Council for Hay River

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure how the DEC members feel about the creation of a separate DEC for Hay River. I am not sure what the issue may be for them regarding that. What I did do from my side was because I had the request from Hay River on what would it cost to establish a separate DEC, we provided that information to the DEA in Hay River, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 10-14(5): Travel Restrictions on Highways 3 and 4

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Joe Handley. My question is regarding the recent publications where heavy wide loads are travelling on Highway No. 3 between the hours of nine and 12, I think, during the day, and the Ingraham Trail, Highway No. 4, between the hours of one and six a.m. I would like to ask the Minister if he could look at it more closely and maybe make changes, because the hours that are specified in that publication affect my constituents and also those of the Deh Cho when they go for medical appointments in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 10-14(5): Travel Restrictions on Highways 3 and 4

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. I thought I was going to be shut out today. Yes, Mr. Speaker, in response to the Member's question, I will look at it and see whether or not the hours are appropriate, given the needs of the community. Thank you.

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

Question 11-14(5): Support for Mackenzie River Bridge

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also for the Minister of Transportation today. Recently, I was very impressed by a presentation made by MLA Michael McLeod

and a community corporation from Fort Providence on a proposal to build a Mackenzie River bridge. It seemed like a winner all around and certainly does not look like it will cost us much more than it costs us to run the ferry and build an ice road every year.

I am wondering when we will get a formal indication of support for this Mackenzie River bridge from the GNWT.

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

Return to Question 11-14(5): Support for Mackenzie River Bridge

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly our initial view of the proposal was very positive. There are some outstanding issues with regard to the price, costing, the interest rates, a couple of other policy issues. My department is currently doing an assessment of the proposal. I expect that within a month to six weeks we should be able to give the proponents to the proposal some response.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. I would certainly like to urge the Minister to move as quickly as possible. Given the current low interest rates, it seems like an opportune time and it may not always be so. I thank the Minister for that commitment.

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

Question 12-14(5): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. It has to do with the Hay River situation in education. I was wondering if the Minister could inform the House whether he is prepared to look at another petition from the Hay River DEA? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 12-14(5): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Petitions are generated by, of course, the local population of their desire and will, at which time I have to respect that and look into it. I guess the challenge here is the financial cost and the implications across the Territories for that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 12-14(5): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before the Minister would give any support or serious consideration to a petition from Hay River, would he clarify whether this petition would have to be supported by all members of the South Slave

Education Council before he would give it serious consideration? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 12-14(5): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, the authority to create separate DECs lies in the control of the Minister. I am not sure that we would require the approval of other DEAs in order to create another DEC. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 12-14(5): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Final question, Mr. Speaker. When the Minister talks about increased costs for setting up a Hay River DEA, what figures will he accept to take into consideration? Would these be figures brought about by the DEC in Fort Smith, or would they consider figures coming from Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 12-14(5): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, the figures we would use are generated by individuals in my department of what it would cost to generate. I think that would be an appropriate way to proceed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. At this point, I would like to say the House will take a short break in order to join Her Honour, The Commissioner, in the Great Hall for a reception. We will resume at the call of the Chair.

-- Break

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, colleagues. The House will now come back to order. We are still on item 6, oral questions. We left off with the honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey. You have finished your supplementaries. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 13-14(5): Program to Encourage New Home Construction

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up a little bit more with the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation with respect to the new program alluded to that will be coming into effect on April 1st. I just wanted to confirm that this is a new program to encourage new construction and if I am correct in what I heard, that it is available in tax-based municipalities. Could the Minister please tell us what the name of this new program is? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 13-14(5): Program to Encourage New Home Construction

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a program that was jointly funded through CMHC and the NWT Housing Corporation. It is a combination of existing NWT housing funds with a new agreement we have reached between the territories, provinces and the federal government for new initiatives and new funding for those communities that need more affordable housing, and also perhaps more new rental units. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 13-14(5): Program to Encourage New Home Construction

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, is this money available to people who are developing new houses for other people as well as individuals who will just be developing a home for themselves? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 13-14(5): Program to Encourage New Home Construction

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to our knowledge and our understanding, there are two new initiatives or two categories. One is called affordable housing, which alleviates the housing shortage in large urban areas or centres. The other is based on the rural and remote needs, so that our contribution actually received from the federal government is \$1.89 million annually. That is the subject of this new program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 13-14(5): Program to Encourage New Home Construction

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The funding for the affordable housing and the rural and remote needs combined for both of these programs is \$1.89 million per year, but that money has been committed by the federal government to be joint funded for a period of four years. Is that correct? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 13-14(5): Program to Encourage New Home Construction

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to confirm, the NWT will receive \$1.89 million annually. Over a four-year period, it will be a grand aggregate of \$7.54 million, and would address the two categories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 13-14(5): Program to Encourage New Home Construction

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for further clarification, this is available only in tax-based municipalities, or is it available in all communities? Is it the developer or is it the homeowner? Is the rural and remote for homeowners and the other affordable housing is for developers? I am still not clear on that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Two questions there. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 13-14(5): Program to Encourage New Home Construction

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to confirm the Member's question, the first category is affordable housing and is intended to alleviate the rental housing shortages in the urban communities or centres. In the rural and remote, it addresses the shortfall of home ownership. Although I think we have the capability of adjusting it, it is just a matter of how we are going to implement it effective April 1st. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 14-14(5): Program Definitions of Urban and Rural

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Housing on the same matter. Of this \$1.89 million annually, there are two categories. How is the department going to separate the two categories, urban versus rural? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 14-14(5): Program Definitions of Urban and Rural

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been made aware that we will use existing criteria, although we will still need to redefine some of the methodologies. The intent is to address those two key categories, rural and remote and urban. There is still some flexibility in the implementation. We just need to redefine some of the methodologies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 14-14(5): Program Definitions of Urban and Rural

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the Housing Corporation has a policy not to interfere in market communities such as Yellowknife and Hay River and those communities that have a housing market. How does this program affect that policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 14-14(5): Program Definitions of Urban and Rural

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our analysis, we find that it is not infringing on the markets because many communities are experiencing zero vacancy rates. Through our consultations as well with developers, we do not see this program infringing on the markets. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 14-14(5): Program Definitions of Urban and Rural

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding, based on the Minister's answer, is that the program for the urban areas like Yellowknife is for social housing only under this criteria that he is talking about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 14-14(5): Program Definitions of Urban and Rural

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, just to clarify again, the original intent was to provide sufficient funds in the urban centres that would address the rental housing shortages. Where it would apply in the rural and remote, we would then put the funding into affordable home ownership. That was the intent. I think the question you raised -- I will clarify this. In the implementation of that program, we want to keep it flexible so that it addresses not only rental units but also home ownership right across the board. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 14-14(5): Program Definitions of Urban and Rural

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, here in the Northwest Territories housing has always been a major problem. The quality of life starts in the home. The quality of living that you live in is in your home environment. In communities outside of Yellowknife and Inuvik, that has been a problem that is consistent, but since Yellowknife and Inuvik are experiencing housing crunches, it has become a territorial problem now.

Now, I ask the Minister, how does the Minister ensure that the budget identified from the federal government is split evenly between regional centres and those communities that have been in need for years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 14-14(5): Program Definitions of Urban and Rural

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In taking a comprehensive review of how we are going to redistribute funds, we use our existing allocation process. We believe that with this new federal funding provided to us, we can provide additional funding to those communities in the greatest need. So we are still doing an evaluation of those needs. Hopefully by April 1st, we can come back to the communities and state that they have an increase in their allocation, or in some cases where they do not need additional monies, we can reprofile that to those communities in greatest need. That is some of the methodology we intend to review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. Are there any further oral questions? Thank you. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, petitions. Item 9, reports of standing and special committees. Item 10, tabling of documents. Item 11, notices of motion. Item 12, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister Allen.

ITEM 12: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 1: Human Rights Act

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, February 21, 2002, I will move that Bill 1, Human Rights Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 12, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice of motion for the first reading of two bills.

Bill 2: Appropriation Act, 2002-2003

Mr. Speaker, first, I give notice that on Thursday, February 21, 2002, I will move that Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 3: An Act to Amend the Public Service Act

Mr. Speaker, as well, I give notice that on Thursday, February 21, 2002, I will move that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 12, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 4: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, February 21, 2002, I will move that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 12, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 13, motions. Item 14, first reading of bills. Item 15, second reading of bills. Item 16, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 16: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings for tomorrow morning of Accountability and Oversight at 9:00 a.m., as well as Cabinet House Strategy; Governance and Economic Development at 10:30 a.m., as well as Social Programs at 10:30 a.m., and again, Governance and Economic Development at noon tomorrow.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 20, 2002:

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
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. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 20, 2002, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

