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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

FRIDAY, JULY 7, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Good morning, everyone. It is nice to see the rain, it should help take care of some of those forest fires. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 17-14(3): The Width of Highway No. 3 and Traffic Safety

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been concern raised in this Session that Highway No. 3 was unsafe because there were places along Highway No. 3 where the highway was too narrow for two trucks to pass by one another.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to state categorically that there is no section of Highway No. 3 so narrow that when two approaching trucks meet, one must stop and give way to the other or one must pull over off the highway and on the shoulder in order to pass.

A standard, conventional tractor-trailer transport is 2.63 metres in width under the Large Vehicle Control Regulations. Pursuant to the Motor Vehicle Act, a truck is over-width at 3.2 metres. In other words, for two trucks carrying over-dimensional wide loads to pass, they need a minimum travelling surface width of 6.4 metres. There is no point along Highway No. 3 narrower than eight metres wide. The average width is ten metres with some sections as wide as 13 or more metres. The newly reconstructed and paved sections of Highway No. 3 are built to an 11 metre standard width.

Particularly in travelling from a wider section to a narrower section, the highway may seem too narrow, but in fact, no section is narrower than eight metres. This is more than adequate for two trucks to pass. I would point out that when the highways in the Northwest Territories were first built 20 or 30 years ago, eight metres was the specified design width.

Mr. Speaker, Highway No. 3 is safe and passable at the posted maximum speed limit of 90 kilometres per hour. The Department of Transportation's highway patrol officer reports that according to his radar, far too many private passenger vehicles routinely travel in excess of the posted maximum. If there is a perception that Highway No. 3 is unsafe, I would agree that this perception is valid when people travel in excess of posted speed limits, or do not exercise appropriate caution during bad weather. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Minister's Statement 18-14(3): Safety of Hay River Access Road

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of concerns raised in this Session about the safety of the Hay River Reserve Access Road.

The Department of Transportation keeps the Hay River Reserve Access Road in good travelling condition with a standard maintenance routine that includes surface blading, gravel resurfacing, dust control, snow clearing, brush clearing, and traffic sign repair and replacement. In 1997-98, the access road maintenance cost the department \$5,400 a kilometre. This expenditure increased in 1998-99 to \$7,500 a kilometre, largely due to a special ditch maintenance program initiated to improve the road's drainage.

The traffic accident statistics for the Hay River Reserve Access Road do not suggest that the road is dangerous or hazardous. Over the past ten years, there have been a total of seven reportable motor vehicle accidents on the Hay River Reserve Access Road. All but two of these resulted in property damage alone. There were two injury accidents but not one fatality. No accident has been reported on the road in the past two years.

Mr. Speaker, the maintenance and accident records for the Hay River Reserve Access Road speak for themselves. The road is well maintained and there have been only a few, mostly minor accidents. It is not unsafe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Minister's Statement 19-14(3): Formal Acknowledgement to Staff

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to formally acknowledge all of the hard work completed by Tom Bealieu, the president of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and his staff. John Hill, the chairman of the Public Utilities Board and his staff, and of course, my Ministerial staff, Tom Williams, my executive assistant and Betty Low, my executive secretary.

It is not often I can publicly show my appreciation of my staff who have put in countless extra hours to continually provide me with sound advice and guidance so that I can adequately respond to the requests of my colleagues and of the

constituents we serve.

Through my staff's efforts, it certainly allowed me a smooth transition in my role as a new Cabinet Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Allen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Comments on the GNWT Business Incentive Policy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the Business Incentive Policy today. I think it is timely, as this is the last chance I may get to discuss this until the fall. There is going to be a review of the Business Incentive Policy this fall that Minister Handley will embark on.

I have a few concerns, and I have raised some of them already as we have been going through this budget. One concern I raised the other day while questioning the Housing Corporation was that the Housing Corporation has various programs in place, like the EDAP and the IHP. The BIP stipulates that if 51 percent of the money they are giving to someone to buy a home comes from this government, the BIP kicks in and the person is required to buy northern first.

If they go less than 51 percent, say 48 to 49 percent, Mr. Speaker, the BIP is not involved. I think this is certainly a problem. My suggestion would be that if we are spending any government money and we are going to have a policy, I think it has to kick in no matter what the percentage, Mr. Speaker.

As well, the other day my colleague, Mr. Krutko, questioned a Minister in this House about a bid that he thought NTCL should have been awarded, and the Minister responded that there were two bids.

In the initial bidding process, one group was certainly excluded because they did not make the deadline for submissions, but he suggested that NTCL also should have been excluded because they were not BIP'ed. Although they had applied for the BIP, they had not received it. It took them another 14 days to get their BIP.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a misinterpretation of how the BIP is to be applied. I think the BIP is a northern preference policy. I do not think it is intended to exclude companies from the south, or exclude other companies. I think it simply allows northern companies to be awarded a 15 percent advantage.

For example, Mr. Speaker, when Mrs. Groenewegen tabled the Child Welfare League report, I am fairly certain the Child Welfare League of Canada does not have a BIP registration, yet we still use them. Maybe I am wrong. Maybe they do have a BIP, but this government does do a lot of business with companies that are not BIP'ed, and rightfully so. I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that this is an exclusion policy. It is simply a preference policy.

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess this fall, when we look at BIP, and we take a good hard look at it, we can do whatever we want to bulletproof the thing. We can add tons of rules, but I think rules are only one part of the problem. I think spirit and intent is all

together another thing. I think the department and the bureaucrats in the department are going to have to be able to interpret the Business Incentive Policy because, no matter what we do with the rules, there will always... Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, no matter what we do with the rules, spirit and intent has to be the key, guiding component of this.

For instance, it does us no good to have northern shell companies, or storefront companies, set up in the North that use other southern companies for the majority of work on projects, or to do all of the work on projects and then allow these shell or storefront companies to be awarded a 15 percent Business Incentive Policy. That simply does not keep business or money in the North, Mr. Speaker.

So although that component may be strictly to the letter of the law allowed for in the BIP, I think we have to look at spirit and intent. I am eager to see this thing reviewed in the fall. I hope Mr. Handley will take my comments to heart, and I hope they will take a critical look at the BIP. I think we do need a Business Incentive Policy, but I think we have to do whatever we can to improve it and make this thing more bulletproof so it benefits Northerners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Productive Meetings With Ministers

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, much of our time in the House is used for sharing concerns and evaluating government practices. Yesterday, I had two positive meetings. One was with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, and the other was with the Premier.

These meetings involved the mayor, Fred Behrens, and the acting senior administrative officer of the Hamlet of Rae-Edzo, Graeme Dargo, and the Minister of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. I also met with the four chiefs of the Dogrib region, the negotiators of the Dogrib land claim, and the Premier.

It is good to see all levels of government in my region responding to concerns and addressing issues from a united front. I am sure this teamwork approach will be effective and benefit all of my constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Recognition of Hay River Educators, Students and Volunteers

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, on the last day of Session, I would like to acknowledge some groups and individuals from Hay River.

First of all, I would like to recognize all the graduates from Diamond Jenness High School and apologize to them for not being able to be there for their graduation this year. I would like to wish them all the best and encourage them to continue on with their education and recognize that they are very important to our society.

I would also like to congratulate all the Grade 6 graduates who are graduating from Camsell St. Paul, and getting ready to go to Diamond Jenness High School. I would like to wish them all the best. I would also like to thank the teachers in all three schools in Hay River, who have dedicated their time and do so much for the education of our kids.

Another group I would like to recognize is the parents and staff that operate the Hay River playschool. I think they are a very important element to our education society. I would like to wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

I would also like to recognize a very special individual in Hay River, who has given some 45 years of her time in volunteer work. Grace Smits received the 2000 Northwest Territories Outstanding Volunteer Service award. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is very fitting that we take the time to recognize people such as Grace and let them know that their work does not go unnoticed.

I would also like to recognize two people that retired this year from the education system, Rose Goudreau and Pat Thomas, for all the years of hard work they have put in the education system in Hay River, and apologize to them for not being able to be at their retirement banquet.

I would also like to recognize my youngest daughter, Katrina, who just yesterday successfully got her drivers' license. I am sure she will make life very interesting for her dad for the next couple of months anyway.

-- Laughter

I would also like to recognize my family for all the support they have given me, especially over the last three weeks being away from home. I look forward to being home for the next while and spending some time with them.

I would also like to thank all of my colleagues for their support and the time we have spent here. I look forward to seeing all of you in the fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Oil and Gas Development in the Deh Cho Region

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to talk today about the need for the regional petroleum advisory to be located within the Deh Cho First Nations.

I have received a letter from the Deh Cho First Nations for the Honourable Joseph Handley that proposes a need for greater cooperation. It is pointed out by Grand Chief Michael Nadli, in his letter to Minister Handley, that it is important that the Government of the Northwest Territories work closely with the Deh Cho First Nations in developing oil and gas initiatives in the Deh Cho.

Oil and gas development will not occur in the Deh Cho without consent and participation of the Deh Cho First Nations. It logically follows, Mr. Speaker, that it is important that a meaningful dialogue be maintained between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Deh Cho First Nations. Locating the regional petroleum advisor within the Deh Cho First Nations office will accomplish this.

Mr. Speaker, the Deh Cho First Nations believes the regional petroleum advisor could assist the First Nations in dealing with oil and gas companies and in preserving traditional lands. Easy accessibility to the advisor would help the First Nations in meeting the challenges that oil and gas development would bring.

It is time for this government to accept that the government functions need to flow to the people. Locating the regional petroleum advisor within the Deh Cho First Nations office will accomplish this. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with it being Friday and all, and the last day of this Session, we will be heading back to our communities. I would like to do a Friday funny, or try to.

Mr. Speaker, it relates to the 2000 Summer Games being held in Sydney, Australia. I have done some thinking here, and I think we should send a team, Team Northwest Territories. I have selected a few individuals that could attend on our behalf, and represent us well.

It starts with the Honourable Joe Handley. Honourable Joe "Hit the Wall" Handley, Mr. Speaker, and I think he would do well in the marathon event. We hope he gets past the first leg before he hits the wall.

-- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Jake "The Finish Line" Ootes, in the 50 yard dash. To ensure he can get to the finish, we are going to set up oxygen that would be available at the 25 yard line.

-- Laughter

And the Honourable Jim "The Sniper" Antoine, in the shooting competition. With his accuracy, we are sure he will always hit right around the mark, in the bulls eye.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Jane "Ribbon" Groenewegen. With her ability to dance around the questions,

we are sure she will be in for a medal in the rhythm and dance competition.

-- Applause

-- Laughter

As well, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Vince "Ride 'em" Steen, in the equestrian event.

-- Laughter

With his ability to avoid the potholes, we are sure he will manage to get around the track. We are just not sure how high he will go.

-- Laughter

And, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Roger "Sage" Allen.

-- Laughter

In the cycling event, we are sure with his sage, he will be able to clearly see the opposition in front of him.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Steven "Knockout" Kakfwi in the boxing event. With his ability to dip and dive, we are sure he will place well in the intermediate class. A word of caution though: he needs to work on his shuffle.

-- Laughter

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. You will go as their trainer.

-- Laughter

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Member's Statement on Centenary Celebrations in the Akaitcho Treaty 8 Region

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, all. On this last day of Session, I would like to once again announce plans for a celebration in Fort Resolution.

On July 25th, people will be celebrating the 100th year anniversary of the Akaitcho Treaty No. 8. At this time, the Akaitcho agreement will be signed by this government, the federal government and of course the Akaitcho Government. They are negotiating the implementation of the spirit and intent of Treaty No. 8.

In addition, the days from July 20th to July 28th are filled with activities for everybody. I can only start to list some of the events because the schedule is jam-packed, Mr. Speaker. There are old time and drum dances, talent shows, ballgames, treaty payments, barbecues, canoe and jet boat races, and a very special feast, just to mention a few. It is to the credit of Mr. Paul Boucher, his centenary organizing committee, and the community in general, that the ten days are stacked with events.

Many dignitaries are expected to recognize this 100th anniversary of Treaty 8, including Members of this House, Mr. Speaker. The site is being prepared for about 5,000 people during the July festivities. Aboriginal political groups will be meeting in Fort Resolution as well. The Akaitcho Territory government and the Dene Nation are holding their annual general assemblies during this time.

This also marks the 30th Dene National Assembly, from July 24th to July 29th. The Akaitcho Government Annual Assembly is from July 21st to the 24th. Mr. Speaker, this is a huge task and I hope to see as many of you there as possible. Otherwise, I will see you in this House on October 31st of this year. Have a safe boating season and a good summer. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement on Regards to Colleagues and Constituents

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement today is on the recess until Halloween. Mr. Speaker, I could not help but notice this morning that it was raining as I came into work, and I have to hope that this is not a trend that is set for the rest of the summer. If so, MLAs have missed the best days of summer by sitting in the House to approve the budget.

However, I understand the rain is good for the forest fire budget. I really hope that it is a result of the exuberant dancing the Minister of Finance was undertaking last night when he concluded his first full budget in this House.

-- Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to take this opportunity to let my constituents know that, while I will be taking some time off over the summer, most of the time I will be available for them to call on me. I am prepared to work for them on their behalf.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Members a safe trip home, a good summer, and we will see you in the fall. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Regards to Constituents, Colleagues and Staff

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to take the opportunity, on this last day before the recess, to send out some good wishes to fellow Members and to my constituents. I was going to do a statement on the hotel tax, but I will rest that for now.

Mr. Speaker, even though I am sitting in the city that I represent, I do not always get as much time to visit my constituents and talk to them as I would like to. I want to tell them that I am hoping I can do another door-to-door in the fall. Hopefully, I could live up to that.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a Member of this House for seven months, and the most frequently asked question I get is: how do I like this new job? I want to tell people that I do not consider this a job. I consider this a total privilege to take care of the office of the Member for Range Lake. That justifies the trust people have placed in me to the best of my ability and to use all of the resources available to me at my disposal.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the constituents that I have spent seven months passing two budgets. I feel like I have done nothing but pass budgets and fight taxes. Mr. Speaker, I think they are aware that this was because of the irregularities in the schedule caused by the delay in the election, and hopefully we will straighten this out.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend the rest of the time thanking some staff. My constituency assistant, Jean Wallace, who has been a great support to me, professionally and personally. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the staff of the Clerk's office. I think that people are not aware that every hour we spend in this House, there are hundreds of people that work for us, dozens of people who spend double the amount of time.

Mr. Speaker, I did not realize I had quite a temper until I became an MLA.

So may I wish all the Members a great holiday. I am hoping to spend most of my time in the summer here, but I will be driving from Toronto to Yellowknife. I am really going to test Highway No. 3 and prove to the Minister of Transportation that there are bits there that are quite unsafe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Congratulations to Michel and Rose Sikyea

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The interests, needs and aspirations of my constituents are always at the forefront of my mind as their MLA, and so are the interests of all the people across the Territories.

In fact, I am really happy to be able to say that as a result of my exuberant answers yesterday, Mr. Nitah's area received 3.5 millimetres of rain on that fire we are getting there.

-- Applause

Good government. On a more serious note, it is a tremendous honour and privilege today for me to say congratulations to some former constituents of Weledeh who now live at Aven's Centre: Michel and Rose Sikyea, who are celebrating their 77th wedding anniversary today, July 7th.

-- Applause

I believe the Guinness Book of World Records has a 79th wedding anniversary recorded as the longest marriage. With Michel being 99 years of age and Rose being 95 years of age, they are in a position to break this record.

Michel is renowned for his storytelling at Aven's Centre, where he has resided for the past five years. The Aven Manor will be

holding a recognition ceremony for the Sikyea's today at 2:00 p.m. Again, congratulations to these two for reaching an increasable milestone. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. I will just remind Members that the statements should only be on one topic, but on the last day of Session, we will allow a little latitude. Also, I caution Ministers to avoid Members' statements on areas of their responsibility as Ministers. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member from Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement on Comments on Representing Constituents

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today being the final day of the Third Session of the 14th Assembly, we have been sitting here for three weeks doing the budget. As the MLA for Nahendeh, I just wanted to say that being an MLA in the Cabinet, we do not have the opportunity to raise issues as an Ordinary Member. However, with the different issues that are raised, we do deal with them in our own way.

I just want to assure the constituents that the issues in the six communities of Nahendeh are being dealt with and I will have the opportunity from now until October 31st to be back in my community of Fort Simpson, as well as in the constituency.

There are many things going on in my constituency that the people are working hard at. I will be available from now until October 31st to come and visit and enjoy your company.

With it being summer, it finally gives us the opportunity to get out there on the land. Either it be the 9th hole, the 18th hole or in the bush, we will have the opportunity to enjoy our land here in the North. I look forward to that. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement on Tribute to Constituent, David M. Hamilton

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I rise to pay tribute to one of my constituents, but interestingly enough, that constituent does not have the right to vote in territorial elections.

For all of us, we know that he is the boss here at the Legislative Assembly. This month, he is celebrating 20 years of service to the Legislative Assembly. David Hamilton came from Scotland in 1970, and he, I believe, was a Bay boy. He worked for them for a number of years, and then switched to our government and served in a number of capacities in the communities in the Arctic area.

He joined the territorial government in the mid-70s, and in 1980, became the assistant clerk of this Legislature. Several years later, in 1983, was appointed the Clerk. He has had the respect of six different Assemblies. It is not an easy role, Mr. Speaker, yet he makes it look easy.

Certainly during my time here, I have appreciated his advice, his council, and his readiness to be of assistance. I have always found him to be very understanding and helpful with difficulties I have faced as an MLA, ready to listen, ready to help, ready to offer advice.

To our benefit, he brings a great deal of experience and, as a result, he adds a great deal of dignity and respect to this House. Over the years, he has seen many politicians come and go. Many times, many of us would like to have been a fly on the wall during the contentious issues that arise from time to time, and I am sure he has seen bundles of tribulations and, no doubt, intrigue. He has played an important role in the evolution of his own responsibility as a servant of this government.

Mr. Hamilton was awarded the Certificate of Recognition by the Secretary of State in 1987 for service in the electoral system and the Governor General's Commemorative Medal in 1993.

He was appointed the Northwest Territories' first resident chief electoral officer in 1997 and administered the first election for MLAs following the division of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Ootes, your time has expired. You have to follow the rules, you know.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We all know Mr. Hamilton works a tremendous number of hours, especially while the House is sitting. We owe Mr. Hamilton and his family a big debt of gratitude.

He plays an important and significant role in our daily lives here in this Assembly, and my public statement will hopefully let the people of the Northwest Territories know of the importance we place in him.

Congratulations on your 20 years of service, Mr. Hamilton. This House really appreciates your dedication. Thank you, and may your force be with us for many more years.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Comments on Adjournment of Session

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, like many of my colleagues, I will be testing out Highway No. 3 this afternoon after this big rainstorm. I have invited Mr. Steen to come with me, but he has not accepted my offer.

When I get home today, Mr. Speaker, Hay River will be celebrating the 50th reunion of the church and the mission, and many of the people who lived in Hay River and were associated with the hospital and the mission over the last 50

years will be there. So I look forward to seeing many friends when I get there, some of whom I probably have not seen for many years.

I will be seeing you, my colleagues, at the assemblies over the summer. Mr. Nitah, we will be there in Fort Resolution. I am looking forward to those events. I am hoping to visit many of your communities over the summer months.

So if you are ever passing through Hay River and it is a weekend, and I am not out traveling at one of these, please do take the time to drop by and visit. I am sure we can arrange for a good meal. Otherwise, I will be here, working at the Legislature. I encourage you to contact us anytime over the summer months.

I just want to thank all of our colleagues for their hard work and their input over this last three-week Session, and wish them the very best for the remainder of the summer. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Oral Question 122-14(3): Alleged Contraventions of the Financial Administration Act

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Roland on July 5, 2000, regarding his allegation that the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development was in contravention of the Financial Administration Act with respect to funding transfers exceeding \$250,000.

The Member cited Section 27 of the Act, which states that "No person shall incur an expenditure without the authority of an enactment." He also referred to Section 30 which states "No person shall incur an expenditure unless it is pursuant to an appropriation and in accordance with the activity set out in the estimates on which the appropriation is based." His line of questioning referred to Financial Administration Act restrictions on transfers of funds among activities.

Just for clarification, Mr. Speaker, the Act permits the Financial Management Board to approve transfers of funds among activities which are laid out in the estimates. This authority has been delegated by the board to Ministers, under the Delegation of Authority Regulations.

The Act also requires that a list of funds transferred among activities exceeding \$250,000 must be laid before the Legislative Assembly at each Session. Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Finance will be tabling that report later today.

However, the specific instances referred to in Mr. Roland's question do not fall within those sections of the Financial Administration Act. Mr. Roland asserted that there were three incidents where funding transfers were outside the Act. Of the three amounts referred to by Mr. Roland, only one actually represents a transfer of appropriated funds within a fiscal year, and that transfer was entirely within the requirements of the

Financial Administration Act.

The amount of \$4.1 million was appropriated in the 1999-2000 main estimates within the resource management and economic development activity of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development for the NWT Development Corporation. During the 1999-2000 fiscal year, the department reviewed the Development Corporation's budget requirements and provided the Corporation with contribution funding of \$2.7 million. The remaining \$1.4 million was reallocated within the resource management and economic development activity because the funding remained within the activity for which it was appropriated. It was entirely within the Minister's authority, and there was no reporting requirement to the Legislative Assembly.

The other two amounts questioned by Mr. Roland, \$236,000 and \$366,000, reflect funding that was allocated to the resource management and economic development activity in the 1999-2000 main estimates. These amounts have been reallocated in the present 2000-2001 draft main estimates that we have discussed lately, to the corporate management activity. These reallocations were not made as budget transfers during a fiscal year but represent a budget reallocation for which approval is being sought through this main estimates process. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Oral Question 84-14(3): GNWT Addictions Strategy

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Bell on June 28th, regarding the Department of Health and Social Services' Addictions Strategy.

The Department of Health and Social Services, in consultation with stakeholders including the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the health and social services boards, the NWT Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association, community based alcohol and drug projects and various non-government agencies, is developing a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

This Mental Health and Addictions Strategy will provide an overall framework to guide improvements to services so that the needs of individuals with mental health and addiction issues can be better met. Implementation of the strategy will be included in the 2001-2004 business planning cycle. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a second return.

MR. SPEAKER: Mrs. Groenewegen, you may go ahead with your second return.

Return to Oral Question 75-14(3): Training of Northern Nurses

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Miltenberger on June 27th, regarding the training of Northern nurses.

Although the department did lapse money in recruitment and retention last year, the headquarters unit has now been staffed, and nurse educators are in position in the boards. Plans are already being implemented, coupled with the ongoing shortage of physicians and nurses, strongly indicate that there is a very little likelihood of any significant lapse this year.

As previously announced, as part of the northern development component of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy, the department has already introduced a new program this year to provide additional support for health and social service professionals to further their education and continues to develop options to support northern professionals.

Nevertheless, within the context of the comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Strategy, I will assess the implications, financial and otherwise, of increasing the funding available for education leave. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize someone who is a former researcher at the Legislative Assembly, Candy Townsend. I am proud to say that she is one of my constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes, and welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 147-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Transportation, the Honourable Vince Steen. On Highway No. 3 there is a section of road on kilometre 284. Due to erosion and constant repairs to this section, the curve is very sharp and very dangerous for two large trucks to meet, as large trucks have run off track and need more room to turn.

The Minister has given us measurements which are sufficient for standard roads and curves. From my experience in driving this highway and being told by some experts, this curve is not up to standards.

Can the Minister have the department check that this is true? If it is true, can the department repair it and make it safe, as traffic will be increasing with winter only a few months away? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen. There were two questions there, Mr. Minister.

Return to Question 147-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is the visibility I presume the Member is referring to, rather than the width on the curves. The department is well aware that these problems exist. That is part of the reason that Highway No. 3 is being reconstructed, to improve the visibility on the curves.

I am not quite clear as to what the second question was, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. The way the Chair heard it, one was whether the information was true. Second, what was the width. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 147-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have been driving for over 30 years, and have a class 1 driver's license and used to drive trucks, I have a lot of experience in driving trucks. Off track is where a truck, when it turns, needs more space because the back wheels are further away.

So when you have two vehicles meeting around a sharp corner, they have to take extra space to turn. There is one curve that is not a standard curve because of all of the repairs and the erosion.

My question for the Minister is, can the department check it and repair it? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 147-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my department is always open to suggestions as to how to improve the conditions of the highway, short of resurfacing the whole thing. I am sure we are open to suggestions from the Members, if specific curves are identified, and I believe he referenced kilometre 384. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 147-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned kilometre 284, just for clarification.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. That is a point of clarification, it was kilometre 284. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 148-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question today for the Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen. It pertains to the same issue that the Member for North Slave asked, kilometre 284. I am told by the people who drive there all the time that it is a dangerous corner. It is not safe. Two trucks cannot meet.

As the Minister stated in his statement, in formal measurements it is okay, but when two trucks are passing, it is not. There is water on both sides, so there is very little room for the trucks to maneuver. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, I understand that is a site where they are having at least two accidents in the last short while and in fact there may have even been casualties.

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister would commit to giving some credibility to what the Members here are saying, and not just listen to the department, to examine this more carefully. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 148-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will pass this information on to the department. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 148-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that visibility is not the issue. We are talking about when the trucks are operating in normal conditions, at a normal speed. Unless we cut the speed limit down to 50 kilometres per hour, and cost the industry a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. I want to make sure that the Minister understands that it is not visibility. It is not trucks speeding and driving irresponsibly. That was a comment, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Minister, that was more of a comment than a question. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 149-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow on the same line of questioning with Minister Steen. Yesterday, after Mr. Steen maintained that the road was safe and that trucks can pass at all areas, one of my constituents joked to me that we should set up Mr. Vician in a transport trailer and Mr. Steen in a transport trailer at opposite ends in Rae and Yellowknife, to see if they can meet going at 90 kilometres per hour. I told them that was a ridiculous idea, seeing as Mr. Vician is a constituent of mine and I would not want to put any one of my constituents in harms way.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, as trucks make turns I am aware, as Mr. Lafferty suggested, off track becomes an issue, and a truck's back end can swing out a full three feet. Does the Minister take this into consideration when he makes the measurements that he refers to? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 149-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department definitely takes these things into consideration. I have to remind the Member, Mr. Speaker, that I just finished reading a report as to the width of Highway No. 3. I read in there that the minimum width of the highway has been measured. We do not have any sections of the highway less than eight metres.

We specified very clearly in the report exactly what is considered a safe distance. My department clearly identified it. From the standards we have been given and that we comply with, the highway is safe. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 149-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do have a question. I do not want to make this an exercise in forensics, but the Minister suggested that an oversized vehicle is 3.2 metres. Two of them meeting on a corner would be 6.4 metres. If we assume that they are not oversized, it looks like at 6.4 metres they are going to meet on an eight metre width of road. You take into account the fact that one of them is turning, and can swing out another metre, we are talking about 7.4 metres of room required on an eight metre corner. We are really starting to split hairs here, but can the Minister agree that this makes it really tricky to pass on certain sections of the highway? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 149-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the report said the minimum is eight metres. That clearly suggests that there are portions of the highway that are over 13 metres. I am assuming those are on the corners. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 149-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is assuming that it is 13 metres on all corners. Indications from people in the industry have been that the specific corner we are talking about is not anywhere near 13 metres. I hope the Minister will take our concerns seriously and look into this.

I just have one further question. If the road is safe, and has been safe for the last two years, as the Minister indicated, I am confused as to why he lowered the speed limit to 70 kilometres this past winter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 149-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I clarified in the past as to why we lowered the speed limit. It was referenced as more of a visibility problem that private individuals were experiencing in dealing with the increased truck traffic.

It was not so much the fact that the trucks had to slow down for their use of the highway. As a matter of fact, without the speed limit, they were not slowing down. That suggests that they were not having a problem navigating the highway.

If you take into consideration the number of trucks that navigate that highway versus the number that ran into the ditch, I would suggest the highway is safe. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 149-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For clarification, the motivation for lowering the speed limit for large trucks on that road was not at all a safety issue; it was something else, a visibility issue? Just confirmation, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 149-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, visibility is a very important safety issue when you are driving on the highway. Thank you.

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

Question 150-14(3): Land Claim and Self-Government Negotiation Mandates

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. In the last couple of days. I have asked the Minister to provide me with documents on the negotiation mandates for his negotiators. I thank him for the documents he has provided.

He has provided me with the federal policy guide that apparently the negotiators operate under. This federal policy guide is from 1996. The copy of the self-government guidelines from 1995 that refer to the Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs Political and Constitutional Development Committee. I do not believe this department and these committees are around any longer.

I would like to ask if he has any documents regarding directions to negotiators that are a little more up to date? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 150-14(3): Land Claim and Self-Government Negotiation Mandates

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did provide the honourable Member with the guidelines on self-government. It is based on the federal government's inherent right to self-government policy. This whole initiative on the self-government negotiations was originally derived from federal policy.

We adhere to it. That document is still the document used for guidelines. Not only us, but other jurisdictions in Canada. The documents for our particular guidelines, the first document from 1995 was updated in 1998, I believe. It is still prevalent and used today, even though there are some minor changes in there.

It refers to the Department of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs. Of course, intergovernmental aspects of that department have gone to the Executive. There is still a Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The name alone changed, but the instructions are still there.

The process of the Constitutional Affairs Committee has changed. Cabinet has taken that portfolio. The names, the internal processes and the reporting has changed. However, the instructions are still the same.

We use that as the basis for our negotiations, of course, at each negotiating table. There are negotiating instructions. I would like to talk with the honourable Member and try to find out exactly what kind of detailed negotiating instructions he is seeking. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 150-14(3): Land Claim and Self-Government Negotiation Mandates

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the self-government guidelines that this government apparently still operates under, even though this one is dated 1995, the Executive Council approves a negotiating mandate. That is specifically what I am requesting, if the Minister could provide that to me. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 150-14(3): Land Claim and Self-Government Negotiation Mandates

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not very clear as to what the honourable Member is talking about. I did provide him with the Dogrib Framework Agreement, which is a public document, as well as the Beaufort Delta Framework Agreement, also a public document. In there, there are instructions for those two tables that we are currently negotiating.

We are, for the Deh Cho negotiations, just beginning to start dealing with a framework agreement. Once that is concluded, initialled and signed, it becomes a public document. In there, it will lay out how negotiations will take place.

Likewise with the Akaitcho Treaty 8 Framework Agreement. That was initialled and is to be signed July 25, I believe, in Fort Resolution. Once it is signed, it becomes a public document. We will share that document with the honourable Member at that time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 150-14(3): Land Claim and Self-Government Negotiation Mandates

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister did provide me with the negotiation process and the schedule agreement from the Beaufort Delta and also the Dogrib Framework Agreement. Both documents are dated 1996. However, I am looking for specific negotiating instructions provided to his negotiators.

The Minister still has not answered my question. I cannot believe the negotiators are provided these self-government guidelines and given the go-ahead. I am looking for the specific negotiation instructions he provides to his negotiators. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 150-14(3): Land Claim and Self-Government Negotiation Mandates

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are many negotiating instructions as we deal with each negotiating item. I would provide the honourable Member with the negotiating instructions, but there is an element of confidentiality there we share with our other partners, with the Dogribs and the federal government, as well with the Beaufort Delta leadership and the federal government. I will look at that request and determine with our agreements with our other partners to see what negotiating instructions we can share. Thank you.

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

Question 151-14(3): Public Service Code of Conduct

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a result of the conflict of interest inquiry last December, there was a public expectation that the code of conduct for the public service would be reviewed. I noticed in February of this year a draft code was circulated by the Financial Management Board Secretariat as part of the consultation process. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Can he advise me if the consultation period is concluded? Has the proposed code of conduct been finalized yet?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 151-14(3): Public Service Code of Conduct

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the draft of the code of conduct has been completed and will go

to the deputy minister's review committee in early August. Assuming it gets approval through the Financial Management Board, we expect to have it finalized in September or October. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 151-14(3): Public Service Code of Conduct

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Minister says finalized, does he mean implemented by September or October?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 151-14(3): Public Service Code of Conduct

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point, the plan is to distribute it to all staff and to hold briefing and information sessions with them. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we expect it will be fully implemented by September or October, and briefing sessions will have been held with all the staff. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 151-14(3): Public Service Code of Conduct

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the recommendations was that the proposed code of conduct protect an employee of the government who reported on inappropriate activities. Will there be whistle-blower protection in this code of conduct?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 151-14(3): Public Service Code of Conduct

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the proposed code of conduct does include a clause on reporting wrong-doing, and assuring the employee that it is not only their responsibility or obligation to report wrong-doing, but also that they will not be disciplined or receive any sort of reprisal for identifying that sort of potential wrong-doing. Thank you.

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

Question 152-14(3): Tender Process on Fort McPherson Tank Construction Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday during committee of the whole, I asked a few questions of the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services regarding a specific contract for the construction of

two large tanks to be installed in the Fort McPherson water treatment plant as part of the water improvement project.

I have concerns that arose from this discussion. There was a contract let by this government, in which NTCL was the only bidder on the contract. In the unedited Hansard, Mr. Rattray stated:

"There were two things that were wrong in how it was handled. The first was the NTCL bid on the project and were not designated as a northern manufacturer. At the time the tender closed, they did not have approval as a northern manufacturer of steel tanks in order to qualify for the bid."

Mr. Speaker, I have concerns with the second comment as well, which basically states they did not retain the manufacturer approval within the time of the tender call. It goes on to say another reason for rejecting the tender was there was another bidder who did not get their bid in on time.

The whole purpose of the Manufacturers' Directive is to give a benefit to northern manufacturers. You get a 15 percent write-up. Regarding this particular tank, you do not get the write-up if you do not register as a northern manufacturer. I would like to ask the Minister, in order to save this government money, this would have saved us 15 percent because they were not in the BIP. Why was that the reason for this contract? Everybody knows that NTCL is a northern company.

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

Return to Question 152-14(3): Tender Process on Fort McPherson Tank Construction Project

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the department made an effort to clear up the issue yesterday in committee of the whole by referencing the fact that at the time the bids closed, NTCL was not registered as a northern manufacturer. I understand they have to register with RWED, which they had not done. They were in the process of doing it, and had put forward an application to do it, and RWED was in the process of approving it. However, at the time the bids were open, they had not qualified.

As a department, we received a letter from a different company that believed they were qualified under RWED, and they objected to us awarding the contract to someone who was not qualified. The tender did call for qualification as a northern manufacturer. With that in mind, we disqualified NTCL's bid. We re-issued invitations to tenders to three qualified companies, which included NTCL, because at that time they had qualified. I am told the bids closed on the 5th. I have not been told what the decision was or who has the contract. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 152-14(3): Tender Process on Fort McPherson Tank Construction Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the other problem with this tender is that there was no other bidder. The Minister stated there was another bidder, but they did not

get their bid in on time. This is in the unedited Hansard. Are you telling me if someone puts a bid on a particular contract and there is someone else that did not get their bid in, they can call the department and say, "Reject the person's bid because I did not have a chance to bid?" Is that the practice of this government?

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

Further Return to Question 152-14(3): Tender Process on Fort McPherson Tank Construction Project

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. There were no other bidders. NTCL did not qualify as a bidder. That is what the decision was made on. The department further clarified yesterday that the other qualified bidder did not have his bid in on time. We did not consider his bid either. We just put it out again to all three, giving all three of them an equal opportunity to put in a qualified bid. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 152-14(3): Tender Process on Fort McPherson Tank Construction Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the knowledge of the Minister that there was an application in with the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development to ensure they did classify as a northern manufacturer, the usual timeframe for approval usually takes up to a day. In this case, it was almost 14 days. The Minister and people in the department had this knowledge, so why was that not taken into account when you reviewed this particular bid?

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

Further Return to Question 152-14(3): Tender Process on Fort McPherson Tank Construction Project

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my department advised me they had made a decision based on the information they had before them. Whether NTCL had applied or not could not be taken into consideration. It would not have been a fair situation. We had to make a decision based on the information we have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 152-14(3): Tender Process on Fort McPherson Tank Construction Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker the Minister keeps referring to this particular contract, that it was refused on the basis of BIP. The government does business with hundreds of other contractors in the Northwest Territories. We are getting a lot of our goods and services from companies that do not have BIP. So why in this particular case was this company picked on because they do not have BIP, when this government does business with hundreds of other companies who are not even registered for the BIP?

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

Further Return to Question 152-14(3): Tender Process on Fort McPherson Tank Construction Project

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I believe that it was the Manufacturers' Directive and not the Business Incentive Policy that came into play. They were not registered as a manufacturer, but they were registered as BIP as far as I know. It was not a question of BIP. Because of the Manufacturers' Directive, it was a requirement in the tender that you had to be a registered manufacturer in order to qualify in the process. Thank you.

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

Question 153-14(3): Lutselk'e Education Concerns

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my question is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Mr. Speaker, education is one of the most important things in a person's life in this day and age. To that end, we have passed many motions and legislations in the House since we came into office. In Fort Resolution, the school was in pretty rough shape and after a few hiccups, the Minister and his department were able to secure resources to fix it. I thank the Minister and his department for that.

However, there is a big problem in Lutselk'e. The turn around of the instructors, educators, teachers is very high. I pointed out in the House earlier in this Session that we need consistency for education to work. Towards that end, I would like to get a commitment from the Minister to meet with the local education authority in Lutselk'e before the start of this school year, to set up a plan and a process to address some of the many problems that is facing that community, not least of all the economics, cost of living and housing issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 153-14(3): Lutselk'e Education Concerns

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I am quite prepared at the invitation of the district education authority in the community to attend a meeting and participate with the members of that committee. I would like to point out that the normal process that we use to address issues, Mr. Speaker, is to work through the district education council of which the Lutselk'e chair would be a member. However, that does not preclude me from taking in and attending meetings directly with community organizations.

I understand Mr. Nitah's concern and the community's concern. Lately, there have been some difficulties with teacher turnover and there may be others. I would be most pleased to attend a meeting. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 153-14(3): Lutselk'e Education Concerns

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for his commitment. We certainly do not want to circumvent the district education council, but that may be one of the problems also, Mr. Speaker. Small communities like Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution, for that matter, get lost in the bigger district council in terms of funding, decision-making and so on.

One of the problems in Lutselk'e is that community members do not really have an opportunity to really have input into who gets hired to educate their children. I think that may be one of the problems that we have to address.

I still would like to work with the communities in getting something similar to that with the Dogrib Community Services Board. I think that has proven to work very well. We know now that the rate of aboriginal students in university is higher than the Canadian average and I think that had a lot to do with it. I would like to get the Minister's commitment to work towards a process to establish a similar board within the Akaitcho Territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 153-14(3): Lutselk'e Education Concerns

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the moment, we have a process that I do have to adhere to. The process of funding is through the district education council, which is made up of the chairs of the district education authorities from the various communities. I understand that there may be some desire to move towards an Akaitcho Territory council down the road. I have to leave that decision and that process to be initiated by representatives from the Akaitcho Territory. If that is the desire of the communities, then the process is no doubt in place for the communities to follow. At the moment, we do have a district education council which I respect, and the process is there at the moment. Thank you.

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

Question 154-14(3): Inter-Activity Funding Transfers

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when I first addressed the issue of the Financial Administration Act, there was a report by Minister Handley as to what had happened. Just for clarification, Mr. Speaker, when I raised this issue with Mr. Handley, I notified him that I would be questioning him on Sections 29 and 30 of the FAA. That was the end of discussion. He did not inform me at that time that there was a report that was going to be tabled in this House and he did not provide any further detail.

A number of my constituents were concerned that I had already known about this report and what was in it. That was not explained. There was no notice given. In fact, it was not until he

did an interview that stated that there would be a report. Last night in committee of the whole, the Minister also said that there would be a report tabled in this House.

So just for confirmation, from the chairman of the Financial Management Board Secretariat, is he in fact tabling that report today? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 154-14(3): Inter-Activity Funding Transfers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly when the Member indicated to me that he was going to ask questions regarding sections of the Financial Administration Act, I welcomed him to do that, and if he needed more information, I would provide it. I did not at the time say to him exactly what would be tabled, but I want to assure the House that today I will be tabling a report on inter-activity transfers over \$250,000. Thank you.

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

Question 155-14(3): Seniors Housing Programs

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, the Honourable Roger Allen.

In March, the Minister visited two of my communities with me. He heard the constituents' concerns about housing and received a detailed report about housing issues in Rae Lakes. I would like to know what his department has planned in my region for seniors. Specifically, in terms of seniors' individual housing units and the associated safety concerns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Housing, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 155-14(3): Seniors Housing Programs

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the moment, we are working on a number of new initiatives that were generated by our community visits. We are presently trying to revise a number of programs within the Housing Corporation to address the needs of senior's housing, not only in the Member's communities, but across the Territories as well. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 155-14(3): Seniors Housing Programs

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I will be visiting my constituents in the next few weeks and I would like to give them something positive. Can the Minister give me something on paper in the next short while for my visits? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for Housing, Mr. Allen.

Further Return to Question 155-14(3): Seniors Housing Programs

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will communicate all of our revised program elements to the Members. Again, we heard in the House in the last several days the issue of the application of BIP, the application of the Northern Manufacturers' Directive, and we are working under the context of those two policies to try to find ways of making it more equitable in the context of how we apply those two policies to the program elements of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation programs.

Until we can get some certainty on how those are going to effect the revisions to those programs, I will just mention to the Members that we are continually working with the other departments to resolve that issue at this moment. Thank you.

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

Question 156-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Steen. Further to my line of questioning about the reduction in speed limits this past year from 90 kilometres to 70 kilometres, the Minister indicated that it was a visibility issue at first, not a safety issue. He did clarify that and said that certainly visibility is a safety issue.

I would like to take you back to Hansard of February 24th when the speed reduction was made and the Minister announced it. His explanation then, Mr. Speaker, was:

"I believe in view of the condition of this section of the highway and the increased volume of traffic travelling on it, a lower speed limit for trucks will reduce the wear and tear on the road and give motorists a greater sense of confidence that they can travel the highway safely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

It does not say anything about visibility. So I want to ask the Minister if he could clarify it. Why was the reduction taken? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister of Transportation Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 156-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the answer is in the second part of what he quoted, to give people a sense of confidence in their ability to navigate that highway. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 156-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it does say that, but it does not say anything about visibility. It very clearly says it was to reduce wear and tear on the road. Clearly the

department is concerned about wear and tear and the condition of the surface. Will he confirm that? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 156-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there were two points there. One was the wear and tear, definitely. The second point was the reference to people's ability to navigate that highway with confidence. That included visibility. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 156-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. BELL: I agree with the Minister, but clearly it says to give motorists a greater sense of confidence. The wear and tear is an issue because clearly people driving down that road are so scared of the condition of the road that they are not driving with confidence. Now is the situation corrected, and the surface is corrected now? I mean, if we are back up to 90, it must be fixed. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 156-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the department corrected the problems with the surface a while back. As a matter of fact, we have been working on it all year on an ongoing basis. We tried to respond to the traffic volume and the impact of that traffic on the highways. We have to take into consideration the fact that the weather plays a major part in this whole process, in that the more it rains, the more potholes we are going to have because we are using calcium to keep the dust down. So we have to increase the maintenance. I am sure the department has the ability to respond based on the funding that was approved just recently in the budget, thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 156-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad we have established that wear and tear is really at the root of this problem, because if we went from 90 to 70 and now back up to 90, and we are to take the Minister's explanation that it is a visibility problem. I would like to ask the Minister how he fixed the visibility problems that allowed us to take it from 70 and back up to 90, if visibility is the real issue. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 156-14(3): Highway No. 3 Safety Concerns

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think that the visibility issue that was brought to me was in the wintertime when there is a lot of snow flying behind those trucks. In the summertime, it was that the calcium is not in place. There was a lot of dust. So specific to the time that we were talking about it, it was the snow problem, there were problems with visibility, so we responded accordingly. Thank you.

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

Question 157-14(3): Site For the Aklavik Health Facility

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. It is in regard to the construction of a new hospital facility in Aklavik. There were some questions about the location that it is going to be constructed on. I raised this question with the Minister in committee of the whole and she was going to look into what is happening with the location. Is the community of Aklavik going to be compensated, or will there be money made available to the community to establish a new baseball field? Has the Minister looked into this? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 157-14(3): Site For the Aklavik Health Facility

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is being looked into, but I do not have an answer at this time.

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

Supplementary to Question 157-14(3): Site For the Aklavik Health Facility

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker can the Minister get back to myself or the community of Aklavik, and keep us in touch on exactly where this is at and how we can resolve it as soon as possible?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 157-14(3): Site For the Aklavik Health Facility

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will commit to doing that.

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

Supplementary to Question 157-14(3): Site For the Aklavik Health Facility

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How soon can the Minister get back to me on this particular matter? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 157-14(3): Site For the Aklavik Health Facility

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should be able to respond to the Member within a week's time. Thank you.

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

Question 158-14(3): Registration Process For Northern Manufacturers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for ensuring the registration of a program in regard to the Business Incentive Policy and Manufacturers' Directive, the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, in regard to the time that it takes for a company to register as a northern manufacturer.

Can the Minister tell me whether he has looked at the possibility of allowing aboriginal organizations who have land claim agreements who specifically have economic chapters, like the Inuvialuit, they have the participation agreement in the Gwich'in, Sahtu agreements there is an economic measure, which clearly states that this government has to allow them certain privileges.

So will the Minister consider looking at reviewing that and making this process a lot easier for First Nations' companies? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 158-14(3): Registration Process For Northern Manufacturers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have made a commitment to review the Business Incentive Policy. Without commenting on the merit of the proposal and, yes, certainly it will be considered as we do that review. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 158-14(3): Registration Process For Northern Manufacturers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me exactly what is their regular length of time for an application to be processed and approved?

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

Further Return to Question 158-14(3): Registration Process For Northern Manufacturers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not think there is a regular time, but if everything is in order, we get all of the documentation in order and there are no outstanding questions, then it can be done within a 14 day period. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 158-14(3): Registration Process For Northern Manufacturers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the department notify any particular departments that there is an application before them and it is being reviewed so they are aware of it? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 158-14(3): Registration Process For Northern Manufacturers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, any applications are processed by the staff in Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, which is responsible for the administration of the Business Incentive Policy. Once they make a recommendation on it, it then goes to the senior management preference committee, which is chaired by the deputy minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and includes all of the deputy ministers from departments with any sort of contracting responsibilities.

The deputy minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is prepared to call a senior management preference committee at any time if there is an urgent need to have it. Other than that, they meet on a regular basis, but I am not sure exactly how frequently. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 158-14(3): Registration Process For Northern Manufacturers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister explain how long it takes to update the lists of the different manufacturers, either through the Business Incentive Policy or the Manufacturers' Directive, and ensuring that list is updated as the applications come forth?

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

Further Return to Question 158-14(3): Registration Process For Northern Manufacturers

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the list of qualified companies is updated on a fairly regular basis and certainly at least annually. There are hundreds of companies that are registered. There are some new applications each year, some who cease doing business and so on. So it is a fairly major

undertaking, but it is done on a regular basis as we get the information. Thank you.

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

Question 159-14(3): GNWT Tender Qualifications

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on the line of questioning with Mr. Handley that Mr. Krutko has embarked on,

Mr. Krutko is very concerned that NTCL put a bid in for a contract but was not awarded the contract, although they were the sole applicant, because they were not BIP. Can Mr. Handley tell this House if you need a BIP to do business with this government?

In other words, should a company be thrown out and a process restarted if the company did not have a BIP? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 159-14(3): GNWT Tender Qualifications

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I understand the question. It seems a bit hypothetical to me. If a company is concerned that the BIP was not applied properly, then the senior management preference committee, the deputy ministers' committee, is the committee that it should go to for a review and a ruling on the issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 159-14(3): GNWT Tender Qualifications

MR. BELL: Thank you. I do not believe the question is hypothetical. NTCL put in a bid on a project to do some manufacturing for water tanks. They did not have a BIP. There is nothing hypothetical here. Should the thing have been thrown out and started over the way it was?

I do not think you need a BIP to do business with this government. Can the Minister answer that question? Do you need a BIP to do business with our government? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 159-14(3): GNWT Tender Qualifications

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, to answer the question, no. You do not need a BIP to do business with the government. I do not know the specific circumstances of the particular contract that is being referred to me to answer specifically on that one.

To answer the question, you do not need to have a BIP status to do business with this government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 159-14(3): GNWT Tender Qualifications

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is really the point I was driving at, and I will leave it at that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. That was a comment. Item 6, oral questions. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I was going to respond to oral questions, that is when I raised my hand.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The record will show that I did ask twice, and there was no indication of any further questions, Mr. Krutko. You may seek consent to return.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to Item 6, oral questions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to Item 6, oral questions. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

REVERT TO ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 160-14(3): Update on Fort McPherson Water Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I would like to ask the Minister of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to give me an update on exactly where things are at with the Fort McPherson water project. We may not be back here for some time. I would like to have it on record from the Minister where we are.

Can the Minister tell me exactly where are we at on this project, are we on schedule, and will it meet the required new water source in Fort McPherson before next spring? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. You have asked more than one question. Would you just give us the question that you would like the Minister to answer, please?

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs give me an update on exactly where we are at with the Fort McPherson water upgrade project?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 160-14(3): Update on Fort McPherson Water Project

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the Fort McPherson deep water lake project is on track. I do not anticipate right now any foreseeable problems to delay the project.

We would like to see this project completed according to schedule and we are aiming for the spring of 2001 for the operational use of this facility. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 160-14(3): Update on Fort McPherson Water Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, has the Minister overseen this project, knowing the Minister did make a commitment to this House that this is a priority of this government?

In light of the contracting problems we seem to have in regard to getting particular items constructed and moved into Fort McPherson to be installed this summer, will that have a delay in the project? What are you doing to work with your colleagues from Public Works and Services to make sure that that does not happen?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 160-14(3): Update on Fort McPherson Water Project

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, I will be working with the Minister of Public Works and Services in regard to the prefabrication of tanks. My approach on this is that I would like to move this project according to schedule. I have asked if the contracting is delaying the process. I am told that it is pretty tight, but I think we will still be on track. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 160-14(3): Update on Fort McPherson Water Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister tell me who is in charge of this specific project?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 160-14(3): Update on Fort McPherson Water Project

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a project that is the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' project, but Public Works and Services have been doing the contracting arrangements for us. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 160-14(3): Update on Fort McPherson Water Project

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did get a commitment from this Minister that he will ensure that this

project goes on. It is one of his priorities and I would like to ask the Minister, is this still a priority for the Minister? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 160-14(3): Update on Fort McPherson Water Project

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it is still a priority. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have three documents for tabling today.

Tabled Document 36-14(3): Inter-Activity Transfer Over \$250,000 for the Period of April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000

Mr. Speaker, as required by section 32 (1), subsection 2 of the Financial Administration Act, I am tabling a list of all inter-activity transfers exceeding \$250,000 within departments for the period of April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000.

Tabled Document 37-14(3): Northwest Territories Development Corporation Annual Report, 1998-99

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Development Corporation Annual Report, 1998-99.

Tabled Document 38-14(3): Estimating Potential Hotel Tax Revenues

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Estimating Potential Hotel Revenues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Tabled Document 39-14(3): Annual Report on the Affirmative Action Policy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Annual Report on the Affirmative Action Policy 1999. This report provides government-wide and departmental statistics on the affirmative action status of employees. It also provides details of departmental initiatives to support the Affirmative Action Policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Tabled Document 40-14(3): Minister's Response to the 1999 Forum on Health and Social Services, July 2000

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Minister's Response to the 1999 Forum on Health and Social Services, July 2000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Youth, Mr. Allen.

Tabled Document 41-14(3): List of GNWT Youth Programs and Services

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled List of GNWT Youth Programs and Services, July 2000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Tabled Document 42-14(3): Dogrib First Nation All-Chiefs Resolution Recognizing the Monfwi Gogha Ndenlitte Region

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled All Chief's Resolution, dated July 6, 2000. This is a resolution for changing the name of the North Slave riding and for it to be considered a unique region after the treaty negotiations are complete and the land claim has been settled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Motion 8-14(3): Referral of Tabled Document 32-14(3), Report of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, July 10, 2000, I will move the following motion. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Tabled Document 32-14(3), Report of the Chief Electoral Officer titled Modernizing our Electoral System, be referred to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight; and further, that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight report its findings with recommendations to the Legislative Assembly during the 2001 winter Session.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Motion 6-14(3), Development of a Comprehensive Literacy Strategy. Mr. Bell.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS**Motion 6-14(3): Development of a Comprehensive Literacy Strategy**

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

WHEREAS evidence points to an indisputable link between higher literacy rates and social development in terms of reduced poverty, unemployment, crime, reliance on income support, and improved health and child-rearing practices;

AND WHEREAS literacy is of critical importance in achieving a healthy lifestyle and contributing productively to one's community;

AND WHEREAS the average annual income for persons in the Northwest Territories with less than a grade 9 education is \$14,000 and the average annual income for a person with a university degree is \$50,000;

AND WHEREAS more than 60 percent of all new jobs in the Northwest Territories require some post-secondary education;

AND WHEREAS 15 percent of adult residents have less than a grade 9 education;

AND WHEREAS 11 percent of adult residents in regional centres and 32 percent of adult residents in remaining communities have less than a grade 9 education and 44 percent of aboriginal adults with less than a grade 9 education are unemployed;

AND WHEREAS the average educational level of Yellowknife Correctional Centre inmates is grade 6;

AND WHEREAS there is a clear linkage between low literacy skills and health risk behaviours;

AND WHEREAS as a literacy program delivery mechanism, the Adult Basic Education Program is only offered in 17 of our 33 communities and there are over 240 people on waiting lists to access the Adult Basic Education Program at the three college campuses;

AND WHEREAS the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is redesigning the adult basic education curriculum scheduled for completion in the year 2002;

AND WHEREAS a large percentage of northern residents will be unable to take full advantage of increasing employment opportunities without a long-term commitment to literacy skill development as part of an overall economic and social development strategy;

AND WHEREAS there is a critical need for the Government of the Northwest Territories to commit to a long-term investment in literacy;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the government immediately undertake the development of a comprehensive literacy strategy for the Northwest Territories;

AND FURTHER, that the development of the strategy be a cooperative effort of all departments, particularly those in the social envelope, with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment as the lead department;

FURTHERMORE, that the literacy strategy be directly linked to the aboriginal languages strategy currently under development, specifically in relation to the preservation of aboriginal languages in both their written and oral forms;

FURTHERMORE, that the strategy address the need to measure and increase literacy levels in all official languages in the Northwest Territories;

FURTHERMORE, the active involvement of applicable agencies, appropriate non-government organizations, literacy practitioners, aboriginal organizations and communities is engaged in the development and implementation of the strategy;

FURTHERMORE, that a key component of the strategy be a mechanism to address the need for multi-year funding to literacy program delivery groups and organizations;

FURTHERMORE, that the strategy include an effective accountability framework to provide timely and accurate results measurement and evaluation;

FURTHERMORE, that the strategy framework be completed and presented to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for review no later than November 30, 2000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is high time this government made this one of its highest priorities and did something to address the need and our concerns about literacy. Our constituents are coming to us time and time again and saying this is one of the main concerns they have. Not only in the larger centres, but specifically in some of the smaller communities.

It seems, Mr. Speaker, when we look at what this government has done in this area, they tend to focus on adult basic education. It is one of the easier things, I suppose, Mr. Speaker, to focus our efforts and money at the college level.

One of our real concerns is that there is not enough focus on people who have less than a grade 9 education, specifically grade 1 through grade 7 for adults. Mr. Speaker, these people cannot get into adult basic education. If they can and do get in, oftentimes they end up repeating the program three, four or even five times, Mr. Speaker. We sat down with non-government organizations and they explained to us that there has to be something done for people who cannot even get into adult basic education. There are widespread concerns. Health is a big issue, Mr. Speaker. If you do not have adequate literacy skills and you are on medication from the doctor and you cannot understand how to self-prescribe, or how to give medication to someone who cannot speak English, like an elder in your community. There are serious health implications and risks here.

We have to do something about this. I think when we look at the strategy we feel we need, it is our indication from talking to our constituents and NGOs that this strategy has to be a comprehensive one, and it has to tie in family literacy and workplace literacy, Mr. Speaker. We are doing good things in the area, especially a program like the Aboriginal Head Start Program, which is focusing on the very young. It is important to

focus on the whole family, so the whole family is learning at the same time, Mr. Speaker.

Workplace literacy, clearly there are safety implications. A company like BHP has already recognized this. They have had no choice but to spend somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$200,000 this year developing their own literacy program for use at their mine site, Mr. Speaker. It simply would not be responsible of them to take employees in and have them working on heavy machinery or other equipment where safety concerns are a real issue without adequate literacy skills.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I think the focus has to tie in aboriginal languages. This cannot just be a focus on English. This cannot just be about literacy in English. This has to be about literacy in your mother-tongue. With that, Mr. Speaker, we urge this government to take this seriously and act on this quickly. This is one of the highest priorities for this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a contemporary definition of literacy is how people use written information to function in society. Mr. Speaker, for us to achieve the goals we have set out in Towards a Better Tomorrow, we need to improve our population's ability to use written information.

This government needs to adopt as part of its basic philosophy a literacy strategy, one that goes across all departments. Literacy is not just an education issue. Literacy is a health issue. Literate people are more healthy. It is a social services issue. Literate people have higher self-esteem and are more self-sufficient. It is an economic development issue. A literate population is better able to participate in the economy.

It is an income support issue. A literate population requires less income support. It is a justice issue. The education level of grade 6, which is the average level of inmates in YCC, highlights the fact that a more literate population is less likely to be in trouble with the law.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on. I think the motion, as it is set out, really states quite clearly what we need to do.

Mr. Speaker, I hope this government moves quickly to adopt a comprehensive literacy strategy and that practitioners will be an integral part of the process. Mr. Speaker, I hope to hear our Premier make a statement by this fall, announcing that a literacy strategy is a cross-government initiative and that all departmental business plans will reflect the need to improve literacy skills among our population. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few short minutes to express my support for this motion. I think that in this House, we had a full debate on the issue and all the Members highlighted the importance of literacy in all its aspects. I believe we had a very good debate on that last week. This is coming on the heel of that debate.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that as a new Member of this House, I am very proud of the record of this Legislature with respect to

education in general. I think we should be reminded that the first legislation this Legislature passed was the Amendment to the Education Act, where we provided room for reduction of the student-to-teacher ratio from 18 to one to 16 to one, and also gave extra funding for special needs. I am very proud of the fact that we were able to do that and give extra money to the schools.

I am also proud of the fact that this government addressed the need for additional funding for post-secondary education by way of an amendment to the Student Financial Assistance Act. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that there are people who are not completely happy with that, but I do believe that it is a vast improvement and the only improvement we really had in more than 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit that this is the third prong in the priority this Assembly places on the importance of education and literacy. This motion deals with the adults who have somehow, for many reasons, fallen behind and fallen off the mainstream. Mr. Speaker, I firmly and philosophically believe that literacy is the basic tool to build the foundation of life. No one can function in life without literacy in all aspects of their life. I believe literacy gives a person power, personal happiness and basic fulfillment in life. Without it, you cannot do it.

There are many practical reasons why literacy is important. We have pointed that out in terms of basic training that is required. Mr. Speaker, I hope that Cabinet will accept this motion as advice coming from this House as an indication of how important this issue is. I do not think we are asking for a lot of extra resources. We realize the government is operating under a very tight fiscal situation. What we are asking for is for the government to focus the resources that are there already on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in support of this motion. My colleagues have so eloquently described many reasons why this motion should be adhered to by the government.

Self-respect, Mr. Speaker, comes to mind when I think about literacy. If you cannot read or write, you cannot fully participate in society. If you cannot fully participate in society, it takes away from your spirit and your respect a little bit.

You have to be able to function in society, participate and contribute meaningfully to be happy and to have some good feelings in yourself. I talked earlier in this Session about the spirit of the aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories. That spirit has not been damaged, but it has been weakened by assimilation in the education system. I could mention a lot of things.

The psychiatric professionals compared residential schools to the holocaust, Mr. Speaker, and I would have to agree with that. In order to reverse those negative feelings, people have to get educated, people have to learn how to read and write. I especially encourage government to take this seriously, to integrate the strategy for aboriginal language development with the literacy development strategy. Those go hand in hand and you cover all bases. People who finish feel good about

themselves. Their spirits will be that much higher. Their self-respect will be that much higher. They will become citizens that contribute to society and they will, in contribution, lessen their dependence on this government and its social programs. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to support this motion, and I strongly encourage all the Ministers and their departments to adopt this motion. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in reviewing the programs of the department I am responsible for, I previously directed that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment develop an initiative and a plan to work towards ensuring all Northerners have access to literacy and basic education and that significant improvements be made.

This is in line with our document Towards a Better Tomorrow, which addresses our vision of a prosperous future. That vision specifically states: "self-reliant, healthy, well-educated individuals, families and communities doing their part in improving the quality of their own lives," and it further states, "a motivated young generation prepared to take advantage of the opportunities the North has to offer."

Towards a Better Tomorrow identifies and ties together our priorities, strategies and key goals to support those visions of well-educated individuals and a motivated young generation. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, Education, Culture, and Employment has the significant role and responsibility on the issue of literacy and adult education.

The department has a number of programs underway, such as:

- The Aboriginal Language Strategy, which will articulate how the Government of the Northwest Territories' programs and services can assist aboriginal language communities to preserve and enhance their languages;
- The territorial Adult Basic Education Curriculum Development project; and
- The Adult Literacy and Basic Education Directive, which will guide delivery of programs, and identify the roles and responsibilities of the department and service providers, and outline an accountability framework. We will be circulating this draft for comment shortly to stakeholders, Mr. Speaker.

Other programs are:

- Community Skills for Work, which assists individuals in achieving self-sufficiency through education;
- Adult Basic Education Programs delivered through the college system;
- The Early Childhood Development Strategy being developed in a cooperative manner between Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment; and
- Also, the department's strategic plan update, released in December, supports both youth and adult literacy and

basic education.

These are just several of the department's thrusts and addresses literacy.

In addition, our department is working with stakeholders such as the NWT Literacy Council, who are preparing a report on the state of literacy in the Northwest Territories and expect it to be released soon.

Literacy, of course, is an across-the-government, across-the-NWT issue. Some very positive changes have happened over the past ten years, but much still needs to be done. For example, we know that the 1999 labour force survey showed that in the Mackenzie Valley, some 2,025 individuals were not working and wanted to work, and that the majority of individuals had less than a grade 9 education.

We know literacy levels in the Northwest Territories have improved during the past decade, due primarily to the efforts of our school system and our college system. It may be of value to also give some statistics which illustrate that, with effort and resources, improvements can be made.

For example, during the last ten year period;

- of the population 15 years old and over, the percentage of those with less than grade 9 has dropped to 14 percent from 23 percent;
- among the aboriginal population, those with grade 9 or less dropped to 25.6 percent from 46.2 percent;
- aboriginal high school graduation rates have doubled; and
- in a four-year period, the number of aboriginal students enrolled in post-secondary education doubled.

Despite these positive trends, much remains to be done. Non-renewable resource development in mining, oil and gas is growing rapidly and will potentially create many jobs.

In order for Northerners to secure those jobs, many of our people will need literacy and adult basic education upgrading to prepare them for training. The government has developed the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy, which contains two parts that address training and maximizing employment. Support for the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy will potentially give us resources to address areas of critical concerns such as literacy.

Mr. Speaker, literacy is not just about preparing people for employment. Literacy skills are also important for self-esteem and coping with the challenges of daily life. Literacy is about participating in communities helping others and building one's future. Literacy is the ability to read, write, calculate, speak and understand, as well as communicate with others.

Literacy is critical to the ability to function as an individual and to participate and contribute to one's family, community, culture, workplace or any other group that one interacts with on a regular basis.

Also, it is important that we recognize that literacy and basic education programs must include aboriginal and cultural literacy and its importance in the survival, development and empowerment of the language communities.

Any program, of course, is dependent upon resources and one of the keys will be to make the best use of the limited resources we have, and of course, the ability for us to access new resources. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will continue to focus its best efforts in this important area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Motion 7-14(3): Extended Adjournment To October 31, 2000

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that notwithstanding Rule 4, that when this House adjourns on Friday, July 7, 2000, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, October 31, 2000;

AND FURTHER, if at any time prior to October 31, 2000, and the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today.

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

Motion 8-14(3): Referral of Tabled Document 32-14(3), Report of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight (Withdrawn)

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

WHEREAS the report of the Chief Electoral Officer titled Modernizing our Electoral System, has been tabled in this House;

AND WHEREAS the report covers the administration of the Northwest Territories general election of December 6, 1999;

AND WHEREAS the report contains recommendations for amendments to the Elections Act and actions in preparation for the next general election;

AND WHEREAS this report requires detailed consideration by

a standing committee;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, that Tabled Document 32-14(3), Report of the Chief Electoral Officer titled Modernizing our Electoral System, be referred to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight;

AND FURTHER, that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight report its findings with recommendations to the Legislative Assembly during the 2001 winter Session.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. The chair recognizes the honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that the previous report by the Chief Electoral Officer was referred to a committee in the previous Legislature, I believe that the report of the chief electoral officer is and has been properly given to the Legislature as a whole. The proper place for the report to be reviewed and debated is in committee of the whole. We should take appropriate action to ensure that this report, which is tabled, is referred to committee of the whole for the Session which will continue and open again on October 31st.

I ask MLAs on the other side not to support this motion. Fundamentally, we need to respect the right of all MLAs to debate and discuss in a forum together this report. This report deals with the way in which elections are held and the recommendations are made to each and everyone of us as MLAs. As the MLA for Sahtu, I do not want the impression created that a committee of the Legislature should have priority without any input on my part to discuss and start developing recommendations. I believe the proper way to do it is to refer this for consideration to committee of the whole in the next Session.

I want to ask the MLAs to not support this motion because it does not respect the right of all of us to debate together fully in public the report of the chief electoral officer. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too ought to speak to this as the MLA for Weledeh. When I became a Cabinet Minister, I did not give up my rights and my privileges as an MLA. I think this document, this report, affects me as an MLA as much as it does any of us in this House. We need to discuss the report, and committee of the whole is the proper place to do it. I do not think this gives me fair opportunity. We will have the Accountability and Oversight Committee discussing it amongst themselves and then bringing it into the committee of the whole later on. That cuts out my opportunity for input. We are an open, transparent government. We operate on a consensus model. I believe this document is a good example of how we can work together in committee of the whole.

This is not in spite of past practice, where I believe in the last government it was given to the governance committee. I think

that past practice is wrong. I think it belongs here in committee of the whole and that is where it should be debated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to take part in consideration of this report. I believe that as it is outlined here, I might not have that opportunity because I am not a member of the committee. As this report is being discussed, or would have been discussed in a committee, it suggests that Cabinet would be discussing it separately as well. I do not think that is the intent here. I think that we should all have the opportunity to speak towards this report as Ordinary Members, MLAs, because we are going to have to address specifics to our ridings in here, as well as concerns expressed by our constituents.

As we all know, there is some question as to whether or not Ministers have the ability to clearly take part in the committee of the whole discussions that would be a report from a committee rather than from the chief electoral officer. I prefer that we would deal through this thing with a report from the chief electoral officer directly into committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would encourage the Members to vote against the motion and put this into committee of the whole for discussion at the next Session. This is the first report of the chief electoral officer for this century. It requires the input, I feel, of all Members of this House to have the ability to speak to it, to discuss, and to represent the views of our constituents with regard to the areas that may be of importance to us.

This report apparently contains complaints and concerns that have been raised and some proposed recommendations. Our consensus system is better served here in the open so that our public can understand and see our views on the particular areas and if any decisions need to be made, that they can be discussed here and decisions made in public. The report deals with modernizing our electoral system, but my priority is to ensure that it is done by all of us, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to encourage my colleagues from across the floor to vote against this motion. Simply because I as a new Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes, who represents one of the many new electoral districts, is still in the process of learning the process, and also the process of this House. So I would like to debate this document in the committee of the whole. I think that is the proper place, and it gives an opportunity for a northern MLA like myself to discuss it within the House. Thank you.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also am a new Member of the Legislative Assembly. I would like more time to look at this. I am not too familiar with this Electoral Act and

because I need more time, I will not be voting on this. I would just like to tell the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we seem to have gotten into a debate on process and I am a bit surprised and taken back by this. This motion in no way precludes any Member of this House from moving the document into the committee of the whole for discussion.

In fact, I would expect that we would do that at the same time as we were reporting on the document so that both of them could be reported on. All this motion does is in fact open up the door so that it is not just us who get to talk about this, a report that was done by a member of our staff, but so that the standing committee can hold public hearings if necessary, and surely hear from the public. Bring the public in to let them make their comments on this report that has been made for us by the chief electoral officer.

I do not think this stands in the way at all of any public input. In fact, what it does is it improves the process because we do not bring the public into the committee of the whole. This opens up the doors so that we can do it.

I would absolutely support the Ministers on the other side who want to have this document debated in committee of the whole and am prepared myself to bring forward a motion to move the document into committee of the whole if that would make the system that much more transparent. If that is what we need, I am prepared to say agreed. Let us have it. Let us have the debate in committee of the whole in this Legislature.

However, first of all, let us have an opportunity to have the standing committee solicit the opinions of the public on the recommendations and from that find out how to bring forward some recommendations. So rather than having an unfocused discussion with 19 Members trying to present their different points of view, this motion presents an opportunity for the committee to solicit the views of the public and come back with some recommendations so we can debate both the document and the recommendations in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is one main element missing here. There are a lot of other people that ran in this election besides the Members in this House. I think they should have an opportunity to say exactly what the downfalls of some of the processes were. I think that is one element that is not here. I believe that by allowing it to go to committee, there will be an opportunity for public input through public consultation and whatnot.

As Members, you can come forth to the committee and make your presence there. Then the report will come back to the House for more debate. So for the Cabinet to state that they are going to be shut out of the process, as far as I can see, it is not valid.

The process that was used last time was that the Government Operations Committee reviewed the report. There was public input from people that were involved in the election. They too

have just as much right to say how the electoral process should happen as ourselves as Members in this House. So again, I would like to make it clear that this motion does not do anything to jeopardize anyone's rights. It makes it more of an open process to the public. People cannot come into this House and debate in committee of the whole because it is restricted solely to Members in this House, or witnesses that are called by departments. There again that refuses them that process, so I would like to state that I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Order, please. To the motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was not planning to speak on this. I thought it was a simple procedural manner, but obviously it is no longer. I think the most important principle that we have to live by in this House is respect for the rights and privileges of every single Member. There are 19 of us, and I was under the understanding that we had worked out the process. Obviously, we have not. I think the content of this report is very important. It speaks to the fundamental make up of how we govern ourselves and how we choose to elect our representatives.

I do not think there is urgency on this report. I think we could do it in the fall. We should work out the process. I am really very uncomfortable with the way this debate is going. I think it is not a good start. I hope that we could have a consensus built here somehow. Mr. Speaker, with that, I would like to say that I will be voting against this motion, just so we have time to work this out. I do not want to start off debating this issue with a major disagreement about how to handle it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the comments made by the Members. Mr. Speaker, this discussion revolves around a document called Modernizing our Electoral System. I think that other Members are correct in that this affects all of us.

I think back to the 13th Assembly when we discussed the Electoral Boundaries Commission Report, we voted and it was a free vote. There was a mix of opinions on this side of the House. Some supported the recommendations of the commission and some did not. So I think that this is one of those unique kinds of document.

It really has a global effect on the Assembly. I would like to ask the Members to consider the fact that if we want to solicit public opinion on this, there is a mechanism other than it going to public hearing within the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. There is another mechanism whereby we could solicit public input, in which, and I agree with the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, there are other people who are affected by this as well.

There is a mechanism for doing that by referring this to committee of the whole. A committee to solicit public input can flow from that committee as well. I do not think it is correct to say that public input can only be sought if this goes to AOC. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would just ask that our honourable colleagues on the other side of the House consider the fact that we need to work on this together. Mr. Dent said, or someone

said, that 19 Members discussing this is an unfocussed discussion. Certainly you know, we as 19 Members discuss many things in Caucus and I guess that is a subjective opinion if it is unfocused. I do think that we sit as equal Members and I would request that my honourable colleagues respect that and work with us, work together on this particular document. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Order, please. Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion and I would urge my colleagues to support the motion. Simple fact, there has been no real significant changes here and it is a document that is a reflection on the last election, where all the individuals in the Northwest Territories had an opportunity to participate. In this forum, we have 19 Members who will participate with their opinions. There seems to be a concern from Members who are Cabinet Ministers that AOC will take this and run on its own.

Every Member of the Legislative Assembly has the opportunity to speak to the issue and raise concerns. When it comes back into the committee of the whole, there is another opportunity for every Member to speak to the issues and recommendations that come out and probably make other recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

There should be no fear of what AOC will do. We are supposed to be working together and there should be no fear if there is some direction given. Someone has to implement that. It is strange, as previous Assemblies have just directed this type of a report to AOC for review. If they felt there was need for public hearings, those were held, so people outside of this forum could voice their concerns and opinions.

Yet we seem to want to pull it in here and hold it within this arena. I mean, what are we going to do in that? So I can have other Members in this House tell me that they spoke to my constituents and this is their opinion? I do not think that is the approach you should take. It worked before. We had a successful election and we can proceed from there. I do not see why all of a sudden this change in tactics has to occur. We are here for the benefit of the people of the Northwest Territories and I would encourage, if this goes to AOC, all Members to come forward to make their concerns known to the committee and then that can be put into the report as well, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, I am supporting the motion and would seriously ask my colleagues to support this motion. It is a straightforward move. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Mr. Roland. To the motion, the honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I did not know that we were going to put up with a surprise like this on the last day of Session here.

-- Laughter

Speaking as a new Member and having worked here with all 19 Members, whether we agree or disagree on some topics is one thing or another. I would certainly not want to leave here being

uncertain as to whether I have cut out one of my colleagues, whether on this side of the House or the other side of the House, in an area as important as this.

I have to say that at the present time because of the way it has gone, I have some doubt in my mind. When it came up in committee, I was under the impression that it was a straightforward process that the report had to be put in front of a standing committee to review. Unless I get a clarification on that right now, I doubt as to whether or not this is actually process. I would not want to feel that I have cut any of my other colleagues out of a fair opportunity to discuss this, so at best I will not be voting on the motion, if not against it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the outcome here and the result of this vote is a forgone conclusion. I think that we have heard from some Members who are going to abstain and we know how Cabinet is going to vote. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, initially I certainly agreed with the Cabinet position, that this should end up in committee of the whole. I think that is obvious. I think 19 equal MLAs have to debate this. My only concern is that I would also like to see public input. I think that is why we need to send it to committee, get public input, come back with some recommendations, then the 19 of us can discuss it as equals.

Mrs. Groenewegen has said surely taking it to committee cannot be the only way for public input, but I did not see her offer any other suggestions. So, for lack of any other suggestions, I know we need public input on this. I want to take it to committee, get the public input and come back. All 19 Members can discuss it as equals. I do not think there is anything to fear here, so I would urge my colleagues on this side of the House, if you want to see public input and public representation, support this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this whole debate is not the first time we debated this. We debated this long and hard the last Session. This is the report on the election of the 14th Legislative Assembly, Modernizing our Electoral System. This is the first time I heard the motion, today. It was dated for notice today, July the 7th.

It came as kind of a surprise to me because we all know here in the Legislative Assembly that we have to deal with this issue. There is a sunset clause that we have to deal with. I know it is not in here, but it is part of the whole thing, part of the package. You cannot just take one part of it. You look at the table of contents, electoral districts, establishment of polling divisions, issue of residency, and it deals with the whole gamut and includes the whole debate of the sunset clause. In Caucus, we are planning a three-day or week-long get-together in the early part of September in Inuvik. One of the agenda items is to deal with this type of issue, the whole electoral issue. The debate here is process. What do we do with this document? Where do we send it to continue this debate? That is basically where we are at.

There was reference made to previous governments referring it to a standing committee, but that was the tail-end of a process.

It was the Electoral District Boundaries Commission that was set up by the previous Legislative Assembly and three commissioners went out and solicited the views of people. The report came back to the House for debate, and it was referred to the standing committee for 120 days and the recommendations came back to the House. That was the process last time around. Yes, it went to standing committee, but after there was a district boundaries commission established and they went on for their report.

So I think that I will not support this motion. Not because of what we are intended to do here, but we have to agree on a process and how to take it from here. In previous governments, there were special committees set up from the House to deal with it. I know the intention that the honourable Member, the mover and the seconders have, but I would like to say that we discuss this process at a later date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. To the motion. The mover of the motion, Mr. Dent, may close the debate. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to clear up one thing. Mr. Antoine talked about the report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission and the debate, and then some reference to a standing committee. There had been a number of boundaries commissions, and I do not think that we are not proposing an Electoral Boundaries Commission. There have also been reports of Chief Electoral Officers and in the last Legislative Assembly, the report of the Chief Electoral Officer was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. It did not come to the House for debate before that happened. It was in fact tabled and then referred to a standing committee. There has been that past practice, so does that mean that practice cannot change? No, it does not.

However, if there is a concern about the issue, certainly I would think that as the chair for the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight I would be prepared to offer a personal invitation to Members, all Members of this House, no matter where they sit, to attend the meetings of the standing committee to debate the report if that is what they feel needs to happen. My concern is there are 22,126 registered voters that should also have some input into this process. If the report is referred into committee of the whole, comes up for debate in November and then we try and develop a process for going out for public debate, what is the timetable that gets us through in order to make sure that we can make some of the revisions, like the revisions to the voting by mail that have been recommended? Will we be able to make them in time for them to take effect in the next election?

I think that it is something that, and I have been very surprised by the debate today, but I have consulted with the seconder of the motion today, Mr. Speaker, and noting the concerns and since there seems to be some fear that we are changing the rules when in fact we were just following the standard practices from before, I would like to seek the House's consent, with the seconder's consent, to withdraw the motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Mr. Dent. The rules do allow for the withdrawal of a motion with the consent of the seconder. I would like to ask the seconder, the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, for his input. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Noting the concerns as the mover had said, I would agree that we pull the motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The seconder has agreed. Mr. Dent has recommended that the motion be withdrawn. Therefore, motion 8 is withdrawn. Thank you. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Mr. Nitah. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mahsi Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a couple of gentlemen in the gallery today, Mr. Jim Rothwell, president of BHP Diamonds and soon to be president of Diamet Minerals, and Mr. Bill Zimmerman, vice-president of marketing for BHP. These two are working for a company that is making tremendous contributions to the economy and social fabric of the Northwest Territories, and I would like to recognize them today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the government, I to would like to recognize these two gentlemen with BHP. We have had a long and I think a very successful career with BHP and good negotiations with the two individuals. We look forward to continuing that same good relationship, particularly with BHP and Diamet and the other companies. I would like to recognize them. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I too would like to welcome you gentlemen to the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. We return now to item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole in bills and other matters. Bills 4, 5 and 6, with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call the committee to order. We have a number of items to consider, Bills 4, 5 and 6. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think before we consider these bills that we take a short break. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you. I just wanted to be sure that we are going to review Bills 4, 5 and 6 in that order.

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

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will take a short break and come back and review Bills 4, 5 and 6.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I would like to call the committee to order. We are reviewing Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act. I would like to ask the Minister responsible to introduce the bill. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, I am pleased to present Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act. This bill will permit changes to the structure of the Workers' Compensation Board's appeals tribunal. The appeals tribunal is the final level of the Workers' Compensation Board's appeal process.

Currently, section 7.1 of the Act establishes the appeals tribunal as a five-member body, appointed by the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board. One member is appointed on the recommendation of the board from among the members of the board, two are appointed on the recommendation of representatives of workers and two are appointed on the recommendation of employers. The appeals tribunal is currently experiencing a backlog of 34 cases and, as of the first quarter of 2000, is requiring 224 days on average to render a decision.

In response to concerns regarding the length of delays in the appeals process, this bill will facilitate a more timely determination of appeals by removing the limitation of the number of members of the appeals tribunal. This bill also authorizes the appointment of an additional vice-chairperson to the appeals tribunal. These changes will allow for two panels to hear appeals concurrently.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, in recognition of Members' concerns of the perceived appearance of bias, the chair of the appeals tribunal will no longer be a member of the Workers' Compensation Board's board of directors. However, this amendment will not apply to the current chair of the appeals tribunal, as this would result in delays in appeals presently scheduled to be heard.

Mr. Chairman, having examined all of the issues closely, I have concluded that this approach will best serve the interests of those affected by the current delays in the appeals process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. I call on the deputy chairman of the standing committee, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, at its meetings on June 28th and June 29th, 2000.

Bill 4 proposes to expand the membership of the appeals tribunal, which is the final level of appeal under the Act. The appeals tribunal is experiencing a backlog of cases, and currently takes almost nine months to deliver a decision. Additions to the membership and a vice-chairperson provision will permit two panels to run concurrently.

Currently, the appeals tribunal is composed of five members, with two employer representatives and two labour representatives. Bill 4 limits the composition of a panel to three and prohibits members of the board and the review committee from being appointed to the appeals tribunal.

Several amendments were made in standing committee to address concerns raised by Members when considering the bill. A central focus for the committee was the real need for institutional independence. Concerns for the independence of the appeals tribunal centered on the appointment of the chair or vice chairperson. Initially, the bill proposed that the Minister appoint these positions.

The committee strongly rejected the notion that the Minister should have any input into the choice of the chair or vice-chair.

The committee passed an amendment which permits the members of the appeals tribunal to recommend from among their members the chair or vice-chair. A further amendment was passed by Members to ensure that the appeals panel retains equal representation from workers, employers and the general public.

The committee noted that a transitional provision allowed the current chair, who is a member of the board, to continue to the end of his term, notwithstanding the provisions excluding board members from serving on the appeals tribunal. The committee received assurances from the Minister that this situation was only transitional, and that it would come to an end upon the termination of the chair's term in December 31st, 2000.

The committee would like to thank the Minister and his officials for presenting the bill and responding to the issues raised by the committee. Members were particularly encouraged to hear from the Minister that a long awaited legislative review of the whole Act is presently underway. The committee looks forward to having an opportunity to work with the government on the review.

The committee would also like to acknowledge a letter from Bob Haywood, president of the Northern Territories Federation of Labour. The committee thanks the executive of the federation for their comments regarding an open and fair selection process for members of the appeals panel. Members are confident that the bill as amended addresses issues regarding the selection and composition of the appeals panel.

This concludes the standing committee's comments on Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Worker's Compensation Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Would the Minister like to bring in any witnesses?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: My witness took ill suddenly, so I do not have a witness with me today.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): General comments. Clause by clause? Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that Bill 4 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill 4 is now ready for third reading. We will go on to Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2. Does the Minister have any opening comments? Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, as the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, I am pleased to present Bill 5, An Act To Amend The Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2. This bill will permit dependant surviving spouses who had their pension benefits terminated due to remarriage prior to April 17, 1985, to be paid a special one-time, lump-sum payment.

In the last session, I introduced Bill 7, An Act To Amend The Workers' Compensation Act, which re-instated benefits to surviving spouses who had their pensions terminated upon remarriage post 1985 by removing the provisions that terminated those benefits upon remarriage.

At the hearings on Bill 7, Members of this Legislature expressed concern about the other group of spouses who remarried prior to April 17, 1985. It was the opinion of Members of the Legislature, notwithstanding the fact the legislation may be constitutionally valid, there is a moral obligation to make some sort of ex gratia payment to these surviving spouses. I undertook to request the WCB attempt, given the Members' wishes, to negotiate an appropriate lump-sum payment for these spouses.

Mr. Chairman, the WCB has been successful in negotiating this lump-sum payment amount, based on a formula for each of the five identified surviving spouses to which this bill will apply. As the WCB is statutorily prohibited from paying these lump-sum amounts under the current Workers' Compensation Act, this bill would amend the Act to allow the WCB to pay out monies to these surviving spouses. This bill is drafted in such a manner that if in the future the WCB identifies other surviving spouses

who are in similar circumstances to these surviving spouses, they may also be entitled to such a payment.

The total amount to be paid to these five surviving spouses is \$778,000. This amount will be paid by the WCB from a contingency reserve set up for this purpose. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have witnesses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Does the chairman for the standing committee in charge of the Workers' Compensation Board have a report? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No.2, at its meetings on June 28th and 29th, 2000.

Members will recall that during the second session of this 14th Assembly, a bill was introduced and passed which retroactively reinstated the pensions of surviving spouses whose pension benefits had been terminated upon marriage or remarriage. The scope of the bill was limited to those widows who married or remarried after April 17, 1985. The bill did not address pension benefits for those widows who married or remarried before April 17, 1985.

When the committee was considering that bill, Members urged the government to "do the right thing" for those widows who married or remarried before April 17, 1985.

The committee would like to thank the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board and his officials for presenting Bill 5. The committee is encouraged to see the Minister responding so promptly to the concerns of the committee.

Bill 5 enables the Workers' Compensation Board to make a special payment to dependent surviving spouses who have lost entitlements because they married or remarried before April 17, 1985, thus fulfilling its moral obligation to those individuals.

Mr. Chair, the standing committee is very pleased to support the proposed amendment. This concludes the committee's comments on Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The Minister will not be calling any witnesses. The floor is open to general comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for introducing this bill and acting very promptly. I would like to congratulate the Legislature for doing the right thing. I think it is good that we were able to address the discrimination on the basis of marriage of protected rights under charter. I would like to congratulate all Members for a job well done. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. I would also like to commend the government for taking this action. I think clearly they may or may not have had a legal obligation in this case. That is probably debatable, but I feel they certainly had a moral obligation. I think they saw it the same way. So thank you to Mr. Handley for this quick action. I think they have done a fine

job here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. General comments. Clause by clause? Bill 5, An Act To Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that Bill 5 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill 5 is now ready for third reading. Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act. Does the Minister have any opening comments? Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to introduce Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act. These amendments will be another step towards addressing the shortage of nurses in our communities by allowing applications to be approved in a more timely manner.

The Northwest Territories Registered Nurses Association (NWTRNA), is a self-governing organization, operating independently from the government that regulates nurses in the NWT in accordance with the Nursing Profession Act.

Currently, the NWTRNA's board of directors is required by the Nursing Profession Act to review all applications for registration. In reality, it is the registration committee who carries out all registration functions. While this committee exists in the association's bylaws, it is not mentioned in the Act, with the result that the registration committee's authority to perform its duties is not clear.

The Nursing Profession Act also fails to mention the registrar, who is an employee of the association who carries out administrative functions. Currently the registration committee meets to review all applications, even those where absolutely no discretion is exercised.

The NWTRNA has indicated that the committee cannot meet often enough to process applications in a timely manner. This has led to a backlog of applicants who could be practicing in our communities sooner if their applications were approved more quickly. The NWTRNA and the department agree that the registrar should be empowered to approve those applications where no discretion needs to be exercised without requiring the approval of the registration committee. Approximately 90 percent of applicants fall into this basic category, so the amendments will speed up the approval of a significant number of applications.

To address the issues I have mentioned, these amendments will establish both the registration committee and the registrar and specify their authorities.

In addition, Bill 6 repeals two outdated provisions that have not been applicable for well over a decade. The amendments also clean up the registration sections in the Act by clarifying the process or changing the wording of provisions to make the

process more transparent.

Finally, some transitional provisions are included in the bill to provide for pending registration applications and the continuation in office of the current members of the registration committee, and to ensure the validity of prior and existing registration certificates.

I would like to take this time to thank this committee for taking their valuable time to review the bill prior to formal introduction. This will help to ensure the bill is passed as quickly as possible. Passing the bill in this Session will lead to nurses being hired in a more timely manner and also minimize the possible consequences of the discrepancies between the Act and the current practices of the association.

I welcome the opportunity for further discussion and to answer any questions you may have about this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I would like to call on the committee responsible for reviewing this bill, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Social Programs reviewed Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act, at its meetings on June 21st and 28th, 2000.

The Northwest Territories Registered Nurses Association is a self-governing body that regulates nurses in the Northwest Territories. The bill establishes both a registrar and a registration committee to review applications and issue certificates of registration. Currently, the registration committee is only mentioned in the association's by-laws.

The bill will provide the registrar with the power to issue basic certificates of registration. The registration committee will have the power to direct the registrar to issue temporary certificates of exemption for periods of up to six months.

The bill contains transitional sections respecting pending applications and will protect the validity of prior certificates.

The committee would like to thank the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services and her officials for presenting the bill and responding to the committee's questions during our public review on June 28th.

Members of the committee would also like to thank officials from the NWTRNA for appearing before the committee and for acknowledging their support of this bill.

During the hearings, committee members became aware that the proposed amendments were silent on the time allowed to make an appeal. Following consultation with the Minister, the committee passed a motion to amend the bill to allow for a 30-day appeal period.

Mr. Chair, the standing committee supports Bill 6 as amended and individual committee members may offer further comment during committee of the whole consideration of the bill. This concludes the committee's comments on Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Does the Minister wish to call any witnesses? Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: No, Mr. Chairman. I think I will just try to answer the questions myself. If required, I will call my witnesses, but not at this point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The floor is open to general comments. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. I just want to commend the Minister for taking this action to clear this up. We know we are fighting an uphill battle here to attract health care professionals to the North, especially given the shortage in the rest of the country.

So for us to have a backlog of people waiting for registrations I think is crazy. I am glad the Minister has recognized this and addressed this and moved quickly. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Before we go any further, I would like to recognize Jane Leblanc, a resident of Yellowknife in the gallery and Mike Irving, a former member of the Northwest Territories public service, up from Vancouver, enjoying his role as rear commander of the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club.

-- Applause

General comments. Clause by clause? Bill 6, An Act To Amend the Nursing Profession Act, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 10.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 11.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 12.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 13.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that Bill 6 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill 6 is now ready for third reading. There being no further business for the committee of the whole, I shall rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act; Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2; and Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act, and would like to report that Bills 4, 5 and 6 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

-- Applause

The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I seek unanimous consent of the Members to go back to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Ms. Lee, you have unanimous consent.

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. I would like to recognize two visitors in the gallery, Mr. Irving, the former senior civil servant with the Government of the Northwest Territories. I believe he was the president of the Housing Corporation. As well, Mrs. Jane Leblanc, a very well-known resident of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Welcome, Mr. Irving. Madam Leblanc, bienvenue. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for

Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS.

Bill 1: Appropriation Act 2000-2001

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 1, Appropriation Act 2000-2001, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? Thank you. Bill 1 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The Member is seeking consent to continue with the third reading of the bill. Are there any nays? Thank you. Are there any other nays? Thank you. You may proceed with third reading, Mr. Handley.

Bill 4: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 4 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act No. 2. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, the Member is seeking consent. Are there any nays? There is one nay. You need two. You may carry on, Mr. Handley.

Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. Bill 5 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Member is seeking consent to proceed with the third reading of Bill 6. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed,

Mrs. Groenewegen.

Bill 6: An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 6 has had third reading.

The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lakes, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 13, tabling of documents.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to Item 13, tabling of documents. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed, Mr. Roland.

REVERT TO ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 43-14(3): Note From Member For Sahtu to Member For Inuvik Boot Lake Regarding Inter-activity Transfer

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a note I received today from the honourable Steven Kakfwi regarding inter-activity transfers. I am tabling this just to show that I am not afraid of the previous work I have done, and I am being open. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Any further tabling of documents? Mr. Clerk, I understand that her Honour, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, is prepared to enter the Chamber to assent to bills. Mr. Clerk, could you please attend to and escort the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories into the Chamber? Thank you.

ASSENT TO BILLS

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, and Members of the Legislative Assembly. I would like to commend you on the great amount of work that you have accomplished since I opened the Session almost three weeks ago. I also commend you for the respect that you have shown each other in your continued commitment to our system and consensus government.

At times, the business of government requires that you put in long days and you have done so, especially during this past week, with good will. I would like to take the time to recognize your families and friends for the patience and caring that they provide, particularly during those days when you cannot be with them. I am sure you would all agree that your tasks and decisions would be even more difficult without the support and understanding of your families.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Colonel Pierre Leblanc, Commander of the Canadian Forces Northern Area, for his generous assistance and kindness in the time since I

took office. I am delighted to know that the Colonel and Mrs. Leblanc will continue to be residents in the city of Yellowknife, and I offer them my best wishes in all of their future endeavors.

As you return to your constituencies across the Northwest Territories, I wish you safe travels. I hope that a good part of your summer will be spent in the surroundings of your families, friends, homes and communities. I urge you to take the time to stop and appreciate the beauty and the warmth, the uniqueness and the potential of this territory you collectively represent.

As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills; Bill 1, Appropriation Act 2000-2001; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act; Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 2; Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Nursing Profession Act. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Before we conclude this Session, I would like, with the indulgence of the House, to say a particular thank you to all of the people that have assisted us over this past Session. The staff, both in and out of the Assembly, the personal staff of the Members for all of the work and the long hours that they have put in, in order to make the work of this House, the Members and myself much easier. We owe a debt of gratitude to them for their dedication.

For the pages from the William MacDonald School, they have endured some long hours in this House with good order and good cheer, and I would like to recognize them: Nice Todd-Cullen, James Kracknel, Chris Fournier, Duncan Hamer, Lesley Miller, Noel Taylor, Louise Tumchewichs, Rachelle Matthews, and Vital Manual.

At this point in time, I would like to offer a special recognition to Rachelle Matthews on your behalf, Members. Rachelle has the distinction of being the longest serving page in the history of the Legislative Assembly thus far. On your behalf, we have a plaque which we will present to him in appreciation and recognition as the longest serving page of the Legislative Assembly, dated July of 2000.

-- Applause

And one final thank you, of course, would go to our acting Sergeant-at-Arms, Jay Bran, for this brief period of time. Thank you very much for your involvement.

-- Applause

With that, I will ask for orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Tuesday, October 31, 2000:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions

7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned to Tuesday, October 31, 2000 at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 2:00 p.m.