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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 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. Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Good afternoon, colleagues. I would like to provide at this time my ruling on a point of order raised yesterday, Wednesday, November 1, 2000.

Speaker's Ruling

The point of order was raised by the Member for Weledeh, the honourable Mr. Handley, and is contained on pages 1479 and 1480 of the unedited Hansard.

The point of order was raised during question period when the Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger, was questioning the Premier. The point of order raised by Mr. Handley, and I quote from page 1480 of the unedited Hansard:

"Mr. Speaker, the Member is referring to a document that is not before the House. That is my point of order."

A review of the unedited Hansard on page 1478 indicates that Mr. Miltenberger's question concerns statements the Premier, the honourable Mr. Kakfwi, had made on page 1415 of the unedited Hansard of October 31, 2000 concerning job descriptions for executive assistants. However, upon further review of the preamble to Mr. Miltenberger's question, he did make mention, and I quote again from page 1478:

"That there was compelling legal evidence that pointed to the fact that Cabinet had probably contravened its own legislation"

Although the actual question related to the Premier's comments concerning job descriptions for executive assistants, the Member for Thebacha did mention the matter of legal evidence.

The question I have to answer, is there precedent that requires a Member to table a document that they refer to in debate, or in this case, during question period? There have been a number of rulings by my predecessors, but those are related to the requirement for Ministers to table documents that they mention in debate. The rulings have focused on the tabling of Cabinet documents or sections of documents that may or may not have fallen under Cabinet confidentiality.

There are three rulings that I reviewed to assist me in this matter. One was made on June 12, 1995, by Speaker Gargan; on February 13, 1998, again by Speaker Gargan; and lastly, again by Speaker Gargan on February 18, 1998. These rulings did not directly deal with a document being cited by an

Ordinary Member, but dealt with documents being mentioned by a Minister.

In considering my ruling, I referenced two parliamentary authorities: Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms 6th Edition; and Marleau and Montpetit – House of Commons' Procedure and Practices. The question is not the tabling of a document that may have been cited or quoted from, in part, by a Minister as there are precedents for that occurrence, but whether an Ordinary Member can be compelled or required to table a document that he or she may cite or quote from.

In making my ruling, I was guided by Beauchesne's 6th Edition, Citation 495.(1) which again addresses documents cited by a Minister. I quote from 495.(2):

495.(2) "It has been admitted that a document, which has been cited, ought to be laid upon the table of the House if it can be done without injury to the public interest. The same rule, however, cannot be held to apply to private letters or memoranda."

It may assist Members if I indicate how the term "cited" is interpreted in the parliamentary context. Again, I quote from Citation 495.(5) of Beauchesne's 6th Edition:

"To be cited, a document must be quoted or specifically used to influence debate. The admission that a document exists or the reading of the salutation or address of a letter does not constitute citing"

Another reference contained in Beauchesne's 6th Edition should also be considered. I quote:

"A private Member has neither the right nor the obligation to table an official, or any other, document."

When it comes to tabling a document, a practice has been developed in this House which is not common among other jurisdictions in Canada. Other jurisdictions vary from only Ministers that are permitted to table documents to tabling documents by any Member, which is the case in our House.

There are, however, limitations as to what is permitted to be tabled. In considering our precedents and other authorities, I rule that the Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley, does not have a point of order.

As the rules and practices do not indicate that an Ordinary Member can be compelled to table a document unless expressed through some formal discussion in the House, I indicated that the requirement for Ministers concerning the tabling of documents is different and would depend on the circumstances as they arose.

However, if an Ordinary Member feels that a document that he or she continues to cite from would be in the public interest to make public, then the opportunity does exist under the item on the orders of the day. That item is tabling of documents. Thank you.

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Addressing Northwest Territories Seniors' Issues

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recently received the annual report from the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors. This association was formed in 1983 by a group of citizens concerned about issues facing seniors. Their mission statement is "Building the support of communities for the health of seniors." Mr. Speaker, over the past 17 years, the association has provided a range of good programs and services in support of seniors. They have found sources of funding that help to build much needed facilities such as the Aven senior's home and the Baker Community Centre.

With seniors being the fastest growing segment of the Northwest Territories population, the association's board stresses in this report that a coordinated plan is necessary to address the issues facing seniors across the North.

Mr. Speaker, our government has recognized the need for a Minister responsible for seniors and it has appointed one. However, Mr. Speaker, he has no budget. Depending on which programs or services are required, right now, seniors may have to deal with either the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation or local health and social services boards.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, for this government to develop a long-term plan that is coordinated at the territorial level to address issues facing seniors. The Minister responsible for Seniors should be tasked with bringing different government departments together to ensure that seniors enjoy a one-window approach to services.

Mr. Speaker, the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors and other seniors' organizations across the Northwest Territories cannot achieve their goals by working alone. We owe it to our seniors. We must develop a coordinated approach that provides programs and services for the maximum benefit of all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Support to the NWT Fur Industry

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement today is in regard to the fur industry and the importance of it, especially in my riding. The fur industry has built this country to what it is today and we have seen the history of the fur industry as bright. However, we have to

realize the importance of the fur industry to our small aboriginal communities, and improving and enhancing that industry like we are improving and enhancing the oil and gas industry or the diamond industry. We are giving loan guarantees in the range of \$9.2 million to certain industries to enhance their ability to market the different trades.

We have to do just as well in the fur industry when we talk about enhancing the fur markets, making the fur products, and also enhancing the ability of the trappers themselves to be able to continue to carry out this activity.

Everyone knows that there has been a major impact on the fur industry in regard to the European boycott and the efforts by this government to impose the leg-hold trap on the trapping industry which, to date, is one of the biggest factors for a trapper to continue with traditional trapping methods which are no longer there. Also, the high cost of fuels, gas, transportation and food for people to continue that practice.

We hear a lot of things on the radio lately about the trapping industry and how we can enhance it. We can enhance it as we have in this government where we heard yesterday from the Minister responsible for Education. He has found \$12 million to do a study in regard to non-renewable resources. Yet we are seeing dwindling resources in the resource-based economy to assist trappers to go out and harvest their furs. Also, the ability for them to purchase traps to go out and carry out that activity is no longer there.

I think it is essential that this government implement a similar program that we have in regard to other industry, enhancing those industries. However, this government also has to spend the money resources on the trapping industry as we are in other sectors.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development questions on this matter later. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Female Young Offenders Facility in Inuvik

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this day I refer to an issue I have been working on since my days in the 13th Assembly. It is regarding the justice facility that has been planned to be constructed in Inuvik, Female Young Offenders Facility, to be specific.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a growing concern in the community of wondering when this will proceed and there have been a number of times that the Minister has committed that this project is still moving ahead. There are continuing concerns where the Department of Justice has raised issues of cost expenditures and the first time it came forward was the cost of the utilidor to the proposed building. The Town of Inuvik, along with the Housing Corporation, worked together to get the proposed utilidor to the property line at no cost to the department.

Now, Mr. Speaker, an issue that has come up is the area that is selected and the cost overruns that it would probably receive. I have a concern with this because the community has once

come forward and come to the table and offered what it can. In fact, on the utilidor extension alone, the community of Inuvik, the Town Council of Inuvik, is ready to put forward up to \$350,000 to ensure that this project proceeds. Now I know there are concerns when this decision was made back in the 13th Assembly that this was a project that was picked out of somebody else's back yard. I think there has been work going on to try and bring this back to where some people feel it should go.

The facts are very clear, Mr. Speaker. Over 40 percent of the young offenders in that facility are from the Beaufort Delta area. We need the opportunity to deal with our own people with families to have a solid impact in turning some of these young people around before they become a permanent fixture in the justice system. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Justice at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Fur Industry Potential

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak about the potential here for developing the fur industry. This is an industry that has been neglected largely due to market demands. Now is our chance to strike while the iron is hot. The price for many types of fur is on the increase and there is a resurgence of need for this product. We have many people here who can benefit from this international trend. However, what we need from this government is a major commitment to help the growth of a secondary industry, Mr. Speaker.

We can help provide employment to depressed economies by giving opportunities in areas of taxidermy, manufacturing fur products and providing other related services. Our people are experienced in trapping, but they need the training to expand this market potential, Mr. Speaker.

In the past, this government supported the secondary diamond industry with loans and loan guarantees as my honourable colleague alluded to. We have seen that was a smart move. It allowed us to participate on another level of development and growth. This government has also supported exploration for oil and gas through its financial resources over many decades, \$8.5 million in the last five years alone, Mr. Speaker.

Is it time to re-evaluate our participation in the fur industry? I understand we give \$15,000 to the Fur Institute to promote the fur industry. While that is fine, there is another level of funding we should be looking at. That area is developing a secondary fur industry, especially in depressed economic areas. We must promote fur bearing humans, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Increasing Rental Rates and Cost of Living

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are in the midst of a welcome increase in our economy in the Northwest Territories and the good things that come with it: jobs, investment, long-term hope and stability as we work toward becoming a have Territory. However, along with that, Mr. Speaker, come the negative consequences of a boom economy and the demands it is putting on our already limited infrastructure. This is not news. We knew it was coming and one of the earliest signals we are getting is the pressure on the cost of living. I am particularly concerned about the trend in rental accommodation developing in Yellowknife.

In the last two years, we have seen vacancy rates drop from 11 percent to 2.5 percent. A quick survey of some landlords shows that, at this time, rents are increasing from three percent to in some cases over 20 percent as businesses move to capture fuel costs that are up some 70 percent and take advantage of demand in a market that has not seen rent increases in more than a decade.

Along with the increasing work force, the rental shortage is compounded by the conversion of rental units to condominiums and executive suites.

Mr. Speaker, in Yellowknife, we are facing a serious situation. The impact on low-income families being squeezed out and having fewer and fewer choices is of particular alarm. Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Inuvik Boot Lake has similar stories where a one-bedroom apartment is now \$1,000 a month, a 25 percent increase in the past year.

While developers need to cover their costs and make a fair return on their investment, the trends are cause to examine the situation at various levels of government. Let me make it clear, Mr. Speaker. In saying this, I oppose anything that looks like rent controls. The free rules of supply and demand are firmly established here and I do not believe they should be interfered with. However, I also feel our government has as much responsibility to manage both the good and the bad sides of economic growth. My message, Mr. Speaker, is that our municipal governments, our territorial government, landlords, developers, lenders and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation need to collectively work together to balance our housing situation. We have also got something to gain and lose by how we manage this. I will be asking the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation questions related to this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Visit to Nahendeh Communities

HON. JIM ANTOINE: (Translation starts) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to be speaking in my language today. I do not have an opportunity to speak in my language too often, so I am very happy today to be able to speak in my language. I am happy for that occasion.

October 23rd to the 26th, I visited six Nahendeh communities... Minister Roger Allen, the Minister responsible for Municipal and

Community Affairs, Housing and Youth. There were several Government of the Northwest Territories regional staff who travelled with us as well. Liza McPherson from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs; Larry Campbell and Steve Moses from the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation; and Paul Kraft from Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. I would like to thank each of these communities for the wonderful hospitality they showed Mr. Allen and myself. I would also like to thank you for sharing your concerns and your suggestions to improve services for our communities.

You can be assured that Minister Allen and I have taken note of all the items discussed and are looking at ways to address your concerns. Whether we were meeting with the hamlet or village mayors and councils, First Nations chiefs and councils, Metis presidents or private residents and businesses in Nahendeh, we were clearly made aware that people want to work together to find community solutions to community problems. So I am thankful for that.

We, the Government of the Northwest Territories, are here to help the people, so we look forward to helping with people in the communities. (Translation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: (Translation starts) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories' and its boards and agencies must be committed to work with all the people and the communities to address local problems and support local initiatives, whether they are in the areas of housing, business development, transportation, education, health and social services and justice. They are all there to help the people of the communities, so we continue towards that initiative. I will continue to work hard to ensure that the regional government staff are available to follow up on your concerns and have strong support from their departments. To the people of Fort Liard, Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake, Jean Marie River, Fort Simpson and Wrigley, a special thank you. To the people of Trout Lake and Wrigley, thank you for the special feast arranged in our honour. So for now, this is all I have to say. Thank you. (Translation ends)

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

Member's Statement on Impacts of Residential School Abuse

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My comments today are on residential schools. It is very evident now that residential school abuse has had a serious and traumatic impact on the aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories. Many of the social problems affecting Northerners today can be traced to residential school abuse. Granted, not all students that attended residential school suffered abuse. Many of our leaders today attended these schools and are now role models for our communities. There are others who claim that the residential school program is the best thing that could have happened to them at the time.

For many years, society has refused to admit that anything so horrendous could have taken place at the hands of people in

religion or in government-run facilities. However, Mr. Speaker, we have to admit that the abuse has taken place at the hostels and residential schools. The abuse came in many forms; physical, mental, sexual or neglect. It all added up to abuse.

Mr. Speaker, these same students were also forbidden to speak their own language. They also no longer had the opportunity to pursue traditional activities. Mr. Speaker, many of these students lost their identity and their sense of self. In short, Mr. Speaker, they became paradoxes in their own land. We cannot ignore the fact that a great deal of abuse that has happened in the North is the result of government failing to protect children while in their care and housed in their facilities. We will probably never be able to right that wrong and we will probably have to live with the consequences for many generations to come.

However, Mr. Speaker, we have to recognize the impact that residential schools have had on the people of the Northwest Territories. We have to provide the support to the victims during the trials and the hearings and encourage this government to provide the programs and services that support the healing and foster safe environments for individuals, families and communities as a result of this big injustice that we are finally able to admit has taken place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Recruitment and Retention Plan for Health Care Professionals

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in this House on previous occasions I have raised the issue of a recruitment and retention plan and the need for the department to focus more on the retention aspect of that program. I rise once again to speak about that issue.

In the last number of months, Mr. Speaker, I have had experience with four different health and social service professionals and their trials and tribulations in terms of training and trying to get funding to go to school. If the way they are being treated is any indication, then we are not doing enough in the area of the retention side of this program.

We do not seem to be willing to make a true commitment to supporting ongoing education. When students apply, the program is so complicated and has so many pots of money, they are forced to go to many different places trying to get money rather than having a convenient, one-window approach. When we do send them away on a practicum, they are expected to look for other pots of money from outside of government or we will nickel and dime them over issues like travel and meals, which government employees take for granted. When they do get their education, once again we are less than supportive. We insist that they need two to three years experience to be hired. If they do not have that, we offer them a mentorship. Unfortunately, the mentorship is at a wage that is so low and for such an extended period of time, most people cannot afford to do that. After that, we seem to be offering terms or keeping them on tender hooks waiting for a permanent job offer.

We are also I do not believe doing a good enough job working with northern students who have gone south to school. Only as recently as today, I have received a message from one of those students saying she is being swamped with offers to stay down south. She was rejected for assistance last year, and she was going to try one more time this year, but very clearly if the government was not interested, she would not be out of work. If this in fact happens, Mr. Speaker, it would be a failure. It would be unfortunate and it would be to our detriment. I mean not only from the North, but in this case to the people of Fort Smith. Lots of time and money has been spent encouraging people to train, to become educated, to become nurses, and to have them leave for other jurisdictions would be the greatest failure of all. So I hope that the department will in fact take the steps necessary to improve in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Literacy the Key to Employment Success

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a common concern that I hear from many of my constituents about career advancement is that southerners get promoted instead of local northern employees. This is a particularly big issue in my riding and throughout the Territories. In September, I brought this issue up with BHP. I was told that because many Northerners have low literacy levels, they do not get promoted. Many positions require the use of computers. All positions require the ability to read whether it be about following directions, operating equipment, or about ensuring a safe workplace. Literacy is the key to career development. Workplace literacy programs are essential if we want to ensure that Northerners benefit from northern development. The territorial government has educational facilities for adult education. Partnerships between our existing learning institutes and northern developers are needed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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 Students and Teachers

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize a number of Hay Riverites in the academic field. Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize a constituent of mine and one who I am sure has made at least one Member sitting across extremely proud. Mr. Speaker, my congratulations go out to Geoffrey Groenewegen on receiving the Minister's award for academic achievement. Geoffrey obtained the highest mark in the Northwest Territories in the 1999-2000 social studies departmental exam.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize residents of Hay River for their participation in the Northwest Territories Literacy Council Read for Fifteen campaign. Hay River, Mr. Speaker, recorded 1,203 participants. In comparison, Yellowknife, with five times the population, recorded 880.

Mr. Speaker, I would like at this time to recognize Harry Camsell Elementary School staff in Hay River for a recent technology award they won. They were the only school in the Northwest Territories to win this award. They were one of the

20 grants awarded to the schools across Canada. It made me very proud to have a school from Hay River among this elite group.

Mr. Speaker, the award was bestowed by Industry Canada. It was in recognition of schools demonstrating innovative uses of a technology. Harry Camsell School, in particular teacher Tyler Hawkins, is very progressive in their use of the software programs to promote communications and research skills. Mr. Speaker, Harry Camsell School is part of a very large network of schools involved in educational research. The information communications technology programs currently employed by the school have helped them build team learning within the school. This is vital to the enrichment of our students. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add that the students, through the use of a database they created, are able to communicate, do research, and link up with students in other parts of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to close by saying that our teachers are to be commended for the valuable work they do on a daily basis. Their ability to guide our children through the information highway will result in unparalleled opportunities for our children in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Tax Relief for Northwest Territories Residents

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak to the fact that I believe Northerners and all residents indeed of the Northwest Territories are going to need help to pay their fuel bills this winter. We all use home heating fuel. We have seen the costs rise astronomically. We know that most of this is due to world factors that are out of our control. This government does not impose a tax on home heating fuel, but that does not reduce the fact that Northerners are going to struggle this winter. When it is about to be 40 below, I hope we have a plan. Gasoline as well, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday, Mr. Nitah spoke of trappers who use fuel for their vehicles in order to make their livelihood. We know this government has by legislation an ad valorem rate that they have chosen not to use. They have imposed a 10.7 cents per litre tax on gasoline. Mr. Speaker, our Finance Minister has insisted that this rate is low enough and we have held the line since 1997. He is not prepared and not ready to look at this. Mr. Speaker, I think that is shameful. I think we have a real situation here. A lot of my constituents who used to use premium, for example, are now using regular gasoline as a cost saving measure. Mr. Speaker, we charge the same level of tax, 10.7 cents, no matter what type of fuel you use, so I do not think our constituents should be fooled into thinking they are going to pay less into this government's coffers by switching gasoline. This is certainly something that I think the Minister needs to address.

Of course, we do not have all the answers. There may be some things that are out of our control, but what about revisiting the property tax subsidy rebate that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs used to distribute to homeowners? Where has that gone, Mr. Speaker, and why has this Finance Minister not looked at it nor mentioned it? We do not see much of a plan. So, Mr. Speaker, Cabinet can put their collective heads in the sand -- or snow, as the case may be -- but that is

not going to help us. We are going to need to see a plan and need to see something quickly.

Alberta has announced a \$300 energy rebate available to all residents who filed income tax and are over 16. What are we doing, Mr. Speaker? Not much. So I hope the Finance Minister has a plan and I will have questions for him later today. Thank you.

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

Member's Statement on Opinion on Allegation of Public Service Act Contravention

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to say a few words about the legal opinion which has been referred to in this House over the last few days. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I am glad that this document will be tabled in the House later today so that the public can have the opportunity to read and judge for themselves. I appreciate the Member for offering to do so.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, each member of the AOC was given a copy of this opinion. I had the opportunity to read the nine page opinion several times last night. Given all that has been said, and what information is out there in the public, and the seriousness of the allegations against the government and the individual in question, I feel that it is important for me to state for the record what I get out of reading it. I also feel that it is important that I let the public and my constituents of Range Lake know that there are differing opinions on this side of the House about this issue.

Based on my knowledge of the law, Mr. Speaker, and having discussed this issue with the Members and the legal advisor, I believe the opinion does not provide evidence that Cabinet has broken its own law. Nor does it suggest that there has been any legal conflict of interest arising out of the appointment in question. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I believe the evidence suggests a position to the contrary.

Mr. Speaker, we as Members enjoy a wide degree of freedom of speech in this House. The privilege and the immunity that comes with this privilege is necessary for us to do your job. It is very important that we take care of it. I believe any privilege as such comes with responsibility to use it wisely. We have the obligation to use it fairly and accurately, especially when it comes to the reputation of individuals who do not have the power or privilege to answer for themselves. Mr. Speaker, I am very saddened by what has gone on in this House over the last few days. I believe that we have, as a collective, been diminished by the experience and I want to state that for the record, for the benefit of my constituents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery, The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to recognize in the visitor's gallery Mr. Derek Endo, who is the director of personnel for the

Northwest Territories Power Corporation in Hay River. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize a young lady in the gallery who is very dear to me who is visiting from Saskatchewan and going to school there this year. She is up here visiting her dad. My youngest daughter, Katrina Delorey.

-- Applause

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Gordon Stewart, the chairman of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Bob Orness, member of the Union of Northern Workers. With that, we have covered all our bases and recognized everyone. Welcome to the gallery. Thank you for coming. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 181-14(3): NWT Hunters and Trappers Assistance

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is in regard to a Member's statement and the importance of the fur industry to the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the Minister exactly what his department is doing to ensure that we continue to promote, enhance and have the resources available for us to continue this important resource industry that we have in the North. So I would like to ask the Minister, what is he doing to ensure that we have programs available for the hunters and trappers, especially with the high cost of fuel and the high cost of the industry? With that, Mr. Speaker, what is his department doing to enhance the fur trapping industry?

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

Return to Question 181-14(3): NWT Hunters and Trappers Assistance

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, there are a number of programs that Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development offer to assist trappers and others who harvest off the land. I will not go over the whole list again, but there are a number of things we try to help in - everything from community harvest to individuals who need assistance to get out on the land and to protect this part of their lifestyle.

The department spends over \$2.5 million each year right now to support harvesters. Of that amount of money, roughly \$1.8 million goes directly to the trappers. We have about a little over a thousand trappers now who are earning somewhere in the neighbourhood of between \$800,000 and \$900,000 this past year harvesting fur. We expect it is going to increase. As I said yesterday, we are looking at all of our programs. If there is any way we can improve on them, then we need to do that.

Mr. Speaker, there are rising costs this year, but the price of fur is also going up. One of the most important programs we have is the Fur Pricing Program, where we offer a guaranteed price for good quality fur and that program certainly will continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 181-14(3): NWT Hunters and Trappers Assistance

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister consider establishing a new program to offset the high cost of gasoline, especially for the trappers? That is probably one of the highest costs that they incur in trapping. So I would like to ask the Minister, would he consider looking at the possibility of establishing such a program in regard to a gas subsidy similar to what we have with the seniors' fuel subsidy, or any subsidies we have within the government so that the trappers can take advantage of those different subsidies? Right now, we do not have them. Will the Minister consider looking at the possibility of having a gas subsidy for the trappers?

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

Further Return to Question 181-14(3): NWT Hunters and Trappers Assistance

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Department of -- as it was known then -- Renewable Resources, at one time years ago used to have a fuel subsidy program for harvesters. That program was done away with and the money was put into the Harvesters Support Program. It was done that way at the request of harvesters. They did not want to have it all broken up and they could only apply if they needed assistance for fuel. They would have to go somewhere else for assistance with equipment. It was rolled into one program. It was done at their request.

To now create another program to pull fuel to one side and assist them in that way would take a lot of consultation with harvesters. If we had any of them coming forward, or many of them coming forward, then yes, we are open to consideration. However, right now, given the history on the program, I would need to be persuaded that it is a good idea to break it up again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 181-14(3): NWT Hunters and Trappers Assistance

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just on that matter, I believe the program is presently being delivered

in the Yukon to the Yukon trappers. They do have a fuel subsidy that is provided to Yukon trappers who are registered trappers in the Yukon. I would like to ask the Minister, will he seriously look at that program and see if it is possible that we could deliver a similar program since the work has already been done in the Yukon?

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

Further Return to Question 181-14(3): NWT Hunters and Trappers Assistance

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we will take a look at the Yukon program and see if it has merit. I do want to point out that we have at least six programs in the Northwest Territories, six different programs. Our objective and the direction we have been receiving from this House has been to cut down on the number of programs and make it easier for harvesters to apply for assistance. So, as I said, rather than creating more programs, I would sooner take those six and roll them into one program and let the harvesters and their associations decide how they need assistance, in what amounts and to whom, and have less bureaucracy for them. So I will look at the Yukon program, but my tendency is to have fewer programs, more flexible to the trappers and less paperwork for them. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 181-14(3): NWT Hunters and Trappers Assistance

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, we do not have an economic development agreement with the federal government. When we did have the agreement, there were special arrangements made in regard to special Arctic grants and whatnot, which trappers were able to access.

So I would like to ask the Minister, has he made any attempt to meet with our federal counterparts in Ottawa to see if we can establish a special program under a similar economic development agreement that we can structure totally for the fur industry in the Northwest Territories? This is an industry that is unique to the Northwest Territories. I am wondering if the Minister will consider looking at the possibility of establishing an economic agreement with Ottawa to look at the possibility of receiving funds from Ottawa to assist our fur industry. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 181-14(3): NWT Hunters and Trappers Assistance

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes. Discussions are ongoing with Ottawa on an economic development agreement. If we are successful, then definitely the fur industry -- and I include value-added products, manufacturing -- would be part of that economic development agreement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. I would like to remind Members that they should limit the preamble in the supplementary questions to just the question. There has been a lot of time spent. We only have an hour. I will apply the rules a little bit more diligently as we go on. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 182-14(3): Federal Investment in Social Housing

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated earlier, I would like to direct a couple of questions to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and in particular in relation to the work of the department with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. I would like to ask in light of the corporation's diminished presence in the Northwest Territories, what action is our Housing Corporation taking to revitalize the federal presence in the housing development in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 182-14(3): Federal Investment in Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate the question raised today by the Member. We have undertaken a number of new approaches to how we work with a number of agencies across the Northwest Territories and those who have a vested interest in housing. The housing issues are raised from community to community, so we are trying to invite the federal government to invest that into a social housing program in the Northwest Territories. So that is still underway and we hope to continue to press the issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 182-14(3): Federal Investment in Social Housing

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the pressure of booming economies in some communities, it is showing up first for the people on the lower end of the economic scale. What work is the Minister undertaking with other departments in the social envelope with his Ministers in those departments so that we can ensure that those people are housed with dignity and respect and with something they can afford? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 182-14(3): Federal Investment in Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Member and also the House that we are trying to develop...building an apartment unit in Yellowknife specifically to address the current housing problem through a rent supplementary program. We realize that there has been some tremendous impact upon the rental market here in the city, so we are trying to develop new ways to address that key issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 182-14(3): Federal Investment in Social Housing

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a problem that is not just coming down the pipe. It is literally at doorsteps today. Is there a contingency plan in place now, Mr. Speaker, that will assist those low income, those desperate families that are showing up and have very few if any options? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 182-14(3): Federal Investment in Social Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are trying to deal with it as quickly as possible. Although we have some existing corporation leases with private landlords, we are also working with a private construction firm in the city to try to eradicate some of the demands on public rental units. So we are constantly working with various agencies and groups and business as well to meet those market needs. Thank you.

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

Question 183-14(3): Support to the NWT Fishing Industry

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the Members talking about the fur industry and putting programs in place for the price of fuel. I would just like to bring to the attention of the House and to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development that we have another industry out there that is always struggling for survival and is very dependent on the price of fuel. It is a big part of their industry. I refer to the fishing industry. I was wondering if the Minister is keeping the fishing industry in mind and could give some assurance to the fishermen that his department is willing to work with them and help them out this coming winter on the price of fuel? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister Handley.

Return to Question 183-14(3): Support to the NWT Fishing Industry

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes. We do recognize the importance of a fishing industry. We have for many years worked closely with the fishermen's association. We continue to work with them. We did develop a strategy and a proposal to realign some of the support we provide. One of those main programs, of course, is the transportation subsidy we provide to get the fish off the lake to the fish plants. I can say without any doubt that that program will certainly continue. The fishing industry currently have the strategy and we are awaiting their response to us. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 183-14(3): Support to the NWT Fishing Industry

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do I take that from the Minister then to mean that at the least there will be no decreases from subsidies or programs they received in the last fishing season of the last year? There will be no reductions in those programs for this coming season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 183-14(3): Support to the NWT Fishing Industry

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, this year we have not made any reductions in the program. The strategy will enable the fishermen's association, if they choose to, to move money around from one area to another. The allocation from RWED remains the same. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 183-14(3): Support to the NWT Fishing Industry

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister commit to be willing to meet with the fishermen at the beginning of the season if they are having a hard time getting going to talk about the price of fuel this coming winter and how it is going to impact them over the coming season? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 183-14(3): Support to the NWT Fishing Industry

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to meet with the fishermen's association to discuss this issue and any other ones they may have. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 183-14(3): Support to the NWT Fishing Industry

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister consider bringing on a fuel subsidy for the fishermen, something compared to the fuel subsidy for seniors? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 183-14(3): Support to the NWT Fishing Industry

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, we have a strategy that is before the fishermen's association. We would like to have their response to it. We would like to discuss it with them. It has a number of proposals for how the money might be

more effectively allocated. I would like to discuss that with them and if they want to raise the issue of the rising fuel costs, then that should be part of that same discussion. Thank you.

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

Question 184-14(3): Trapping as a Healthy Lifestyle

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, being a trapper and living your life out on the land is a healthy way of life, especially when you match an older gentlemen to a younger one, the learning trend is great. You learn about the land. You learn about the weather. You learn about the hunting skills and develop many skills. That is a healthy way of life. Can the Minister for RWED agree with that statement, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. I am going to rule that question out of order. It is asking a Minister's opinion. I think we should ask a question. It is more of an opinion, Mr. Nitah. I rule that out of order. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 185-14(3): Support for BHP Literacy Program

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Jake Ootes. On Monday, September 25th, I attended a meeting with the Minister, BHP and aboriginal leaders. We discussed workplace literacy. BHP shared the effort that they put into developing a workplace literacy program. They had developed curriculum and were starting to purchase materials for this program. Some employees showed great interest in improving their literacy skills. I would like to ask the Minister: what has the department done to support BHP in training a literate work force?

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

Return to Question 185-14(3): Support for BHP Literacy Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue that Mr. Lafferty is raising is a very important one. I am familiar with the fact that BHP, as Mr. Lafferty has mentioned, gave us a briefing on some of the challenges that are being faced in order for the employees to move from an unskilled level to a semi-skilled level and from semi-skilled up to a skilled level. The challenge there of course is trying to provide literacy training and upgrading training. The Department itself has provided training through a number of sources. Of course, the College is one. Through the programs we operate, Community Skills for Work, for example, ABE programs...we provide access to that. I cannot tell the Member directly how many people have benefited from that who may be employed by BHP. We do have programs in place that no doubt individuals may have benefited from, such as the college programs, the youth employment program that we have in the summertime, and labour force development programs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 185-14(3): Support for BHP Literacy Program

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So far, BHP has spent over \$200,000 developing a workplace literacy program. If they do not get any funding support, the program will fail and Northerners will lose out on more career advancement. I would like to ask the Minister how he will support the diamond industry in having a literate work force.

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

Further Return to Question 185-14(3): Support for BHP Literacy Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I understand that BHP has spoken with me. Initially, they were contacting the federal Member of Parliament in that regard, and they were awaiting word as to the results of requests for funding support for their particular program. I did mention to them that they should contact me back if that particular process failed.

At the moment, we are working on a literacy strategy, Mr. Speaker, part of which is workplace literacy, of course, how we can address that whole area. We have not completed that particular strategy. We are in the process of doing so and I believe that may, down the road, help us to address some of the kinds of issues that are on the table with some of the industries. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 185-14(3): Support for BHP Literacy Program

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask the Minister about some of the programs he has on the go. I would like to ask him if one of the workplace literacy programs he has is in the diamond industry. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 185-14(3): Support for BHP Literacy Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do not have the work place literacy portion of the literacy strategy completed as of yet. It is under development, Mr. Speaker. We are also, while I have the opportunity, working on a joint training program that we have contributed funding to. This is being developed on a joint basis between the department, Aurora College, the Chamber of Mines and, in this particular case, Diavik diamond mines for a number of modules. We have contributed \$90,000 to that program, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Question 186-14(3): Funding Support for the NWT Fur Industry

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. From personal experience, Mr. Speaker, I know that trapping is a very healthy way of life. You learn skills that give you self-esteem and you are just happy to be a human being. With that in mind, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for RWED a question. Can this government give us a firm commitment that it will look at funding the fur industry with major dollars so that the North can benefit from renewed interest in the fur industry, Mr. Speaker? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 186-14(3): Funding Support for the NWT Fur Industry

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, we are right now providing a subsidy of \$2.5 million plus each year for harvesters. Most of that goes to the fur industry. In fact, \$1.8 million, as I said before, goes to trappers. In addition to that, the Development Corporation has spent a lot of money on the fur value-added industry and we will continue with that. In spite of tight fiscal times, there is no thought at this point of any way cutting down on that amount of money.

We recognize that fur prices are going up. We are working with harvesters on that. We will continue, and I am not sure what the Member means when he refers to massive amounts of money, but in my view, spending \$2.5 million a year on this industry to support a thousand harvesters is reasonable. I support continuing what we are doing.

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

Supplementary to Question 186-14(3): Funding Support for the NWT Fur Industry

MR. NITAH: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Minister in his answer to an earlier question posed by my honourable colleague for Mackenzie Delta, where he wants to reduce the bureaucracy and have one pot for trappers and their association to seek their funding. In light of fuel price hikes which affect everything else, I think that pot requires more money. Does the Minister agree with that statement?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, I will allow the question. Mr. Minister can answer if he chooses.

Further Return to Question 186-14(3): Funding Support for the NWT Fur Industry

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I agree that like any other program of grants and contributions and programs to support our economy, every pot could use more money. Certainly this one could use more money. I think we could easily spend a lot more money very responsibly in supporting trappers, and especially getting more young trappers out. It is a matter of trying to balance all of our needs across the Territories. Yes, it could use more money than what is there, and it could use it very responsibly. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 186-14(3): Funding Support for the NWT Fur Industry

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that the Minister agrees. In anticipation of our agreement with the federal government that would see significant resources going to the fur industry, would this government look at developing a strategy similar to that of the secondary diamond industry strategy that would see us involved in areas such as the fur manufacturing, taxidermy training, and further training assistance to trappers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 186-14(3): Funding Support for the NWT Fur Industry

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we will certainly support all of those initiatives, whether it is fur manufacturing, taxidermy, or support to young trappers. We have made a lot of efforts in the past, and we have spent millions of dollars trying to support the fur manufacturing industry. It has not worked as well as we have liked. We have to review that. That is ongoing right now. We need to get into the fur value-added the same way we were diamond value-added, but we have to do it right. We have to do it in a way that is responsible and hopefully profitable. I have seen some good work coming out of the little factory in Fort Simpson that is well designed. I think that has a lot of potential. There are a lot of avenues to this and we continue to support it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 186-14(3): Funding Support for the NWT Fur Industry

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this point, if the Minister is not going to commit to a strategy, however we are living in an economically depressed time in the Northwest Territories, especially with our government. There are communities out there that are economically depressed. Can the Minister commit to work with communities with depressed economies to be given extra consideration for extra funds to assist with trappers training as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 186-14(3): Funding Support for the NWT Fur Industry

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I did not refer to a strategy because we already have so many strategies going on. I told my staff I am not going to ask them to develop any new strategies right now. Let us get the ones underway that we have done first.

-- Applause

However, we do take the fur industry seriously. We will continue to invest as much money as we can into it. We need to invest responsibly. We need to invest in a way that is going to get a maximum return and I am committed to doing that as soon as possible.

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

Question 187-14(3): Young Offenders Facility in Inuvik

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I raised in my Member's statement, there is concern once again growing in my community regarding the young offenders facility in Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, this is a project that was designated in the 13th Assembly and put in the books. There was a class D figure estimate put in the books looking at the project, as is in all government capital infrastructure programs, a class D estimate because they are not sure of the specific location and so on.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is a very big concern because we are being told now the cost is going up and the community, as I said in my Member's statement, has already agreed to fund the utilidor extension so that is at no cost to the department. However, we are being told now that there is more money required and that is a concern. Now the Minister responsible for Justice, in speaking to him, has confirmed that he still supports the project in Inuvik.

However, I received a copy of a letter that was sent to the honourable Roger Allen and it talks about the support for it continuing on, but there is one sentence, Mr. Speaker, that draws some serious concern. It states at the same time planners are searching for alternative solutions in Inuvik and other communities in case the Inuvik option is no longer viable, Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister responsible for Justice to clarify, for the record, for myself and the people of Inuvik and those families affected by their children going to the southern part of the territory where all the facilities lie, will he commit to having this project remain in the community of Inuvik?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Return to Question 187-14(3): Young Offenders Facility in Inuvik

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the female young offenders facility in Inuvik has had a lot of work gone into it and support from the government and the Legislative Assembly to have it in Inuvik. The support is still there. The decision to have the facility built in Inuvik is still there. As the honourable Member mentioned, it is a class D estimate that was originally put as a price tag for a facility like this facility in Inuvik, not knowing the location and a lot of work still has to be done on the geotech. We have done that and so we are kind of narrowing the estimate and, at this stage, I am told by the department that the final figure has not been reached yet. We are working with the Department of Public Works and Services to try to determine what figure we are going to come up with, but there is an increase in the original approved amount right at this point. We have not determined how much that is going to be, but the support for this facility is still to be in Inuvik at this point in time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 187-14(3): Young Offenders Facility in Inuvik

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for the first part of his response, still the support is there. I am little concerned at this time. As the Minister said, there has been some work done; geotech, surveying, rezoning and a commitment by the Town of Inuvik for over \$350,000 for this project. Can the Minister tell us what class estimate is now being used as we spoke earlier? It started with a class D. What level are we at right now?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Justice, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return to Question 187-14(3): Young Offenders Facility in Inuvik

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the last time I had a meeting with the department official, it was a D class estimate, and we figure that there is not going to be any more increase to that or less. Just to clarify at this point and as well as for Mr. Roland, the question of what the planners are doing. The planners are planners. They are not the decision-makers. They develop options and those options are to be looked at again, with the support for the facility still to be in Inuvik. I support that. Thank you.

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

Question 188-14(3): Offsetting Increased Fuel Costs

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Finance. Recently, the federal government announced a tax credit to help Canadians offset the cost of home heating fuel and other fuel cost increases this year. However, we all know, Mr. Speaker, it is much different living on the 49th parallel than it is living where we live. We obviously need a lot more home heating fuel. It is a lot more expensive to operate in the North. Has the Minister considered this and can he tell us if he is doing anything to help Northerners offset the cost of heating their homes this winter?

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

Return to Question 188-14(3): Offsetting Increased Fuel Costs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is true that the price of fuel has gone up about 24 percent over the past 20 months and it is a serious concern to all of our people in the Territories. It is serious and I do not take that lightly at all. However, our government takes a much broader approach to resolving our problem. I do not think handing out cheques to people is really what people want each time the price of fuel goes up and next week it will be the price of eggs going up. The people do not want us just to hand out cheques to help them with their fuel. What they want is an economy in the Northwest Territories. That is what we are working on.

Am I doing anything? We have been working incredibly hard and long to get an economy going in the Northwest Territories so that people can afford to live here and live comfortably and pay their own bills. We have done a lot of things, and I think we are seeing signs of our economy turning around. So I take a much broader approach to this issue than just helping out people with little cheques here and there.

Having said that, there are a number of things we have done over the past year. Some of the main ones we have done are: we have continued programs. We have a power subsidy program that continues in spite of hard times. We have a seniors' home heating subsidy that continues. We have, as a Member mentioned in his Member's statement, not adjusted our fuel prices even though they are ad valorem. We have kept them down. That saved people in the Territories \$2 million over the last couple of years. We continued the same programs of assisting people through public housing and social assistance. We have certainly increased people's ability to pay for fuel through the salary negotiations and agreement with teachers. We have now reached a tentative agreement with the UNW. We are working with industry. So there are a whole lot of things we are doing to make this a good place to live. I think we need to continue to have that broad approach, not focus on following other examples of writing out little cheques for everybody to help them pay their way. That is not going to develop an economy. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 188-14(3): Offsetting Increased Fuel Costs

MR. BELL: Mr. Speaker, I am staggered by the Finance Minister's response. He does not even seem to be able to relate. He talks about the people of the Northwest Territories do not want this, they want that. Mr. Speaker, you would think the Finance Minister does not own a home, does not drive a vehicle. I just cannot understand why he cannot relate. His answer is just to me...I do not understand it, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Finance Minister even tell us if he knows what the cost of a litre of automobile fuel is today in Yellowknife? He cannot relate, Mr. Speaker. Can he answer that question?

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

Further Return to Question 188-14(3): Offsetting Increased Fuel Costs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I use a lot of fuel myself and I am sorry I stagger the Member, but I did not mean to have that impact. I will try not to stagger him too much. The cost of a litre of fuel, I do not know if we are talking about gasoline or diesel or whatever it might be. I fill my truck up every week and I pay for gasoline. I run a generator in my house and I use heating oil for that. Again, I do not know the exact amounts I pay. I pay my bills and do not look at exactly what they are. I know the price of fuel has gone up considerably. I know it has gone up...

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: In October, this month, the average price of gasoline was 87.9 cents. I do not think it is exactly the same at every outlet, but that is an increase of 17.3 cents for

gasoline, or 24.5 cents over the last 20 months. If the Member wishes, I can get him the price for all the different categories of fuel. I do not have them off the top of my head. I like to keep my mind on bigger things than just how much each category of fuel is worth.

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

Supplementary to Question 188-14(3): Offsetting Increased Fuel Costs

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think sadly that illustrates my point, the point that the Minister can read a briefing note and tell us what the price of gasoline per litre was in October, but he does not know today. Obviously, his bank account is too big for it to make any kind of difference. I just do not see how he can relate, Mr. Speaker. I think we need a plan. I have heard nothing. The people who have to heat their homes this winter...it is not really funny. They cannot wait for this economy to get turned around in two, three or five years. What is he going to do for those folks who are going to have difficulty heating their homes this winter?

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

Further Return to Question 188-14(3): Offsetting Increased Fuel Costs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am very aware, as I mentioned, that fuel has gone up in price. What used to cost me 34 cents for heating oil now costs roughly 50 cents or a little bit more than that. I know that is happening. It affects me the same as anybody else. I am sensitive to it. I am aware of it. As I mentioned, we have done a lot of things to help make the Northwest Territories a better place for people to live. Am I going to today write a cheque for everybody as Alberta did? No, we cannot afford that. We do not have the money. We have a deficit. Are we ignoring this problem? No, we are not ignoring it. We are very aware of it. My department is working on it, but it is not easy to simply follow the example of Alberta or anywhere else. We have a different situation here, different circumstances. If the Member wants, I can provide a little more trivia for him. The price of a litre of diesel fuel, motor fuel, is roughly 85 cents. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 188-14(3): Offsetting Increased Fuel Costs

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not think this was about trivia and I certainly did not think it was a trivial question. I am sorry that Cabinet in their ivory tower cannot find it within their time frame and within their agenda to have a plan to address the cost of fuel this winter.

MR. SPEAKER: Question, please.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need a plan. What is Cabinet going to do this winter?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 188-14(3): Offsetting Increased Fuel Costs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I said, we continue to work on this. What we have in our budget this year is in our budget. What our plans are for the future year is something that we should be discussing later on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 189-14(3): Responsibilities of Minister for Seniors

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following along in my Member's statement this afternoon, my questions are for the Minister responsible for Seniors. Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that a lot of people even know that we have a Minister responsible for Seniors. I would like to ask the Minister if he could inform the House, what is the mandate for the Minister responsible for Seniors?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 189-14(3): Responsibilities of Minister for Seniors

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been honoured to be given the responsibility for Seniors by the Premier. However, I think the thought behind why they established a Ministry for Seniors is best answered by the Premier. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 189-14(3): Responsibilities of Minister for Seniors

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not think that I can now redirect my questions to the Premier, so I will have to continue asking the Minister responsible for Seniors about the portfolio. I am aware that there is no money in the budget for a department of seniors, but does the Minister have a plan to develop a coordinated approach across government departments to the delivery of services to seniors?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 189-14(3): Responsibilities of Minister for Seniors

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government does have a plan, as the Member is referring to. The Minister responsible for Health has been spearheading this plan, Mr. Speaker, harmonization of the senior programs.

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

Supplementary to Question 189-14(3): Responsibilities of Minister for Seniors

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would expect that the Minister with the title "responsibility for Seniors" would have taken the lead, so I am a little surprised to hear that the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services has the

lead here. Could the Minister responsible for Seniors advise us how many meetings he has called among Ministers whose departments deliver programs for seniors?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 189-14(3): Responsibilities of Minister for Seniors

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, the Minister responsible for Health has been spearheading the harmonization of seniors' programs. She would be in a better position to respond to the Member as to how many meetings have been held, who has been involved, et cetera. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 189-14(3): Responsibilities of Minister for Seniors

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am a little bit confused. I thought that having the responsibility for Seniors, the Minister would have at least been invited to attend those meetings. Has this Minister not even attended the meetings that the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services has called to talk about the coordination of services for seniors?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 189-14(3): Responsibilities of Minister for Seniors

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been involved in the coordination of the programs to some degree. However, it is recognized that most of the senior programs fall under the Department of Health. Therefore, that department has been trying to harmonize exactly how we are going to address all the seniors' needs, including how and whether or not there should be, as the Member suggested at one point in his statement, funding for the Minister responsible for Seniors, specifically for seniors' programs. Some of the seniors' programs are under MACA, some of the seniors' programs are under housing. So there is a group that is trying to harmonize all these programs together.

As the Minister responsible for Seniors, I do not really have a responsibility per se to organize all of these programs under one roof. What we agreed to do is have a committee which is looking at putting all these programs together under one Minister. Thank you.

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

Question 190-14(3): Establishment of Enterprise Graveyard

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Roger Allen. It is regarding an issue that has been brought to my attention from the community of Enterprise regarding their application to establish a graveyard in the community. The process has been a long, ongoing process and it has taken

upwards of six years. To date, they have not made much gain in that area. Without a graveyard, the community has been forced to bury their families elsewhere, usually in the community of Hay River. There seems to be, although I use the word "process," there seems to be a lack of a process that is being used to set up a graveyard. I would like to ask the Minister, what is the process for establishing a legally designated graveyard in a community?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Allen.

Return to Question 190-14(3): Establishment of Enterprise Graveyard

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it is a new issue for me. I am going to have to advise the Member that I will take the question as notice today and I will get back to him as soon as I can. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Allen. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 191-14(3): Retention of Health Care Professionals

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are addressed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, and deal with the issue of the recruitment and retention plan and the maintaining and enhancing of our northern staff and hopefully finding new staff as well.

This issue has been raised in this House quite a number of times in the business plans and it continues to try to address a significant shortfall. My question to the Minister is: given the fact that studies show that we tend to focus too much time on recruiting and not enough time on retention, what does she intend to do to try to improve the retention component of the recruitment and retention plan to make it easier to access? More of a one-window approach, so that our northern professionals get the help they need? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 191-14(3): Retention of Health Care Professionals

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member refers to studies that indicate we are focussing too much on recruitment and not enough on retention. Studies? I am not sure which study the Member is specifically referring to, but I am pleased to report that the department currently spends about \$1 million annually on programs to support students who are studying to enter health and social service professions and employees who are wishing to study in an area of value to the health and social services system. We are currently spending \$1 million to enhance the capabilities of health care and social services professionals. I believe this goes some way towards ensuring that we retain these employees in our system. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 191-14(3): Retention of Health Care Professionals

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is information on Web sites that speak to this issue of recruitment and retention across the world and what people in other jurisdictions have found out to be the way to deal with that issue. My question to the Minister is then with the \$1 million that is being spent, can she indicate how they track and work with northern students, northern nurses, northern social workers down south to ensure they return home? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Health, Ms. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 191-14(3): Retention of Health Care Professionals

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the areas, specifically the educational support program which I referred to, are education leave, professional development fund, northern development fund and medical bursaries. A number of these areas do have a remissible portion based on return of service. That is one way in which we try to ensure that once we have made the investment in these folks, they will come back and serve us here in the North. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 191-14(3): Retention of Health Care Professionals

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate whether the Department of Health and Social Services, working with Education, tracks all northern students or all northern professionals who are down south either getting retrained, upgraded or going for their diplomas and degrees in social work or nursing? Do they know as a government between the two departments where these people are? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Health, Ms. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Could I ask the Member, Mr. Speaker, for clarification as to when he talks about Education and Health working together? Is he referring to these retention initiatives I have just mentioned or is he referring to the overall recruitment and retention programs of the department? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: I guess the Minister is seeking a little bit of clarification, Mr. Miltenberger. Could you be a little bit more specific in the question?

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could attempt to provide clarification, the question I am asking is to deal with the fact...does the government know how many people are down south -- either under SFA or being funded through the recruitment and retention program -- taking health or nursing or social work? Are they working together to make sure they track these people so they return North to deliver these very essential services we are so desperately in need of? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Health, Ms. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 191-14(3): Retention of Health Care Professionals

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer to the first part of the Member's question is yes, we do know how many students are in the south, students or employees, in the south either taking training or taking upgrading. As I mentioned, they are sponsored either by the department or by the boards. We do know how many there are.

As to what specifically we do other than the return of service agreements to ensure that they come back to the North, I am not aware of any particular program to ensure that. That is something I could check into for the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 191-14(3): Retention of Health Care Professionals

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister address all those employees like the ones from my constituency who were denied education leave and had to go to other sources? They are nurses -- professionally trained northern, aboriginal nurses -- who are down south. Does the department track those people as well or does Education track those people as well to make sure we do not lose that very valuable service?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. There are two questions there. The first question is does your department track that. That is the question, Madam Minister.

Further Return to Question 191-14(3): Retention of Health Care Professionals

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My answer again is yes, we are aware of where students are who are either receiving training or upgrading who are taking that training in the South. Yes, we know who they are. We know where they are. Thank you.

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

Question 192-14(3): Trap Replacement Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. It is with regard to the statement I read out today, but also I am more interested in the different programs this department delivers with regard to the trap replacement program and the fur pricing program.

We have a training initiative with the Aklavik Fur Shop, which is in my riding and has now been shut down. There was a trapper diploma training program that, along with the Department of Education and Aurora College, trained people to work within the different fur shops and what not that we have in the North. Mr. Speaker, with that, I would like to ask the Minister on the different programs, especially in the area of the trap

replacement program. A number of years ago there was a program in place to assist trappers. With the humane trapping argument from Europe, we had to find a humane means of trapping. I would like to ask the Minister: how many traps have been replaced to date, the leghold trap with the new, more humane traps?

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

Return to Question 192-14(3): Trap Replacement Program

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a specific number on the traps that have been replaced over the years, but it would be literally thousands of traps that have been replaced. In fact, all the traps in use for those species that are specified where there is a humane trap have now been replaced and we continue to provide assistance where it is necessary for any that may have been missed. It is in the thousands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 192-14(3): Trap Replacement Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the same point, the trap replacement program, a lot of the newer trappers coming on require these traps. It seems like there is a shortage of these traps in the Northwest Territories. My understanding is there is only one producer of these specific traps and we are only allowed so many traps per year. Could the Minister tell me what is he doing to assist the younger trappers, the people who are new to the industry? Are they able to acquire these traps?

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

Further Return to Question 192-14(3): Trap Replacement Program

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. There has been, at times, a shortage in the traps. Fortunately, the Northwest Territories was ahead of most jurisdictions in making the conversion over to the humane traps. However, now we find that the other provinces and regions are getting up to speed. They are using up more and more of what can be manufactured. We are concerned that the average age of our trappers is increasing and the average age is well over 50. We need to get more young people into it.

As I mentioned yesterday, we are running two pilot programs this year, one in the Delta area and the other one will be south of the lake. We are using older, experienced trappers as mentors who will take young people out with them and begin the process of learning how to trap. So we are doing those two programs on a pilot basis this year, which will assist young people. As the young people or any new entrepreneurs want to get into trapping, then we do have small business programs available to assist them from that side as well once they are on their own. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 192-14(3): Trap Replacement Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the area of the trapping industry, there is the Fur Pricing Program the Minister mentioned. I would like to know exactly how that program is being administered? Have we followed to ensure that we are being fair to the trappers who have submitted fur and try to get the reimbursements back as soon as possible?

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

Further Return to Question 192-14(3): Trap Replacement Program

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that program is administered generally by the department, but it is implemented in each region by the resource officers. Most often, the prices and so on are set at the community level. Anything that is considered to be prime fur in reasonably good condition is guaranteed a price. There is a price for it. The officers who are doing this are, in many cases, people who are experienced trappers themselves. They are aboriginal people from the communities and they have been trained on grading fur to make sure that it all works well. In some cases, if there are issues and concerns and because grading fur is a judgment issue, then we will follow up and attempt to straighten out the disagreement if it exists. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 192-14(3): Trap Replacement Program

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the same matter, the Fur Pricing Program, I have heard many complaints from a lot of trappers who have submitted furs and they have not received their reimbursements or it has taken quite a while before they get their cheques back waiting for the furs to be sold and what not. In some cases, I have heard of people sending furs out and they have not received their cheques for it. I would like to ask the Minister, if that program undergoes some sort of an audit or is it being reviewed to ensure that people are able to receive their cheques within a reasonable time and if there is a complaint filed, how do they ensure they are following up on those?

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

Further Return to Question 192-14(3): Trap Replacement Program

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the situation and it is Fort McPherson in which some of the trappers apparently believe they have not received their subsidy cheques and have not received them on time. As soon as we hear of cases like this, I get the department following up with it immediately. I am not sure of the specifics of this one

yet, but we will have them report back to me within a matter of days.

In terms of audits, we do -- as a regular part of delivering the programs -- review what is happening and try to make sure it is being administered as it is intended. This specific one I am aware of and I assure the Member we have our people looking into it right now. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Monsieur Ministre. Les questions orales sont finis. Oral question period is over. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 8: Justice Statutes Amendment Act

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 8, Justice Statutes Amendment Act, and wishes to report that Bill 8 is ready for consideration in committee of the whole. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. 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. I have four documents I would like to table today.

Tabled Document 54-14(3): Government of the NWT Interim Financial Report for the Year Ended March 31, 2000

Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Government of the NWT Interim Financial Report for the Year Ending March 31, 2000".

Tabled Document 55-14(3): Business Development Fund Annual Report and Recipients Report, 1999-2000

Mr. Speaker, as well, I wish to table the following document entitled "Business Development Fund Annual Report and Recipients Report, 1999-2000".

Tabled Document 56-14(3): Workers' Compensation Board of the NWT and Nunavut: 1999 Annual Report

As well, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, 1999 Annual Report".

Tabled Document 57-14(3): Workers' Compensation Board of the NWT and Nunavut: 2000-2005 Corporate Plan

And, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, 2001-2005 Corporate Plan". Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 58-14(3): Involvement in Political Activity

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the document entitled "Involvement in Political Activity".

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

Tabled Document 59-14(3): Human Resource Manual, Section 901: Job Descriptions, Bargaining Group and Excluded Employees

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the following documents entitled "Human Resource Manual, Section 901, Job Descriptions, Bargaining Group and Excluded Employees".

Tabled Document 60-14(3): Ministerial Administrative Procedures, Section 10: Ministerial Executive Assistants

Also, "Ministerial Administrative Procedures, Section 10, Ministerial Executive Assistants". Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 61-14(3): January 4, 1999 News-North Excerpt, re: North Slave Per Capita Spending

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a news report dated January 4, 1999. The item is on regional major centre expenditures and who gets what. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to go back to item 5.

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

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Mr. Leon Cournoyea with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome, Mr. Cournoyea. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS**Bill 11: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 3**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried. Bill 11 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act 2000-2001; Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001; Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act; and Bill 9, An Act to Amend the NWT Power Corporation Act, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome to the committee of the whole. We have several items to deal with: Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act 2000-2001; Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001; Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act; and Bill 9, An Act to Amend the NWT Power Corporation Act. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we deal with the four bills in the following order: Bill 9, followed by Bill 2, followed by Bill 3, and then Bill 7. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree? We will start off with Bill 9 after a short break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call the committee to order. We are reviewing Bill 9, An Act to Amend the NWT Power Corporation Act. I would like to call on the Minister responsible for the bill to make any opening comments. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation has requested an amendment to the section of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act that governs and restricts the investing activities of the corporation. The amendment acknowledges the unique requirements of the corporation and recognizes that the best interest of its customers and its shareholder, the GNWT, will be served by allowing the corporation to expand their investment activities beyond the constraints currently placed on public agencies.

The corporation is required under the terms and conditions of its long-term debt agreements to set aside funds on an annual basis to provide for the repayment of the debt at a later date.

The advantage of this approach is that these funds can be invested and grow on their own accord. The more these funds can grow through prudent and efficient investment, the less the corporation will be required to contribute to the funds.

Reducing contributions will help reduce their need for rate increases. The board of directors of the corporation is charged under the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act with directing the business of the corporation, and the amendment meets with their approval.

In addition, the board of directors of the corporation has approved an investment policy that will maximize investment return for a level of risk that is deemed appropriate. This investment policy is conservative and mirrors the investment policy that governs the investment activities of the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories.

Bill 9 will allow the corporation and their licensed professional investment advisors to progress beyond a restrictive list of authorized investments and utilize modern theory and practices to the construction of a pool of investments in the best interest of the corporation's customers and shareholder, the GNWT.

Failure to pass Bill 9 will prevent the corporation from utilizing its financial resources in an optimal manner to the benefit of its customers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee responsible for overseeing this department have any comments? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act, at its meeting on September 26, 2000. The committee would like to thank the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and senior officials of the corporation for presenting the bill.

Bill 9 amends the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act to provide the corporation with the same type of investment powers that other public agencies have under the Financial Administration Act. The amendments repeal sections 32 and 33, which deal with the categories of investment of money that the corporation may make, and the provision that allowed for investment and security in corporations to carry on the business of generating, transmitting and providing energy.

Bill 9 replaces this section with a new subsection which expands the types of investments that may be made by the corporation. The expansion of investment powers provides that in addition to those investments which may be made pursuant to the Financial Administration Act, the corporation may invest in such other securities and investments that it considers prudent.

During the committee's review of the bill, Members indicated to the Minister that they were concerned the amendment to the Act could not become effective until regulations to the Financial Administration Act were developed. Further, the committee advised the Minister that they were reluctant to support the bill unless the government confirmed that the regulations to the Financial Administration Act would soon be implemented.

The committee is pleased to report to the House that they have received confirmation from the Minister that he has received the assurance from the Minister responsible for Finance that these regulations will be brought before the Financial Management Board for final approval during the month of November 2000.

Mr. Chairman, committee members may have additional comments or questions on this bill during the review of committee of the whole. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in any witnesses.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, I would, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with me are Mr. Leon Cournoyea, the president of the Power Corporation, as well as the chief executive officer; and Denise Gagnon, legislative counsel.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. General comments on the bill? General comments? Clause-by-clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the things I would like to try to determine on this kind of approach is the impact on customers and the rates we pay for electrical power service. While I am certainly in agreement with the approach that is taken here -- the corporation could be getting more mileage out of an available cash asset -- I wanted to see if I could get a bit more information on what this might translate into for a customer.

A question I would like to ask -- at least to start with -- is what is the revenue requirement of the Power Corporation for its customers in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is about \$52 million a year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Braden. Excuse me. Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is \$52,502,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Given the current market conditions and the amount of money that would be available for investment, how much more would the corporation realize from being given this additional latitude to invest? What would the additional increment of funds be for this kind of investment? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it could fluctuate between a five or ten percent return, approximately \$500,000 to one million dollars.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So to put it one way, this additional ability could translate into somewhere between a one and two percent change in the revenue requirement of the corporation. Is that correct, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is. What the honourable Member has mentioned is correct. This amount could of course increase over time as the amount of money is invested.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One more question. Could this additional amount of earned revenue be directly applied to any upcoming revenue requirement increase that the corporation has in mind? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments? Clause-by-clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): It is item 9 in your grey binders. Bill 9, an Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act. Clause 1?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 9 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 9 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, you can escort them out. Next item, the committee agreed we will be dealing with Bill 2, Write-off of Bad Debts Act, 2000-2001. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for this bill if he has any opening comments. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the purpose of the Write-off of Debts Act 2000-2001 is to authorize the write-off of the debts listed in the schedule to the Act. Pursuant to section 24 of the Financial Administration Act, the write-off of government assets or debts exceeding \$20,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval. Pursuant to Section 82 of the Financial Administration Act, the write-off of debts owed to a public agency exceeding \$20,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval. The write-off of debts owed to the Workers' Compensation Board exceeding \$50,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

The write-off being proposed in this Act will not require a new appropriation. The write-off will be charged against allowances for bad debts, which were established in the department budget at the time it was determined that collection of the debt would be unlikely. I wish to emphasize that the write-off of a debt does not relieve the debtor of the liability for repayment or mean that the government will not continue to attempt to collect the outstanding amount. Through continued reviews by my staff, future recovery of the debt may still be achieved.

In addition, in cases of debts owed by companies, we track the principals of each firm for a future credit reference. Mr. Chairman, I or the appropriate Minister am prepared to answer Members' questions on the proposed write-off. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee responsible for overseeing this bill have any comments? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 2000-2001, on September 29, 2000. The committee would like to thank the Minister responsible for Finance and his officials for presenting the bill. The bill authorizes the write-off of debts in accordance with the Financial Administration Act, section 24 and 82, as the Financial Administration Act requires an Act for the write-off of a debt or obligation owed to the government or a public agency that is worth more than \$20,000. This bill would write-off \$2,660,190.45 in debts owed to this government and its public agencies.

Mr. Chairman, no debt, obligation or part of a debt or obligation that is written off shall be deemed remitted, satisfied or forgiven as a result of the write-off. Debts contained in the bill will be written off as they are considered uncollectible. The write-off proposed in this Act would not require a new appropriation. The write-off will be charged against allowances which were established in the respective department's budget at the time it was determined that collection of the debt would be unlikely.

During discussions of the bill, the committee expressed three major points: the need for a central tracking system to effectively monitor credit worthiness of government clientele; the disclosure of client information to the public after a certain time period as a collection function; and the need to inform the public that the write-off of debts does not mean collection efforts have ceased.

Members recommended that there should be a system for tracking and monitoring the credit worthiness of clients who have received write-offs or forgiveness of debts. A central monitoring system may reduce the government's lending and operating risk.

The committee also noted that the write-off of a debt also performs a collection function. Clients may be more inclined to repay their debts if their names were to be published and made readily available to the public upon non-payment.

Finally, the committee was concerned that many members of the public may perceive that the write-off of bad debts is similar to the forgiveness of debts. The committee would like to again point out that even though a debt may be written off, collection efforts have not ceased. If a debt is forgiven, then no further collection efforts are planned.

Mr. Chairman, following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 2000-2001 to the Assembly as ready for the committee of the whole. Additional comments or questions by Members may be posed as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. With that, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be calling any witnesses. Mr. Minister.

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

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, on my left is Gerry Gagnon, manager of tax administration for the Department of Finance. On my right is Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witnesses. We are dealing with Bill 2, Write-off of Bad Debts Act, 2000-2001. General comments? Clause-by-clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are dealing with item 2 in the grey binder. Bill 2, Write-off of Bad Debts Act, 2000-2001. Clause 1?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 2, schedule of debts written off, total \$2,660,190.45. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the schedule, item 3, debtor **Gasgo Olton Limited**. For the record, can we have an explanation as to the nature of this debt? It says tobacco tax penalties and interest. What is that arising from? Someone not paying their taxes?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this was a situation in which a businessman was bringing cigarettes into the Northwest Territories illegally without paying taxes. The amount is what was concluded when it was discovered what he was doing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister inform us as to how this was able to happen? In fact, we caught this after the fact. What resulted of this? It sounds like a law was broken. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, essentially the individuals were smuggling cigarettes into the Northwest Territories. Yes, laws were broken. If you wish to have more detail, I can ask Mr. Gagnon to explain exactly what happened from that point on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Gagnon.

MR. GAGNON: This individual here, this limited company had obtained a retail dealers permit under the Tobacco Tax Act. Over a period of time, he had been importing his own tobacco without remitting the appropriate taxes. The department received notice of this and we sent our investigator up to Inuvik to obtain evidence. At the time, there was insufficient evidence -- and still there is insufficient evidence -- to lay criminal charges under the Tobacco Tax Act. That being said, we were able to assess a civil debt due under the Tobacco Tax Act with the appropriate penalties and interest calculated.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This issue, Mr. Chairman, I raised in committee as well, more in regard to the fact that we seem to treat everybody the same, in the sense that if somebody used money of this government -- it could be student financial assistance, a small business loan -- and tried to make a go of it and tried to create a business, employment and so on, but failed and ended up owing this government money and has now had to go through this process. Collection has been attempted. In some cases, some money was recovered, but some of it was not. It was stated that we figure it is not collectible now.

Is there a different system that would fall into place or a mechanism that would kick in when someone has wilfully gone outside the laws and tried to benefit from that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Gagnon.

MR. GAGNON: In addition to raising the assessment here, we did go to the courts and obtain a judgement on our debt due and owing. With that, we did obtain writs. We have registered the writs at the sheriff's office and at lands as well. We are now on the books for any lands transactions which **Gasgo Olton Limited** may attempt to do with the lands they hold in Inuvik.

In addition, whenever we obtain new retail dealers permits, we take a look at people who have been assessed taxes in the past who have not remitted it in accordance with our Act. We review those files. They tend not to receive new retail dealers permits.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So is that to confirm that there is another level that can be used by the department if someone has wilfully gone outside the law, as has happened in this case? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the other alternative that could be used would be to have criminal charges pursued. We do not lay the charges. There would be questions about the method of collecting evidence. There is some chance of that failing on a technicality, for example. As well, by pursuing civil charges, it was felt at the time that would result in the possibility of the funds being recovered, because as we mentioned, written off does not mean they are forgiven. If the individual either attempts to dispose of assets or get back into business and so on, collection could be renewed. The other alternative is criminal charges. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So that is to say that within the system we have right now, within our system, we have no other level if somebody goes outside the rules we have established? That is what I am getting at. I understand that you have done some other things, but is there an organized step as to the severity of the rules that were broken here? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the only recourse we have in these situations is our own efforts, going through collection agencies or going through the courts. That is all there is. There are no other avenues. The other alternative is the criminal charges. That is not within our system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With all of these ones here being written off, as you stated, there is still an avenue here if the monies become available to go after it? So all of these that are listed here, this government can still go back and get the money if something has occurred, as was stated earlier in this one situation, there was the registering of something on titles, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is correct.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are dealing with schedule of debts written off, total \$2,660,190.45. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 2 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 2 is now ready for third reading. With that, I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses out, please.

We are now dealing with Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for this bill if he has any opening comments. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the purpose of the Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001 is to authorize the forgiveness of certain debts listed in this schedule through the Act. Pursuant to Section 25(1) of the Financial Administration Act, the forgiveness of a debt or obligation to the government exceeding \$1,000 must receive Legislative Assembly approval.

When a debt is forgiven, no further collection action shall be pursued. The forgiveness being proposed in this Act will not require a new appropriation. Allowances for doubtful accounts were charged to an appropriation at the time it was determined that collection of the debt was considered unlikely.

The accounts being recommended are the result of bankruptcy, compromised settlements, and-or are in the public interest. In cases where a compromised settlement is reached, the following factors have been considered:

- The possibility of future recoveries;
- The cost to continue legal action; and
- The value of security, for example, do the personal guarantees hold a realizable worth?

Mr. Chairman, I or the appropriate Minister are prepared to answer Member's questions on these proposed forgivenesses. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee responsible for Bill 2 have any comments? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act on September 29, 2000. The committee would like to thank the Minister responsible for Finance and his officials for presenting the bill. This bill authorizes the forgiveness of debts in accordance with the Financial Administration Act. Section 25 of the Financial Administration Act requires an act with a forgiveness of any debt or obligation owed to the government that exceeds \$1,000. This Act will forgive \$264,529.71. When a debt is forgiven, the government has decided that the collection of the debt is not possible and no further action will be taken to recover the debt. Many accounts are forgiven as a result of bankruptcies and negotiated settlements. Forgiven debts do not require new appropriation. Allowances for doubtful accounts were charged to an appropriation when it was determined when collection was unlikely.

Mr. Chairman, following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001 to the Assembly as ready for committee of the whole. Additional comments or questions from Members may be posed as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Dent. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be calling any witnesses. Mr. Minister.

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

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome. We are dealing with Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001. Are there any general comments? Detail? Does the committee agree to go clause-by-clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 1, Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001, clause 1?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 2, schedule of debts, total, \$264,529.71.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 3 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 3 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and his witness. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witness out?

We are dealing with Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2000. Excuse me, could we have some order? We are dealing with Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2000. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he has any opening comments. The Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I do have a statement. Mr. Chairman, the purpose of Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2000, is to amend various statutes in the Northwest Territories for which minor changes are proposed or in which errors, inconsistencies or anomalies have been identified and brought to the attention by the Department of Justice by other departments and by the Department of Justice staff.

Departments responsible for the administration of various statutes being amended by the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2000, have each reviewed and approved the changes to the statutes under their authority.

Most changes proposed in Bill 7 are minor in nature and many consist of technical corrections to either the English or French version of the statute. Other changes have the effect of repealing certain provisions of the statutes that have expired, lapsed or otherwise cease to exist.

The amendments are of such a nature that the preparation and legislative consideration of individual bills to correct each statute would be time consuming for the government and the Legislative Assembly.

In order for an amendment to be included in the bill, it had to meet the following criteria:

- a) it must not be controversial;
- b) it must not involve the spending of public funds;
- c) it must not prejudicially effect the rights of persons; and
- d) it must not create a new offence or subject a new class of person to an existing offence.

Mr. Chairman, in our view the amendments proposed in Bill 7 meet those criteria. My official and I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have. Mahsi cho, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the committee responsible for overseeing Bill 7 have any comments? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight reviewed Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2000, at its meeting on September 26 and 28, 2000. The committee would like to thank the Minister responsible for Justice and his officials for presenting the bill.

The bill is intended to correct errors and inconsistencies that have been identified in various Northwest Territories statutes. The amendments made are intended to be non-controversial and of a minor nature consisting of technical corrections.

The committee was satisfied that the amendments to the 16 acts in this bill are of a non-controversial nature and correct errors of a technical nature. Mr. Chairman, committee members may have additional comments or questions on this bill during committee of the whole. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in any witnesses? Mr. Minister.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, I would.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Chairman, I have with me Mark Aitken, the director of the legislation division for the Department of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Welcome, witness. We are dealing with Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2000. Are there any general comments? Detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, Archives Act, clause 1?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bills of Sales Act, clause 2?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Boilers and Pressure Vessels Act, clause 3. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Business Corporations Act, clause 4. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Certified General Accountants Association Act, clause 5. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Chartered Communities Act, clause 6. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Dental Professions Act, clause 7. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Dependants Relief Act, clause 8. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Document Registry Act, clause 9. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Engineering, Geologists and Geophysics Professions Act, clause 10. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Environmental Rights Act, clause 11. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Financial Administration Act, clause 12. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Marriage Act, clause 13. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Northwest Territories Business Credit Corporation Act, clause 14. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are on page 5. Public Service Act, clause 15. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Revolving Funds Act, clause 16. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 7 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Bill 7 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and his witness. Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witness out. Since that is the last item on the schedule, I will rise and report progress.

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 9, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act; Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 2000-2001; Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001; and Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2000 and would like to report that Bills 9, 2, 3, and 7 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move...

MR. SPEAKER: Can we have some order in the House, please? The House cannot hear the report. Order, please.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do we have a seconder? Thank you, Mr. Delorey. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The Motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Orders of the day for Friday, November 3, 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 Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 9-14(3): Legislative Assembly's Declaration on Family Violence (Groenewegen)
 - Motion 10-14(3): Referral of Tabled Document 32-14(3), Report of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures (Braden)
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 12, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 3
 - Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, No. 3
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
 - Bill 2, Write-off of Debts Act, 2000-2001
 - Bill 3, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2000-2001
 - Bill 7, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act
 - Bill 9, An Act to Amend the NWT Power Corporation Act
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned to Friday, November 3, 2000 at 10:00 a.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:38 p.m.