



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 20

14th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, November 8, 2000

Pages 781 – 814

The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 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. Krutko. Good afternoon, everyone. Bonjour. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 26-14(3): Investing in Roads for People and the Economy: A Highway Strategy For the Northwest Territories**

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later this afternoon, at the appropriate time, I intend to table a document entitled, Investing in Roads for People and the Economy: A Highway Strategy for the Northwest Territories.

The Northwest Territories transportation system makes possible the movement of people and goods within the Northwest Territories as well as to and from our provincial and territorial neighbours. Transportation mobility is key to the health and well-being of our people and our economy.

The Department of Transportation has worked hard over the past decade to improve our transportation system. Since the department was formed in 1989, new airports, marine facilities, community access roads and extensive highway reconstruction have all been accomplished. These improvements were guided by the strategic objectives and priorities set out in the 1990 Transportation Strategy and the 1994 Transportation Strategy Update.

In 1998, the Department of Transportation began the highway strategy initiative. This initiative earmarked special funding for planning studies on roads in the Northwest Territories. Over the past two years, both technical studies and consultations with stakeholders have been undertaken. The results of this effort were first presented in the Summary Report of the Highway Strategy released in October 1999.

As we move into the 21st century, we must ensure that the transportation system continues to move forward. We must direct its expansion and enhancement so that it will contribute to a more prosperous and healthy northern population. Investing in Roads for People and the Economy: A Highway Strategy for the Northwest Territories is this direction. It presents a vision for roads in the Northwest Territories with a plan of action to achieve that vision.

Investing in Roads is shaped by and consistent with the broad vision for the Northwest Territories as outlined in the 14th Legislative Assembly's report Towards a Better Tomorrow, along with the Economic Strategy Panel's report Common

Ground, and the Government of the Northwest Territories' Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy in which roads play a prominent role.

The Department of Transportation has taken steps to implement the plan of action proposed in Investing in Roads. With our existing resources, we are actively improving portions of Highway 3 between Rae and Yellowknife, Highway 7 south of Fort Liard, the Dempster Highway and the Ingraham Trail.

We have also begun several new initiatives including determining how to obtain greater control of the Lupin winter road, constructing a public winter road to Colville Lake and constructing bridges on the Mackenzie Valley winter road to extend the operating season. In addition, we have begun the search for new funding, including lobbying for an appropriate share of the federal \$600 million allocated to the National Highway System.

Just as the 1990 Transportation Strategy served to focus the department's effort through the past decade, I expect that Investing in Roads will serve as an equally reliable guide for the opening years of the new century. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Monsieur Steen. Déclaration des ministres. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 27-14(3): Consultation on Wildlife Legislation

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as Members are aware, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is preparing a new Wildlife Act and species at risk legislation.

A Wildlife Aboriginal Advisory Group was recently established to encourage aboriginal participation in the development of this wildlife legislation and to ensure aboriginal viewpoints and priorities are reflected in it.

The advisory group includes representation from the:

- Akaitcho Treaty 8 Council;
- South Slave Métis Tribal Council;
- Inuvialuit Game Council;
- North Slave Métis Alliance;
- Sahtu Renewable Resource Board;
- Gwich'in Tribal Council; and,

- Salt River First Nations.

The Dogrib Treaty 11 Council and the Deh Cho First Nations declined to attend the meetings given the status of their land claims negotiations.

The advisory group has held two meetings to review issues already identified through public consultation and to note any additional ones. Advisory group members will be consulting with the people in their communities this winter to determine options and recommendations to be included in discussion papers on the new Wildlife Act and species at risk legislation.

The discussion papers are expected to be completed this spring with another round of public consultations scheduled for the summer and fall of 2001. Aboriginal governments will also be conducting their own consultation on the discussion papers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the aboriginal government representatives for working with us on this very important legislative endeavour. Wildlife is extremely important to all people of the Northwest Territories and it is essential that we all work together to develop the proper tools to manage that resource. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Balancing Environmental Responsibilities with Resource Developments

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we hear a lot with regard to the oil and gas exploration and the possibility of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline. However, Mr. Speaker, the protection of the environment is not an option. It is a deal breaker. Northerners are welcome to develop the North, but the land and the resources and the sustainability of our non-renewable resources is important to many of the aboriginal communities and those who live and depend on the land for their lifestyle.

With regard to the resource opportunities, they come and go. The boom-bust scenario is something we have to realize. Also, we have to realize the long-term implications of these developments on the people that live here. Aboriginal people and Northerners have always taken the environment very seriously, through our land claim arrangements, the institutions that have been established and also with regard to establishing legislation to ensure, protect and preserve what makes us unique in northern Canada.

Again, I would ask, at what cost are we willing to sell our environment with regard to development? Mr. Speaker, it is essential that there is that balance. It is essential we work with our partners with regard to this development. Mr. Speaker, we have seen what can happen with regard to working relationships with industry and the aboriginal groups with BHP and also Diavik, where there are assessments in place that can deal with these incomes, but realizing we do have some serious challenges in front of us when it comes to developing the North.

With regard to what we have heard from comments made in this House by the Premier and also news articles and

statements that we have seen in his address to the industry in Washington, Ottawa, Calgary and elsewhere in Canada, one thing we have heard very little about is the environment and how we, as a government, will also find a balance to take on that challenge. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking questions to the Premier on that matter.

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

Member's Statement on Winter Road Access for Wekweti

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, winter is late coming this year but it is here. The lakes and rivers are finally freezing. People from some of my communities value being able to access cheaper goods and services, having their fuel resupplied and also housing packages and construction supplies to be brought into their communities through the use of winter roads.

The communities of Wha Ti and Gameti know that every year a winter road will be built into their communities. In contrast, residents from Wekweti never know from year to year whether or not they will have a winter road. Without a winter road, the people of Wekweti must rely on air transportation for their basic goods and services.

This dependence on air transportation has created a community with an unusually high cost of living. Two litres of milk costs \$7.50, bread costs \$2.85 and canned goods and meat are very expensive due to their weight when being freighted. Furthermore, of the 17 communities serviced across the Northwest Territories by the government, Wekweti pays the highest prices for home heating fuel and gasoline.

Ensuring that Wekweti receives a winter road each year would significantly reduce the high costs associated with living in the community. At the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Transportation about this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Canadian Youth Against Impaired Driving Conference

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members know, Students Against Drinking and Driving (SADD) are hosting a national conference. The 11th Annual Canadian Youth Against Impaired Driving are having a conference in Yellowknife in March of next year. We are going to see about 500 young people gathered from across Canada to focus on the issue of drinking and driving. The last time I spoke on this issue, Mr. Speaker, SADD had raised \$70,000 toward this conference. They have now raised in excess of \$100,000 through government, corporate and community support.

I would like acknowledge the commitment of our government through the Minister of Youth, the Honourable Roger Allen, and the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Vince Steen, in particular for their efforts through their departmental initiatives and correspondence with federal and provincial counterparts in promoting this event. The Ministers of Health and Social

Services, and Education have also shown great support for this event. I hope it will continue and I look forward to further updates on their progress in supporting this conference, Mr. Speaker.

I am informed that organizations are endeavouring to have community involvement across the Territories with at least two students, hopefully more, along with an adult advisor from each community in the Northwest Territories. Good progress is being made on participation from Hay River, Fort Smith, Rae-Edzo and Norman Wells. Information packages have been sent to each of the schools across the Territory and there is special travel support for the first six communities registered and in today's Yellowknifer, Mr. Speaker, there is further information.

We are all aware of the tragedy that can occur when alcohol and motor vehicles are mixed together. In the last ten years or so, drinking and driving has been a contributing factor in 60 percent of the fatal collisions in the Northwest Territories. People across the Northwest Territories are all too familiar with the personal tragedy resulting from drinking and driving. This is not a new message, Mr. Speaker, but it is well worth repeating.

I would ask each Member of the Assembly to encourage participation from their communities in this conference. Show your support. This is one event where youth can make a positive lifestyle change and show leadership where it really counts. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Justice System Concerns in Small Communities

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, my comments will be about justice in the smaller communities in the North. Mr. Speaker, the Charter of Rights requires that legal counsel be provided to persons charged with committing a crime who cannot afford a lawyer or that representation by counsel is essential for the accused to receive a fair trial.

Mr. Speaker, in the Deh Cho region, adequate representation for those accused of serious crimes is simply not available. The court workers, when they are available and do attend court, do what they can for those accused of minor crimes and usually this is sufficient. However, those persons accused of more serious crimes in the Deh Cho, those crimes from which upon conviction a person faces significant jail time, their rights are not being met.

Mr. Speaker, I question how anyone can think that a legal aid lawyer can offer an accused person a quality defence based on a ten minute conversation that occurs half an hour before a trial. How can we justify this lack of pre-trial preparation and consultation between the client and lawyer? How can we justify an insufficient number of legal translators in the Deh Cho? I ask, are my constituents no longer entitled to a trial in their first language?

It is little wonder that the Northwest Territories has an inflated inmate population when compared to other Canadian jurisdictions. Mr. Speaker, when you combine the Northwest Territories' inflated inmate population with the fact that the

majority of those inmates are of aboriginal descent, we begin to see the magnitude of this problem. How many of our residents are in jail because of inadequate or expedited defences? How many can say they have not received a fair trial and thus have had their constitutional rights ignored, because of the way that justice is delivered in the Northwest Territories? I am guessing, Mr. Speaker, that the number would shock you.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the lack of available fiscal resources has meant that we have had to concentrate the majority of funding for enforcement and incarceration. We do not have the money to put into crime prevention. We have to put some money into probation services by creating our own stand-alone probation services. This may help, but I do not see any of these probation officers living in my community.

Mr. Speaker, there are three RCMP officers in Fort Providence to enforce the law and protect the residents; we are grateful for that. However, Mr. Speaker, there must be a corresponding balance in the justice system by protecting the accused and ensuring that their rights under the Constitution and charter are upheld. Mr. Speaker, I intend to question the Minister responsible for Justice on the rights guaranteed to all Canadians via the Constitution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Inuvik Midnight Sun Daycare

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my concern today that I will raise in my Member's statement is to do with the Midnight Sun Daycare. Mr. Speaker, this is an organization that has operated in the community of Inuvik for quite a number of years. They have recently run into some serious problems with funding and how that funding can be used. There are a number of pots they can access but there are stipulations to how the money can be used.

They contacted me in my last visit home and informed me that they were having some problems. There has been a fair bit of work that has been done working with them and I must acknowledge the work of the Midnight Sun Daycare Board as well as the regional staff from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. They have been working together and approaching the aboriginal organizations and any other organizations that might have some funding available to them. As of yet, we are not sure how it is going to go. They were on their last avenue to see where they could go and how the Midnight Sun Daycare can continue to function.

When I met with them, they figured they had two weeks left in their mandate in the sense of keeping the doors open. Mr. Speaker, they have in their care during the day-to-day process, up to 36 children. That is a large amount and that will probably grow as we see opportunities for employment grow in the community.

And this affects, Mr. Speaker, all walks of life in the community of Inuvik from single mothers to double income families to those in the Aurora Campus program. We need to try and do something to ensure that this facility and this program continue to operate. I know they have some initiatives to clear up and

some work to be done that was pointed out by the regional staff to them, but I know they are working hard at it.

I have contacted the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment on this and asked for his assistance. Later on Mr. Speaker, I will be questioning him as to whether we have had any success in trying to garner his department's support. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Déclarations de députés. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement on Opening of the West Channel Bridge in Hay River

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to break with tradition and delight this House with a good news story. Mr. Speaker, the good news I am referring to is the recent completion of the new West Channel Bridge in Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, this was an endeavour undertaken by the Department of Transportation. There was an official opening of the bridge on Saturday, August 12th in Hay River. I would like to thank the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Vince Steen, for attending the bridge opening. It was an important and well attended event in Hay River.

Mr. Speaker, this was a very large undertaking by the Department of Transportation. The original West Channel Bridge was erected in 1963. The old bridge was not able to accommodate large loads as it had vertical and height restrictions. It also had no provision for pedestrians and cyclists and presented a large safety hazard for those people.

Mr. Speaker, the new bridge is approximately 120 metres long, and has two lanes for traffic, and a wide walk-way for pedestrian traffic. It can accommodate all loads as it has no height restrictions, due to the fact that it has an open deck. The new bridge is expected to accommodate 46 million vehicle trips over the next 50 years, and is a very welcome piece of infrastructure for Hay River, the transportation hub of the North.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that several Hay River and northern contractors were utilized for this project. Some examples of these are: Stan Dean and Sons, Rowe's Construction, Northland Utilities and Rail Link Canada, all from Hay River; Nahanni Construction and Jivkov Engineering of Yellowknife, to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the staff of the Department of Transportation as the project was completed on schedule and well within the budget allotted. The entire bridge design and earth works were done in-house by the department personnel at a terrific cost savings to taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, in these times of fiscal restraint, I would like to point out that this badly needed replacement of infrastructure in Hay River came in at \$1.14 million under budget. It is unfortunate that these monies were transferred to a different region after the bridge was erected, but alas, I did say that this was a good news story. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci bien, Mr. Delorey. Déclarations de députés. Item 3, Member's statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Member's Statement on Aboriginal Programming in NWT School System

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the need for aboriginal cultural courses in the school system, reinforcing my statement from yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

I believe students should start learning about their culture in the home first and then start in kindergarten all the way up the school system. Perhaps there could be an overall plan to help deliver cultural courses at all grade levels, right up to grade 12, Mr. Speaker.

This could be achieved with community input and participation from organizations such as the Dene Cultural Institute, the Métis Heritage Centre, and the Inuvialuit Education Foundation.

I see some other provinces are way ahead of us, Mr. Speaker. I spoke yesterday about how cultural knowledge can benefit a person's self-esteem, which is linked to how well aboriginal students do in the education system, Mr. Speaker. It is also part of our history as a people and as Canadians. If our collective cultures are to survive, it is critical that our students and other Canadians learn about our history. I suspect they know more about the American Constitution than they know about Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, for example. The rest of Canada can also benefit from learning about our present day life, an understanding of the eco-systems, et cetera. With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Member's statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Flogging a Dead Horse

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we stand up in this House day after day raising issues to the government, to departments such as Education, trying to get programs, logical programs moved down to the community and regional level, trying to get clear answers for our constituents in what is often a very frustrating kind of process.

Mr. Speaker, tribal wisdom of the Dakota Indians passed on from generation to generation says that when you discover you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount.

-- Applause

Unfortunately, in modern education in government, a whole range of far more advanced strategies is often employed, such as:

- buying a stronger whip;
- changing the riders;
- threatening the horse with termination;

- appointing a committee to study the horse;
- arranging to visit other countries to see how others ride dead horses;
- lowering the standards so that dead horses can be included;
- reclassifying the dead horses as living impaired;
- hiring outside contractors to ride the dead horse;

-- Laughter

- harnessing several dead horses together to increase their speed;

-- Laughter

- providing additional funding and/or training to increase the dead horse's performance;
- doing a productivity study to see if lighter riders would improve the dead horse's performance;
- declaring that dead horses do not have to be fed, are less costly, carry no overhead and therefore contribute substantially more to the bottom line of the economy, as do some other horses;
- rewriting the expected performance requirements for all dead horses; or finally, Mr. Speaker
- promoting the dead horse to a supervisory position.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Poor Conditions of Highway No. 3

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a statement prepared to speak on another issue, but I am advised by more experienced Members here that I cannot make a statement on something that is already on the agenda later on.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to talk about my other favourite issue, which has to do with Highway No. 3. Prior to our journey last Session in the summer time, I stated in this House that I was planning on driving a national highway from Toronto to Yellowknife myself so that I could tell first hand how our stretch of road from Rae to Yellowknife compares.

Mr. Speaker, I can report to you that I did indeed take that trip. I drove every kilometre of that 5,500 stretch with my mother next to me, and I must say it was a very great drive. I was very envious of the all the construction work that was happening in Ontario, especially northern Ontario, and I drove through the city of Kenora, which I believe is the riding of our Minister of

DIAND. I noticed the freshly paved road coming out of his riding, and I wondered why he could not have put that sort of money into our part of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I must stay, driving through northern Saskatchewan was wonderful. The road was straight, even paved, and no one I do not think drove at the speed limit. I think that you could actually drive at a considerably faster speed than, I think, the speed limit of about 100 kilometres per hour.

Mr. Speaker, I could advise you that we did not know whether to cry or laugh when we hit the last 75 kilometres right after Rae. I think the stretch of the road from the border to Rae is so beautiful. It is straight, it is wide, it is even. You could see the trucks from hundreds of miles ahead of you because the road is so great. Seeing all the wildlife was just absolutely great.

My mom kept saying, "There is nothing wrong with this road. What are you talking about in the House?"

-- Laughter

Of course, until I hit the last 75 kilometres and I had to drive at about 50 kilometres to make sure that I did not endanger my life and my mother's. I thought that if I could only convince the Minister of Transportation of the federal government to drive that road, we would not have to make any more statements because he would be absolutely embarrassed that he actually has the last 75 kilometres of our national highway that is not fit to be a trail in anybody's book. That is my impromptu speech on Highway 3, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

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

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question asked by Mr. McLeod on November 2, 2000 regarding the process to establish a graveyard in a community.

The process for establishing a legally designated graveyard in the Northwest Territories is as follows:

- The community identifies the location where they wish to locate the graveyard with the assistance of the MACA regional office.
- At the request of the community, the regional health and social services board arranges for water table testing of the selected area to be conducted to ensure that the site is appropriate. This can only be performed when the ground is not frozen. The community is responsible for the costs of this service.
- If the water table will allow for proper burying, the community may need to apply for:

- An access permit for road use from the Department of Transportation; and,
- A reserve on the land from MACA.

As the Member asked this question in relation to the community of Enterprise, department officials have advised me that information on the process has been supplied to the community. MACA will continue to assist them as requested.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Allen. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mot bienvenue aux visiteurs. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity of recognizing in the gallery the Consul General of China, Mr. Gu and his wife, Mrs. Gu.

-- Applause

Mr. Liu is Consul and Mr. Tian is vice-consul. Their consulate offices are located in Calgary. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly and we certainly hope you enjoy the rest of your visit as we enjoyed your participation in this morning's events. Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize in the gallery members of the Northwest Territories Seniors' Society, Barbara Hood, Ida Luca and Ed Jeske.

-- Applause

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pride to recognize a pioneer prospector and a well known Métis in the Northwest Territories who has travelled this land by dog team, by foot, and in places where a lot of us have never been. He is now an author. I would like to recognize Mr. and Mrs. Darcy Arden. Welcome.

-- Applause

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize my good friend, Darcy Arden, and his wife, June. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition if visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the only Member of this House of Asian descent, may I take this opportunity to welcome and recognize the delegates from China. I know it is a long way that they have come, and it is nice to see them. I hope that they enjoy their stay. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mot de bienvenue aux visiteurs. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ces toutes. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 230-14(3): Balancing Environmental and Developmental Interests

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier regard to the statement I made. I think it is important that we have a balance between development and realizing that we do have a sensitive environment. Also, the importance of the people who depend on the environment for their traditional lifestyles, and to ensure that it is preserved and protected for future generations.

Aboriginal people and other Northerners take the environment very seriously. I would like to ask the Minister what he is doing to ensure that when he does make presentations on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories regarding the oil and gas and the pipeline endeavours of this government, would he also keep in mind that the environment is an essential source? Can the Minister ensure that he will keep that in mind when he makes his presentations?

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

Return to Question 230-14(3): Balancing Environmental and Developmental Interests

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we take the message as we hear it from the aboriginal groups primarily, and from the people of the Northwest Territories, and we convey that message as clearly and as forcefully as we can in our presentations.

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

Supplementary to Question 230-14(3): Balancing Environmental and Developmental Interests

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a large segment of our population depends on the renewable resource sector. I think it is clear that all people will not have jobs in the oil and gas industry. One segment of our population, especially the middle-aged and the elderly people, depends on that sector. I would like to ask the Premier what he is doing to ensure that those people are being heard and that they will have a chance to have input into this process?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Premier. There were two questions, but you can answer either one.

Further Return to Question 230-14(3): Balancing Environmental and Developmental Interests

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I said earlier that the Government of the Northwest Territories has an economic strategy. We have a presentation with a message that we have conveyed to the federal government, to other

provinces, to industry and to conferences and meetings we are invited to. The message I believe is supported by the aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories, by the business community and by this Legislature. We take what I would call a balanced approach, taking everyone's interests into consideration. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 230-14(3): Balancing Environmental and Developmental Interests

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are certain areas of the North that are off-balance, especially calving areas in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Alaska. I would like to reference 1002 lands in Alaska, where the Premier is aware of the concerns of the Gwich'in and people from the Mackenzie Delta who depend on this species. Will the Minister ensure that message is also being given out when he makes his presentations?

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

Further Return to Question 230-14(3): Balancing Environmental and Developmental Interests

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, we will take that into consideration. Certainly both the Government of the United States and Alaska and the Government of Canada take the position that the Arctic Wildlife Refuge and 1002 lands in particular are completely out of bounds for oil and gas exploration. That is the current situation that exists. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 230-14(3): Balancing Environmental and Developmental Interests

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is apparent for this government that we do pass legislation in this House and also strengthen the existing legislation we have, especially with regard to wildlife, the environment and also the air. I would like to ask the Premier, what is this government doing to ensure that these issues will be brought forth in the form of legislation?

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

Further Return to Question 230-14(3): Balancing Environmental and Developmental Interests

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, all the different aboriginal groups, First Nations and Members of this Legislature are invited to make suggestions to this government about legislation that they believe should be advanced through the Legislature here. As a government, we are always prepared to hear suggestions and proposals. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 231-14(3): Review of NWT Lotteries Act Required

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question today for the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of national charities which benefit the Northwest Territories. One such charity is the Canadian Cancer Society, the Northwest Territories-Alberta division. It has joined together to run a charitable lottery to raise funds for cancer research, education and treatment.

It is a big lottery, Mr. Speaker. There are about \$5 million in prizes and the total revenue is a projected \$11 million. In the Northwest Territories, we charge a percentage of the take as a lottery licence fee. That means for this particular lottery to benefit cancer, our fee would be \$360,000. Needless to say, we are not getting this lottery operating in the Northwest Territories and we are not getting the benefit from this very legitimate project.

Circumstances and situations have changed considerably since the Lotteries Act was developed in 1990. I would like to ask the Minister the following question, would the Minister undertake a review of the Lotteries Act and regulations to determine if lotteries such as this can be permitted more economically to sell tickets in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 231-14(3): Review of NWT Lotteries Act Required

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since we did not realize this prize total would ever be envisioned when the fee structure was determined, the department will undertake a review to review the current fee structure for a territorial-wide raffle and propose changes in this current fiscal year, which would allow for a maximum licence fee which would not be based on the total prize. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 231-14(3): Review of NWT Lotteries Act Required

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the interest and the commitment that the Minister has made to that. I would further ask whether reciprocal licensing arrangements might be made. By that, Mr. Speaker, I mean could we see an agreement which would facilitate the sale of tickets by Northwest Territories groups into Alberta or southern regions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 231-14(3): Review of NWT Lotteries Act Required

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, MACA will undertake that responsibility and look into the matter further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 232-14(3): Winter Road Into Wekweti

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Transportation, the Honourable Vince Steen. Winter roads are very important to my region. People enjoy having the opportunity to visit larger centres and to access less expensive goods and services. These winter roads also cut down on the cost of resupplying fuel and building materials. I would like to ask the Minister, is the department going to put a winter road into Wekweti this year? Thank you very much.

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

Return to Question 232-14(3): Winter Road Into Wekweti

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, the department has no plan to put a road into Wekweti.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty, Supplementary.

Supplementary to Question 232-14(3): Winter Road Into Wekweti

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On February 28th, the Minister stated in the House that he would be willing to see if there was a need and justification for a Snare Lakes winter road and then consider putting it into the business plans. What justification does the department need in order to build a winter road? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 232-14(3): Winter Road Into Wekweti

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for clarification, this is the first year the Department of Transportation has responsibility for a winter road into Wekweti. In the past, this was done through the Department of Public Works and it was not a winter road per se, but rather a one-time route into the community and out again in order to deliver supplies, in many cases, building supplies. However, it was never considered as a winter road such as Transportation builds in other communities.

Transportation has now taken on this responsibility and we would consider it in relation to the amount of identified need for this particular road. We would also have to get an indication from stakeholders what exactly they plan to bring into the community and what exactly would be the overall benefits from putting the road in. I am told by the department that it is not a cheap move on the part of the department. It is very expensive to build a road into the community. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 232-14(3): Winter Road Into Wekweti

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Tuesday and today the Minister informed the House the department has been meeting with industry to determine if and how the government could take over the operation and control of the Lupin winter road into the mine.

My question for the Minister is, if the government is looking at taking over the maintenance of the winter road from industry, would it not be equally fair that as a government we ensure our permanent residents also have access to winter roads? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 232-14(3): Winter Road Into Wekweti

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department realizes that we have a mandate to connect all communities with the highway system through winter roads if possible. Wekweti is part of that responsibility. We would put very serious consideration into considering a winter road into Wekweti. Our present plans which involve the Lupin winter road, if this did go ahead, it would be on the basis that this is a full cost recovery and no cost to the government.

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

Supplementary to Question 232-14(3): Winter Road Into Wekweti

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the winter road to Lupin, with the limited funds and resources the department has and the poor maintenance it is doing in other areas of the highway system, is it a good idea to start taking over work that industry has been doing for years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 232-14(3): Winter Road Into Wekweti

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question the Member asked is one of the main questions the department would have to take a serious look at. Based on what stakeholders say, whether or not we should in fact take over operation of the winter road in favour of more northern ownership of that road, so to speak. That is one of the questions that has not been answered yet and it is still in the works. Thank you.

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

Question 233-14(3): Aboriginal Language Funding Lapsed

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since I can remember going to school, aboriginal language and culture has always been a forefront of concern in the community. I have done studies right down the Mackenzie Valley in every region

when I was with the Dene Cultural Institute. I know aboriginal languages and culture is a major concern throughout the Mackenzie Valley.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for that area of work within the Northwest Territories government. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for that department, how much money was not used from the department in the areas of aboriginal languages? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 233-14(3): Aboriginal Language Funding Lapsed

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the funding that was identified as being not used was carried over to the following year in the case of aboriginal languages. I believe it was in the neighbourhood of \$300,000 for the next two years. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 233-14(3): Aboriginal Language Funding Lapsed

MR. NITAH: Thank you. Can the Minister tell me what they plan to use those carry-over dollars for in this curriculum year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 233-14(3): Aboriginal Language Funding Lapsed

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the funding that is in place is used partially to fund aboriginal language groups. That is done throughout the Northwest Territories and the groups in the various regions to look at revitalizing and stimulating the resurgence of the use of aboriginal languages. Other funding is used through the college system and in the school system. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 233-14(3): Aboriginal Language Funding Lapsed

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Languages and culture are closely linked. One can hardly go without the other. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment yesterday said the communities pick and choose what they want to teach as aboriginal content in the curriculum. I would like to get a commitment from the Minister today if he will seriously look at a uniform approach to delivery of aboriginal cultures in the curriculum with emphasis on continuity from kindergarten to grade 12. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 233-14(3): Aboriginal Language Funding Lapsed

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a selection of programs that are offered in the curriculum, such as Dene Kede, Northern Studies. However, we have devolved a lot of the responsibility on to the communities and on to the regions to be able to offer these programs, such as the selection of an aboriginal language as a first language for teaching. I cannot dictate what communities should choose from that particular program that may be available.

I meet on a semi-annual basis with the chairs of the district education councils and we discuss various issues. In order to enforce any kind of program, I would have to deal with the district education councils.

Now, I understand what Mr. Nitah is saying and I believe we are doing a fairly decent job in advancing the particular agenda that Mr. Nitah is trying to address. For example, when I was in Deline, it was requested that we include land claims issues in the curriculum and I brought that forward to the department. They are, at the present time as we are speaking, looking at ways and means of doing that to deliver that as a possible content in the curriculum. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 233-14(3): Aboriginal Language Funding Lapsed

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Aboriginal languages are official languages in the Northwest Territories through the Languages Act, along with French. The French have their own school. More power to them. We need continuity. We cannot pick and choose. If you pick and choose, there is no continuity.

You say you cannot force the government's wishes on others. We do it all the time as a government. There are conditions to every dollar we give to communities. I would like some strong commitment from the Minister that there is going to be continuity and there is a plan for continuity for the delivery of aboriginal culture in the curriculum of the education system by the Northwest Territories government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 233-14(3): Aboriginal Language Funding Lapsed

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe we do have continuity. For example, we have the Dene Kede program, which is offered at the moment from K to 6 and we are extending that from grades 7 to 12, I believe. The curriculum possibilities are there but, as I stated, I respect the control and desire on people in the communities to be able to select.

Additionally, of course, we have been concentrating on ensuring that governance is done in that fashion. There is a district education authority in each community and there is also a district education council. Those bodies make the decision as to what is to be selected for those particular communities. Thank you.

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

Question 234-14(3): Need For Highway Resources

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to pursue my question today following up on my Member's statement, Mr. Speaker. My question goes to the Minister of Transportation. It is in regard to Highway No. 3.

Mr. Speaker, a number of Members in this House had the opportunity to visit the BHP mine over the weekend. One of the things I learned was that the company spends \$4 million along with other users of the winter road. They spend no less than \$4 million on that winter road. That compares to \$6 million or \$7 million that the department has budgeted for the reconstruction of Highway No. 3. I do not know what the numbers are on maintaining it.

Mr. Speaker, that just speaks to the extent of the need in the North for some infusion of money in building the roads that we need to develop the resources that create jobs and so on. I do not know what this report the Minister will be tabling has in it. I wonder if the Minister could tell us what the latest was in his discussions with the federal Minister as to what the potential is for any kind of money that will come to the North for building roads? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 234-14(3): Need For Highway Resources

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the last response we received from the federal Minister of Transport on highway funding is our share of the \$600 million is not to be decided until possibly the end of this year or early in the new year. So we still at this time do not know. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 234-14(3): Need For Highway Resources

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my statement, when I was driving that road I really was convinced that if the federal Minister in charge of money for roads, whoever it is and whoever it will be next election, if they really ever drove that road and saw how embarrassing it is to call that a national highway system, whoever is making the decision in Ottawa may have second thoughts about it.

I wonder, in all seriousness, if the Minister would be willing to bring the person in charge of money for roads and take them on Highway No. 3 and Highway No. 8 and all the highways in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 234-14(3): Need For Highway Resources

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for the question. Part of our strategy in obtaining a larger portion of that \$600 million was to try to convince the federal Minister that we are the last portion of the national highway system that does not have hard-top and we still drive on gravel. We thought that if there was some way to embarrass the federal government into putting more towards us than would be allocated to the rest of the country, we would take that. We tried that.

I also invited the federal Minister to Yellowknife with the hopes that we could take him for a ride down Highway No. 3, but he declined. He said he had already been to the Territories twice, but I believe that was as a Minister of the Armed Forces at that time.

In regards to myself as a Minister being embarrassed about the condition of Highway No. 3, I do not share embarrassment alone. If I do not have money to increase the reconstruction phase, it is simply because this Assembly has not given me the money. Give me the money and I will pass it onto the department and we will increase the reconstruction program. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 234-14(3): Need For Highway Resources

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I think it will be a long time before I accept that I have as much power in how much money goes to that road as Mr. Steen. I think there is a big difference there. Mr. Speaker, if we cannot shame the federal officials for money, maybe we can tell them about the unsafe condition of that road. I know that road is unsafe because following the accident on that road in July, a few days after that, and I do not know if there is any connection, I was driving that road and I noticed a really nice, huge, yellow, freshly painted sign that read "Narrow, winding, dangerous, gravel road. Drive slowly".

Mr. Speaker, I think a safe assumption can be made that there is a concern about the safety of the road. If the federal Minister of Transportation does not want to drive on that road, maybe we can drive him to that sign. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: ...rephrase the question, rather than make a comment. I did not hear a question there, but more comments. I will allow the Minister to respond to what he has heard, if he so chooses. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 234-14(3): Need For Highway Resources

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the department does not need any clarification as to whether that road is unsafe. We probably more than anyone else, recognize the condition of the road. However, we do not come to the conclusion that the road is unsafe, otherwise we would close it. It is as simple as that.

We believe the road is safe if you drive as to the conditions of that highway. We posted speed signs that reduced the speed limits and we were encouraged that this is in fact what is happening. The speeds have been reduced and that is encouraging to us. We do not want, any more than anyone else, unsafe conditions on that highway.

Those unsafe conditions, from the department's point of view, are largely related to weather conditions rather than to our ability to maintain it. We, more than anyone else, would probably like to increase the reconstruction phase, advance that, and have that highway reconstructed in half the time to address the concerns expressed by the public. However, like I said, the dollars are what is controlling everything right now, and we just do not have them. So we are doing the best we can with what we have. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 234-24(3): Need For Highway Resources

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to remind the Minister that the sign went up in the middle of summer and now it is in the middle of the winter. The sign has not come down. I do not think that has anything to do with weather. When you put a sign up saying it is windy and dangerous, the speed limit is reduced, I think any reasonable person will draw a conclusion that the road is not safe.

Mr. Speaker, would he not use that? I am asking the Minister to tell the federal Minister that that road cannot handle the traffic that it will have this winter with Diavik coming on stream...

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, would you please ask a question? This is a final supplementary. Please ask a question.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May I have the Minister tell the federal officials that we need extra money for Highway No. 3? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 234-14(3): Need For Highway Resources

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to compare the amount of dollars the mining industry has compared to what we have as a government and expect the same results. They just have a lot more revenue than we have, so they have the ability to construct facilities as the Member has seen.

Our ability to address the mining needs and the impact they have on our highways is very limited right now. I can assure the Member and the House that we are considering ways of encouraging the oil and gas and mining industries to share in the cost of our highways. Thank you.

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

Question 235-14(3): Legal Aid Guidelines And Requirements

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I spoke of the inability of the residents in small communities to receive a fair trial. While I acknowledge that the court party does travel to the smaller communities and there is a perception that justice does occur, I would like to ask the Minister of Justice, when a court party comes in and legal aid lawyers are given approximately ten or 15 minutes to talk to their clients before court starts, could the Minister of Justice tell this Assembly whether there is a minimum requirement for consultation between a legal aid lawyer and a person accused of a crime? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 235-14(3): Legal Aid Guidelines And Requirements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Yes, there is. According to the Act, there is a requirement that, and I could be corrected, at least 24 hours before the court date, there is supposed to be consultation with the client. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 235-14(3): Legal Aid Guidelines And Requirements

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding then that there is a standard set. I would like to ask the Minister whether the new Legal Services Board is implementing the service standards that lawyers must follow? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 235-14(3): Legal Aid Guidelines And Requirements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Legal Services Board is comprised of five board members now. After the break up with Nunavut, the board is a lot smaller. They are attempting to use existing lawyers who are practicing in the North, trying to be in the south part of the lake now, to utilize their services to do legal aid in the honourable Member's riding.

The responsibility of the Legal Services Board is to retain these lawyers to provide these services and try to follow the Act as close as possible, meaning that yes, the requirements of the Act have to be met during their retention to provide a legal service. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 235-14(3): Legal Aid Guidelines And Requirements

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister stated that there is a requirement for a 24-hour period for consultation. I can attest that this is not being followed and I do not think that is being implemented. I would like to ask the Minister if he

would commit to reviewing and doing some consultation in the communities to see if that is indeed the case? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 235-14(3): Legal Aid Guidelines And Requirements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have met with the chair of the Legal Services Board a number of times since becoming Minister responsible for Justice. With the concerns that were raised here in the House in the previous Assembly, as well as in my travel to the communities, obviously there is concern there that I would like to address. We have been trying to deal with it. We are entertaining putting our own staffed lawyers in certain parts of the Territories to try to alleviate this problem. There is work being done with the Legal Services Board to try to address that problem at the present time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Antoine. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary to Question 235-14(3): Legal Aid Guidelines And Requirements

MR. MCLEOD: In the communities I represent, the case is usually that the plane comes in with the court party and they are shuttled off to the facility that is going to be used as a court room. There is a quick consultation period, then the court proceeds. There is never, at least from my understanding, somebody who is present to translate. Very often there is no court worker in the community. Our services come from a different riding. I would like to ask the Minister to tell this Assembly how the courts determine translation requirements for court dates in the communities. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 235-14(3): Legal Aid Guidelines And Requirements

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the court services, we also have court workers who are there to try to help people who are accused to try to organize their legal defense. We have legal aid lawyers there as well. With both of these types of services, we should determine if there is translation and interpretation required. If that is not the case, then certainly there is an area where we need to improve. Thank you.

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

Question 236-14(3): Review Of GNWT Summer Student Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Premier as the head of the Department of the Executive. It relates to the corporate human resources division, and specifically the review that they are undertaking of summer student hiring.

I expressed concerns that summer student hiring was not happening properly, that in fact hiring was happening at the departmental level and they were simply then notifying the Department of the Executive. There was a study. The Premier committed to get back to the House, I do believe. I am just wondering if he can update the House as to what is going on with this study and where we are? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 236-14(3): Review Of GNWT Summer Student Program

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 237-14(3): Support To The Midnight Sun Daycare

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as in my Member's statement, my question will be going to the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. As I stated, the Midnight Sun Daycare is going through a critical time right now. There is work being done and I would like to thank the regional staff of the department for being as supportive as they are.

Myself, working with the Minister from this end, I have had as much information as the Minister has had, and he has updated me on my information from time to time. I would like to know from the Minister at this point, has there been any further work done in this area, in the area of support for the daycare? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 237-14(3): Support To The Midnight Sun Daycare

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Roland brought this issue to my attention last week and we have been trying to keep up to date on a daily basis. It is a critical situation. I was told the daycare was in need of \$40,000 in order to continue operating. It seems that there were a number of issues.

One of the issues was health and safety and licensing. Our staff have worked on that with the various responsible individuals. Another one was staffing and financial. That seems to be at the moment the remaining critical area to try and solve the financial problems so that the daycare can solve the staffing problem.

Our staff have been working with the daycare individuals to ensure that as much effort is put in to trying to get local support on that. At the moment, that is the status of the information I have. I understand there has been some commitment by various organizations financially. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 237-14(3): Support To The Midnight Sun Daycare

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister stated, that is the information as it sits today. I have as well been keeping up to date on a day-to-day basis with the daycare group and there are commitments being made in the community.

My question is, are there no longer any dollars within the department that regions can access in situations like this? Especially, Mr. Speaker, since it was the Department of Education, Culture and Employment that identified a number of areas that the daycare had to address and suggested as well that they get adequate trained staff in the early childhood initiative area. Also, is there any funding that could be accessed at headquarters, not only by my community, but by other regions? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 237-14(3): Support To The Midnight Sun Daycare

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are two areas that we fund. Early childhood programs provides start-up funding for operation and maintenance. I have been informed that is done on a first come, first served basis, so it has been fairly well depleted this year.

The other one is the healthy children's initiative, whereby we fund approximately \$1.8 million to various areas. Again, it is my understanding that the allocations have been made. However, we are looking to see if we can find some funding. It falls a bit outside of the areas that we can fund because normally we do not fund for staffing costs, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 237-14(3): Support To The Midnight Sun Daycare

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Therein lies one of the problems. There is a lot of funding that can be accessed by groups like the Midnight Sun Daycare group, but their funding is tied and limited by restrictions on how it can be used. Is there any flexibility from within the department to deal with cases like this? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 237-14(3): Support To The Midnight Sun Daycare

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at taking the current contribution funding and see if we can revise that so we can address this specific issue in the case of the daycare in Inuvik. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ootes. Final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary to Question 237-14(3): Support To The Midnight Sun Daycare

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister commit that he will continue to try and work with the daycare and the Inuvik regional department or his department in Inuvik to try to come to a successful conclusion on this matter and keep me updated? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 237-14(3): Support To The Midnight Sun Daycare

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am very familiar with the fact that this is a critical issue in Inuvik. I have asked my staff to keep me informed on a daily basis on the progress of this. I certainly will keep Mr. Roland informed as progress is made in this area.

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

Question 238-14(3): Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question, as the Minister for Health indicated, is addressed to the stable of dead horses across the room. In particular, the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. It is in regard to student financial assistance.

Yesterday in this House, the issue came up about the need to relocate this down to the community level, to the regional level. The Minister indicated that there is a significant amount of work being done with career development staff, bringing them into the office to show them all the improvements to the system. I would just like the Minister to confirm in spite of those improvements that every application from all over the Northwest Territories will still come to headquarters in Yellowknife for the crew of five to review, decide on, approve or deny and disperse funds for every single student financial assistance application? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 238-14(3): Student Financial Assistance Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take exception to the fact that we are referred to as dead horses. I have very good staff in my department and the dramaticism that Mr. Miltenberger puts on this is unwarranted. We are making progress in this whole area.

As I mentioned yesterday, and I emphasize this, we are making progress in this whole area of taking regional staff and training them and ensuring that they can access the computer system, ensuring that we put application forms, the student guidebook and so forth online. This will help streamline it. That is our initial step in this whole process, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 238-14(3): Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister takes exception, I suggest he talk to his colleague down the aisle from him. My question to the Minister is this, will every application for student financial assistance still continue to come to Yellowknife and will the hundreds and hundreds of students to be processed by the five staff to be reviewed, approved or denied and the funds dispersed? Is that still the plan, in spite of all these nice additions and showing up what they are doing to the system? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Before I direct the question, I would like to caution Members about using phrases like dead horse department and things like this. I think it is quite undignified and unparliamentary to start throwing insults like that. I think we can get more done if we do not do that. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 238-14(3): Student Financial Assistance Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process is that application forms come to headquarters for approval. That is the process that has been in place and that is the process that is there today. Now, as we go, will we look at possible changes? Possibly. However, at the moment I cannot commit to do that because we want to ensure that we have an efficient system and that we have a system that works right across the board and it will work.

We are looking at the computer process and the Internet for students to make applications. That all has to come into headquarters. Now it could be that down the road we can have applications forwarded through the Internet system by career officers. That is what I was speaking about earlier. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 238-14(3): Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister may think that it is a good system and we will all keep it going. However, the endless requests from the regions and from MLAs is that this be moved to the regions. I would like to ask the Minister, what would it take for the department to consider even a pilot project? Pick a regional centre and let us try it, as we do with income support. Let the people in the region deal with the whole process from start to finish and let headquarters play the function or the monitoring support role that it actually should be playing. Would he consider that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 238-14(3): Student Financial Assistance Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have some progress to make here in terms of training regional staff and in terms of computer programs to get up and running. That is underway now and we are looking at that very heavily. Once we have completed that task, then we can look at other possible areas where this program can be improved.

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

Supplementary to Question 238-14(3): Student Financial Assistance Program

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this still makes no sense to me. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment in fact delivers comprehensive income support programs at the community level. Student financial assistance is no more complicated and probably less onerous on a daily basis than income support. Can the Minister explain to me what is the difference between those programs that makes it so difficult to consider moving student financial assistance down to the communities and regions? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 238-14(3): Student Financial Assistance Program

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it would be premature in my mind, Mr. Speaker, to talk about training regional staff and at the same time hand over authority to those staff. I do not think we are in any position to suggest at this point that we would have efficiency in that system by doing that. Thank you.

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

Question 239-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Recently, the Hay River Education Authority put forward a petition to form their own education council. I think it was on Monday the Minister responsible for Education put a statement out that they were going to do a public consultation on this petition. I would like the Minister to tell us when he first became aware of this petition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 239-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been comments with regard to the Hay River petition rumoured that it was coming forward. Thirty days ago, we were provided

with a copy of the petition. Approximately 32 days ago now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 239-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was under the impression that the department had received the petition back around May, but it was supposedly incomplete because there had not been any public consultation on it. Hay River went ahead and did consultation on their petition and then submitted their petition again. I would like the Minister to inform me whether the public consultation that Hay River did on it was taken into consideration at all? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 239-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct. The submission was made at that time but further information was required for it to be completed. The formal application was made 32 days ago. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 239-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess that does not answer whether the Hay River consultation was taken into consideration or not. I am wondering, will Hay River have any part in the consultation that is going to be taking place between now and January 4th? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 239-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer to that is yes. The department officials will be doing consultation in a number of areas, and of course one will be Hay River. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 239-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the deadline of October comes along or November...I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. It is put off now until January 4th. Can the Minister commit now that on January 4th there will be a decision on this and not find something to put this decision off further than January 4th?

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

Further Return to Question 239-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to live with the Act and the regulations that are in place which provides for 90 days to make a final decision on this. Providing we hit no hurdles, I am expecting that I can make a decision on this.

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

Question 240-14(3): Business Development Fund List Of Recipients

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Last week, the Minister tabled the Business Development Fund Annual Report for the Year Ended March 31, 2000. Earlier this year, the Minister responsible for RWED tabled two reports, one was the annual report for the year ended March 31, 1999 and a list of recipients for the year ended March 31, 1999. I would like to ask the Minister whether this year, the list of recipients for the Business Development Fund will also be tabled?

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

Return to Question 240-14(3): Business Development Fund List Of Recipients

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have to take that as notice. I am not sure whether or not we will be able to do it this year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 241-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Treatment Problems

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. It is in regard to the situation that Fort McPherson finds themselves in where almost half of their budget is now being spent in the water and sewage delivery program.

I am wondering if there is a way that the community of Fort McPherson can allocate other funds that may follow, say infrastructure funding or forced growth funding or other community funds out there, extraordinary funding? Is there any possibility of funds or programs out there that can assist the community to deal with the situation they find themselves in now?

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

Return to Question 241-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Treatment Problems

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To answer the first part of the question, no, we do not have any internal funds to support the deficit problem. I would like the municipalities to deal directly with the department to resolve the deficit problem they are having with the water and sewer program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 241-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Treatment Problems

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community has made several attempts to try to find ways to deal with their financial problems. It has been unforeseen. They did not realize that this was going to come onto them and because of the extraordinary situation they find themselves in, there should be assistance given by this Minister and his department. I would like to ask the Minister, what can he do as the Minister to ensure that the community's concerns are being addressed so they can try to find a workable solution to this problem?

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

Further Return to Question 241-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Treatment Problems

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have gone to maximize our opportunities to deal with the matter, Mr. Speaker, and for the public record, we will be expending \$2.6 million on a new water system to try to help the community resolve the problem of THMs.

The other point, Mr. Speaker, is that in terms of their deficit problems, we have given the department direction to work with the municipality to look at a number of creative initiatives to overcome that water and sewer deficit. We have worked with the hamlet to increase their water rates to reflect the deficit recovery plan. As well, we are attempting to work with FMBS to extend the one-year requirement limits over a two-year period. Those are some of the plans we have developed. It is going to take a bit more time to finalize other initiatives to handle the depths of the problems. It is an ongoing process and we hope to achieve that in a matter of months. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 241-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Treatment Problems

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is great to say that we will try to deal with it over the next couple of months, but the problem is that it has nothing to do with the replacement or the establishment of the new water source. This is an existing facility. It is the existing water treatment facility and the problem is there. The other system will not come on stream for another year, if not a year and a half.

I am wondering...to the Minister, because the problem is current. It has been there for two years and now the community is spending over half their budget on this particular issue, where they should be using those monies for the items they are allocated. Will the Minister ensure the community of Fort McPherson that there will be the ability to either offset some of those costs or write-off the costs that they have been burdened with through no sake of their own? Will he consider a write-off of some of that debt?

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

Return to Question 241-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Treatment Problems

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point, we do not have the capability right now to write-off that debt. However, we are trying to take a different approach and work with the community to resolve that. It is an ongoing process from day to day.

We recognize there is a debt problem. We have tried to deal within the context of the original operating agreement signed in 1988. We have no control over that. In the meantime, we continue to work with the hamlet to see about an increase to their water rates. Through that increase, we will try to recover some of the debt, probably within a year or two-year timeframe.

It is ongoing, as I said. I am repeating myself but again, it is the effort of our department to work with the municipality to deal with that situation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Allen. The time for question period has expired. Mr. Krutko, you have a final supplementary.

Supplementary to Question 241-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Treatment Problems

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister, along with his senior government officials, make an attempt to go into the community of Fort McPherson and try to work out the next step that must be taken to deal with this urgent problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 241-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Treatment Problems

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have indicated very strongly to the mayor of Fort McPherson and his staff that we will go in to talk to them. Again, their concern was what is going to happen in the next few months as the cold weather period comes in. We said at that time, we will continue to request that Public Works and Services monitor very closely in coordination with the municipality, so that we do not have any unforeseen emergencies. In the interim, we will continue to work based on our recovery plan. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Allen. The time for question period is over. Before we proceed, the Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to return to recognition of visitors in the gallery.

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

REVERT TO 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 the new mayor of Hay River, Mr. Duncan McNeill. Also with him is Terence Courtoreille, and I am not sure what Terence's title is, but he takes care of the money for the Town of Hay River. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Kind of like a treasurer. Welcome to the gallery, Mayor McNeill. 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. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 69-14(3): Investing in Roads for People and the Economy: A Highway Strategy for the Northwest Territories

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Investing in Roads for People and the Economy: A Highway Strategy for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 70-14(3): Dogrib Treaty 11 Council Resolution re: Road to Resources

Tabled Document 71-14(3): Letter to Leon Lafferty, MLA, re: Road to Resources

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the following documents. The first one is Dogrib Treaty 11 Council Resolution for the Road to Resources. The second one is a letter to me from the Grand Chief of Dogrib Treaty 11. Thank you.

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

Tabled Document 72-14(3): Copy of Letter From Mayor of Fort McPherson to Joseph Handley, re Proposed Hotel Tax

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a letter sent to Mr. Joe Handley from the Mayor of Fort McPherson. It is a motion to move that the territorial government be urged to pass legislation to empower

communities to establish, collect and promote tourism development.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 17: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

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

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 17, an Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 17 has had first reading. Thank you. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 13: Hotel Room Tax Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 13, Hotel Room Tax Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill establishes a tax based on the price of accommodation at hotels, motels, lodges and other such establishments. It sets out a procedure to register operators of accommodation and authorizes the operators to collect the tax. The bill also sets out enforcement provisions to ensure that the tax is paid, collected, and remitted in accordance with the Act and the regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the development of our economy, we have to take into consideration the need to have an economy that is diversified, that is not based on any single industry or single one or two industries. We have put a great deal of emphasis on our non-renewable resources. We have spent a lot of time and energy over the last few years on diamond mining and getting that industry started and the value added pieces that go with it. We have also dealt with oil and gas development much more recently and with a tremendous amount of effort. We have put a lot of effort into our traditional economy.

Tourism is a tremendously important industry around the world. It is a \$425 billion industry and it is growing at about four percent per year. It is growing by \$20 billion. It is huge. We have a beautiful land here that we live in and it is an area that tourists should be coming to in droves, but unfortunately, if we

look at the statistics, our summer tourism is down. We are fortunate in some parts of the Territories to have Japanese tourism up. Japanese tourism is growing by 20 percent a year. Hopefully it will continue to grow. We are fortunate as well that business travel is up. It is up considerably recently and it is tied probably mostly to the increased activity in oil and gas and diamonds and so on, but we cannot count on those. We cannot be satisfied to just see the Japanese tourists growing and the business travel growing. We need to be proactive on this. We need to continue to work.

What would happen if something happened in Japan and the Japanese tourism went flat on us? We would see a tremendous loss in activity here. The same thing applies to our non-renewable resource industries. In Yellowknife alone, we see this year a lot of optimism on the part of businesses. There is a 45 percent increase in rooms in the Northwest Territories. People are optimistic about tourism. We need to find a way of being able to help that industry grow.

The hotel industry itself is probably a pretty good indicator of what is happening. We see that a large number of people who stay in hotels are from the North. A large number are government employees or agencies paid for by government. We see in the smaller communities in particular sometimes very low occupancy rates. Even in Yellowknife, which is the centre, we still see occupancy rates around 60 percent. With that 45 percent growth in hotel rooms, it is going to become even worse.

What is the answer to it? Mr. Speaker, I would say that the main answer to both our economy generally and also to the hotel business is let us do something to get our tourist numbers up. As a government, we have been doing a fair bit. We continue to put \$2.5 million into this industry. This is more than we even put into some of the other areas such as the diamond industry or even in oil and gas, but it is not enough. We are not doing enough. While we see industry around the world growing, our tourism business is either declining or it is, at best, holding its own. We need to do something. I ask you to work with me. Let us find a way of improving that industry.

I think it is really dangerous when I see our small airline operators, for example, saying that if they did not have medical travel contracts, they would be broke, or seeing our hotels in a situation where if they did not have government money paying for people to stay in their hotels, they would have to fold up. Worse yet, seeing a lot of hotels in small communities that are probably on the verge of folding, or seeing people who used to make their living on the land who cannot do that anymore. There is not enough money in it. It is too expensive. They need a way of getting more cash into their businesses.

We have a lot of room for tourists. We could probably take ten times as many tourists into this land and still not see any impact, still be able to have a place that people could believe and quite possibly be the first ones who have stepped on that piece of land. People want that. I think people want to come to Canada.

The Canadian Tourism Commission reports statistics show that tourism to Canada is on the rise, but it is not happening in the Northwest Territories. I believe we lost a lot of ground in the last few years. We lost ground in the time of division. At that time, Nunavut got a lot of attention and we did not get very much. People did not know where the Northwest Territories

was. I had one of the businesses, in fact, a hotel business, tell me that they were moving their headquarters to Vancouver because people do not know where Yellowknife is. When it goes to the Toronto Stock Exchange, they do not know where Yellowknife is. The answer is not to see our businesses move out of here. The answer is to make this place known around the world. We need to work together on that.

It is a difficult time for us right now from a fiscal situation. We are still facing a deficit. We need to manage that side but we cannot just hunker down and look after our deficit and do nothing. I think the time is now and I believe strongly for us to make a difference in this important area of our economy. It employs a lot of people. It employs a lot of people in the communities. It employs a lot of people in Yellowknife. It is a very diverse industry that has an impact right from grocery stores to hotels to taxi companies to airlines to restaurants to hotels to tour groups to almost everybody. It has more impact broadly in terms of the communities and within a community. It is a critical one.

We do not have a lot of money to put into tourism. Even though it is very easy to say find it from within, how many times can we keep finding it from within? I am doing everything I can just to find money from within or find savings from within just to manage the deficit. I keep track of how many times people say we should find it from within or how many times they say different things are priorities. I know one Member across is now up to 18 or 19 different things that we have to find money from within for because they are all high priorities. We cannot keep doing that. There has to be a better answer than that.

We need two things, generally speaking. We need to be known internationally. That means marketing the Northwest Territories as a destination. We also need the services and products tourists expect. That means training. That means development of products. That means an expensive marketing campaign.

As the committee that worked on Common Ground went around the communities, they heard very clearly from people that tourism is an important part of our economy. We have to give it more priority than it has met with in the past. We cannot be focused just on a couple of major industries. This is also recognized in Towards a Better Tomorrow, the document that we all had a hand in crafting. I do not think tourism is an option. I think it is a requirement. It is absolutely essential that we begin for the sake of our small communities as well as our hotel industry, as well as our large communities, as well as the airline industry, everybody, that we take this seriously. That it not just be something that we flippantly say we cannot afford to spend any money on or we cannot take some of the pain that is needed to make the investments and get on with this side.

What do we do? We need dollars. As I said, we cannot keep finding everything from within. That is a challenge for me just to balance our budget. We have looked other places. We cannot seem to get the federal government's attention on an EDA. We have not had an EDA since 1996. We are continuing to work on that one and we will continue to work on it. If we can get money through an EDA, then I will be very happy; if we can get that through the tourism industry and build the tourism industry even faster.

We have looked at new sources of money from other areas. We have talked with the federal government on many occasions to try to get money for the non-renewable resources

strategy so we would be able to move some money around. Again, we will continue to do that.

We have worked with Northerners through some of the main strategies we have worked on. We also worked on the hotel tax itself. Typically, if a government was going to introduce a new tax, we would not approach it the way I approach this one. You would not give people a year's notice, a lot of opportunity to discuss it, hear about it, think about it, have input into it. That is not the way governments would typically introduce a tax. We did it that way because this tax is linked to the tourism industry and I want people's input on how we improve that industry. I also wanted to give people the opportunity to have input into alternatives. What is the alternative? Is there a better tax? Is there a better way of getting revenues? I have to say a lot of people in industry have really put their heads to that one. I do appreciate the support I have received from industry in saying we want to work with you on this.

Of course, nobody likes a tax. I am even surprised when you go to the Hotel Owners Association, for example, to find that 20 percent of the hotel owners support a hotel tax. It is unheard of. People do not like taxes. I would have expected it to be around zero but the fact that we have at least 20 percent of the hotel owners saying, "It is not a bad idea. We have to put some money into this thing." is an indication that this is recognized by the industry. We have a lot of people who are saying I am against it but I want to work with you. So it is not a strong "No".

We have had people give us various options that they thought we should deal with. I am certainly listening to those and I will continue to listen to those. I have personally met with the Arctic Tourism Association. They say they want to continue working on it. They voted in favour of it. I have met with the Frontier Visitors Association who have some questions and we have been working with them. The hotel association on several occasions; the Fort Smith Chamber of Commerce; the Inuvik Hotel and Tourism Business Leaders; the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce; the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce. We have hired a contractor, Nexus, to work with us and go out and do a survey and meet with people and listen to what their concerns are. Everybody agrees that more dollars are needed. They are working to address concerns. They are working with us on things like the formula for how we would have the supply with lodge owners, let us say.

I have heard from a lot of people and I have listened to what they are saying. I have heard from the hotel association and I have met with them. They have said, "Please delay this tax. Do not have it come into effect on April 1st. Give us some time to think of some options". They do not have any right now but I am listening. I told them I am willing to delay the implementation until July 1st. We will delay for some months yet and wait. I am ready to do that. I have told them I will and they appreciate that. They have written me a letter recently to that effect.

As I say, we are open to alternatives. I have heard what the bed and breakfast operators have said. We did not realize when we were drafting the proposed tax what the licensing rules/regulations were in the city and we have adjusted it so it only applies to bed and breakfasts, I am proposing, where there are more than four rooms because of a complication. We did not want to draw a line between some bed and breakfast operators and not others. So we are listening.

The administration of the tax itself, we have estimated at \$100,000 for us plus a one-time \$50,000. For the hotel owners themselves, there will be some costs but as one hotel owner told me, for most of them it is just the press of a key. We are prepared to work with them to get the software that is necessary. I am not going to go through the statistics on how much money it will raise and so on because we will never know how much it will cost until we do it because every hotel owner operates as an independent and they are not going to share a whole bunch of information with us and with their competitors.

The bill itself that we are proposing adds five percent on hotel room charges only. It applies to Government of the Northwest Territories and federal employees. That is fair. We will pay our share the same as everyone else does. Lodges, as I said, are treated differently. There is a formula for how they will be treated. This formula is based largely on the way the tax is managed in BC and Alberta.

There is research that shows that the tax will not make a difference at five percent to tourists. They will not go away because of a five percent charge. We have asked tourists who were here last summer and all of them I believe without exception said no, it would not make any difference. If they were planning to come here, they would come here anyway. Five dollars or seven dollars a night difference is not going to change their mind about where they go.

The administration cost for us is not going to be as bad as some people think it might be. The intention is to build up our capacity at the regional level. I mean every region. We will collect the tax from every region.

However, we do need training. The tourism training program has fallen by the wayside recently. We need to get that up. We need an ability to get programs back in place. That is the purpose of this tax.

If we do not achieve the objectives within three years, I have made the commitment to industry that we would repeal it. If we cannot show that this makes a difference in three years time, then we do not intend to have this thing continue. It is not a tax that is going to end up staying in government revenues. Every dollar of it will be identified. Every dollar of it will go back into the industry.

I just want to say in closing that we are on the verge of a tremendous opportunity. We have a huge industry that is growing. It is the biggest, fastest growing industry in the world. It is \$425 billion and we should be getting a bigger share of it here than we are.

All I am asking of you is work with me. If the hotel tax is not the way to do it, do not just sit back and say we do not support it, stop it and then we go back to the same status quo we have right now. That is not the answer to our challenge in the tourism industry. We need to work together on that. Industry has told me they are ready to work with me. I think every letter and every conversation I have had has indicated the industry out there, including the hotel industry, want to work with us in finding a way of boosting our tourism industry. We need to work together. I believe if industry can cooperate, if industry wants to work on this, then let us as a government work together here and get this side of our economy going.

The big winners are all over. It is the big centres, like Yellowknife. It is also the little communities. It is the people who

have been living their lives for hundreds of years off the land who can link into tourism. It is the airline industry. It is all parts. It has much more potential than anything else we do in this Territory. So all I am saying to you is let us work together on this. I think it is a huge opportunity. Now is the time to get on with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with some regret that I stand to oppose this bill for a couple of relatively straightforward reasons, Mr. Speaker. I will take just a few minutes to put my position forward. I know there are many other topics I think my colleagues will address.

I would like to make it very clear that this is not an indication or an opposition or a lack of confidence or optimism that I have for the tourism industry. In a previous life, my wife and I ran a small business of our own that we built from scratch that depended in large part on the tourism industry. I made my living from this industry. In yet a different previous life, Mr. Speaker, I was an executive with the Northwest Territories Tourism Industry Association and I have learned much about the potential and the hard work that has to go into making a successful industry, especially the partnerships that are required to make it work.

My position on this tax has been consistent from the start. I am not in principle opposed to the tax as a legitimate and appropriate way to raise revenue. What I have not been convinced of, and I am still not convinced of, Mr. Speaker, is that it is a tax that has a plan that people have bought into. This is where the Minister and I have at least a philosophical difference.

The Minister is saying give me the money and we will come up with a plan. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that our strategy as partners should be develop the plan. The money will follow if the plan has integrity, if it has buy-in and if it has support. That is what has been missing, Mr. Speaker, from what the Minister has been telling us.

I cannot take issue or argument with anything that Mr. Handley has put forward this afternoon but what has been missing is a confirmation that there is indeed a plan for how this industry is to advance, what role the government and private sector will be playing in that. The Minister has indicated that there is correspondence and consultation and he and the department are to be complimented and congratulated on that, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, he has genuinely taken this idea out in the street and generated a lot of goodwill for the department, for this Legislature, by making that move.

In the correspondence and comments I have seen and heard from industry, Mr. Speaker, I do not see anybody saying, "Go ahead with the tax, Joe, we will work out the plan at the same time or we will work out the plan later". No one is saying that. They are indeed saying we will and want to work with government to move this industry forward but no one that I have seen has said go ahead with the tax at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I will come back to that position which I have held from the start. This tax is not in itself a bad idea, but it is lacking a plan that everybody can have a say in how this industry can move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise to speak against the principle of this bill. Before getting into it, I would like to say that I cannot disagree with the Minister when he talks about the potential in the Northwest Territories for tourism and the need for us to support it better. I agree that it is absolutely essential that we do that. In fact, I said so during the campaign a year ago. At that time, I suggested that we needed to spend more money on promoting tourism. I agree with everything he has said there. I also agree that he has gone out in advance with this bill and that constitutes something that is novel in our form of government. I think it has given the people a chance to have a look at the bill and have some discussion that would not have happened in other jurisdictions. That too I think is something that we can be proud of.

However, going back to the campaign, Mr. Speaker, last year during that campaign, I was asked explicitly if I would support a sales tax. Mr. Speaker, we have fallen into the habit of calling this a hotel room tax. It is in fact a sales tax. He can call it a hotel tax but it is really a sales tax on hotel accommodation. I said during the campaign that I would not support the imposition of a sales tax. Therefore, I cannot possibly support this tax bill.

Mr. Speaker, a sales tax is never a fair tax because it does not reflect a person's ability to pay. For instance, a company like BHP will pay exactly the same tax on a hotel room as someone from Wha Ti who travels to Yellowknife to visit a sick relative in the hospital. It does not matter that one is a rich mining company and the other is struggling to afford to be able to come and visit that relative. A sales tax does not reflect ability to pay. Your taxable income does not count. If this government feels that it must raise more money through taxation, it must be made fair. Ability to pay must be one important consideration.

Now to me, Mr. Speaker, that is the principle issue. It is a tax issue. If a sales tax on hotels is acceptable, what is to stop it from being acceptable on something else? Should we prepare for an airport tax? Should we prepare for a toll on roads? What happens if this government is not successful in getting new money from Ottawa? Are we going to look at a general sales tax? Mr. Speaker, that would be unacceptable and I think we have to make sure that any taxes we bring in reflect people's ability to pay.

Some people have justified this tax, including the Minister, I must say, by saying most other jurisdictions have such a tax. Well, Mr. Speaker, most other jurisdictions do have general sales taxes. Most other jurisdictions charge health care premiums and most other jurisdictions require their students to pay back their student financial assistance. Are we now going to institute those things in our jurisdiction because other jurisdictions do? No, I do not think we should.

This also comes down to an issue of fairness. Why should a sales tax be collected by just one sector? At the Northwest

Territories Arctic Tourism Conference that I attended which Minister Handley spoke about, he said that an equivalent amount of money was spent on parks that is being spent on tourism. Why is that sector not being expected to pay as well? Why does the rubber tire traffic not pay the same sort of tax? The hotel industry should not be expected to collect a tax that will benefit all of the industry from just their sector.

I have to say that I have some questions about the act in which it says that only those places with five rooms or more will be required to collect the tax. Again, where is the fairness here? If people are making their money from selling rooms, why should everybody not collect it? Do people who stay in bed and breakfasts make less money than those who stay in hotels? I doubt it.

Again, it is not based on the ability to pay. What about dormitories? What about dormitory-style accommodation at hunting camps? If someone has a hunting camp with ten beds in each of the four rooms, will they be exempted from paying this? They could have 40 beds, in other words, and not pay the hotel tax.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would say that if we are going to follow the example of other jurisdictions, we are going to have to consider what other jurisdictions are doing about taxes, and that is reducing them rather than increasing them.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I would like to note the letter that was tabled earlier this week from the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce. In the second paragraph there in this letter to Minister Handley, it notes that:

"We must advise and maintain the same positions as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in being opposed in principle to tax increases or the introduction of new taxes. Northwest Territories businesses have a difficult time competing with southern businesses and additional taxes drive up costs which results in less attractive pricing for our products and services."

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business sent a letter to Premier Kakwi earlier this year vetting their concern about the planned introduction of a hotel tax. They noted that in other provinces, members are calling for elimination of this kind of special tax because, as in Alberta, the members are unanimous that they believe their industry should not be singled out and forced to charge a sales tax. There is also a concern they note that rather than encouraging tourism, such a tax deters tourists as it drives up the cost of accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, this tax has also been justified by saying it is a way to capture non-government dollars. At the Northwest Territories Arctic Tourism annual general meeting, Minister Handley said that in talking about the reasons to look for this money, the only way he could see moving more money into tourism was to work in partnership. So as he said, we are looking at a tax that would be imposed on those outside government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is no way to prove the government suggestion that most of the tax will come from non-northerners. In fact, most hotel association members do not agree. In fact, how much will come from government, if not directly or indirectly through government-funded agencies?

For the past nine years in particular, Mr. Speaker, since I have been a Member of this House, I have traveled extensively in northern communities. The majority of the people I met staying at hotels in the North were on the government's tabs, if not directly then at least indirectly. Consultants, contractors, people working for boards and agencies funded by the government, municipal employees and on and on.

The Minister, I know, has said in this House that he has an estimate about how much it will cost government, or how much of this money will actually be collected from the government. I know that the hotel association or the hotel operators have a significantly different number but since we do not have any proof, I guess we are going to have to assume that the real number is somewhere in between the two estimates.

Mr. Speaker, the introduction of this bill today is premature. In advance of having numbers to demonstrate, and the only way that we are going to do that is to take some time to survey hotels to find out what are the numbers, how many people are going to be staying in hotels at government expense? How much of this is just going to be a simple reallocation from one pocket of the government to the other? I say that we need to put this off. It is premature.

Mr. Speaker, we know as well that this is a high cost area for tourists. Lovely as the Northwest Territories is, the Minister spoke very well about why people should want to visit the Northwest Territories. This sort of tax will make it worse.

Japanese tourism contributes \$3.9 million a year to the economy of the Northwest Territories. I know that in talking to a hotel operator, he told me that he recently travelled to Vancouver to meet with tour packagers who bring Japanese tourists to Canada. One of the first things that they said to him was, "Are you going to bring our costs down this year?" Instead, he has to say, "No, it looks like in the not too distant future, we may have to start charging a five percent room tax."

The Minister said that Japanese tourism is up, but I know that I have a letter from the Hotel Association that also indicates that Japanese visitors to Canada in number last year were down by 20 percent. That is in the year 2000. The letter goes on to say that there is no improvement projected for the year 2001. Again, we have a concern about the numbers. Where are the numbers coming from?

It is premature for us to say that we are going to bring this tax in without having much better numbers. We are facing significant competition in the Northwest Territories for Japanese tourists. Between Whitehorse, Alaska and Eastern Europe, it is a very price conscious market that we are after. I think that we have to be careful about what sort of impact we are liable to have on that market.

I have heard the Minister talk about people not being impacted by the cost of accommodations and I find that hard to accept. I know that it affects me when I travel. In fact, I can tell you that I have in the last year visited one place that, because of the costs, when people ask if I enjoyed it, I say it was marvellous, it was spectacular, it was great to go to. Will I go back? No, it was too expensive. Do I encourage others to go there because of that? No. That word of mouth advertising is what is going to hurt us the most. People who come to the North and then travel back home and tell their friends and neighbours that the Northwest Territories is far too expensive to visit, encouraging

them to visit somewhere else. We have to do what we can to bring the costs down.

Adding a sales tax like this will not do that. There are also some problems with the application of the act, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned about the rule as for who pays the tax. For instance, what proportion of the room in the fishing and hunting package is going to account for the room portion?

Mr. Speaker, we have had the legislation presented. The legislation talks about regulations but we do not have the regulations. So much of the detail is left to the regulations. This is a concern to operators I know. For instance, under the act, in section 1(a), "Lodging. Accommodation does not include lodging for which the charge for accommodation is less than the prescribed amount." What will be the prescribed amount? We do not know that. Operators do not know that.

Item 1(c), "Accommodation does not include a place and establishment or a type of place and establishment exempted from the regulations." Why would somebody be exempted by the regulations? I think the introduction of this bill at this time and asking us to vote on it is premature. If we must have a sales tax like this, we should see the regulations before being asked to vote on it. The operators should have an opportunity to review those regulations and give us their comments before we vote on it.

Mr. Speaker, I also know that some hotel operators believe that they will be able to set the plan for the spending. I have been told that they understand that they will be able to ensure revenues are spent to increase off-season room sales, for example. Or that there will be regional allocations of funds based on where the revenues are raised and so on.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has, since first talking about this tax, also suggested a number of different ways that the money could be administered. First he suggested a separate board to look after the funds. Now he seems to have settled on giving the revenues to the Northwest Territories Arctic Tourism. I know that at the Arctic Tourism annual general meeting on October 28th, the Minister said that money would come to the Northwest Territories Arctic Tourism but they would have to develop a business plan with input from government and the Hotel Association. Yet I would note that my reading of the Northwest Territories Arctic Tourism resolution did not directly support the imposition of this tax.

Again, I would say, Mr. Speaker, that I believe it is premature to introduce this bill in advance of industry-wide agreement on the plan for spending the money.

The other thing I am wondering about is whether or not this is the right time to introduce this tax measure, Mr. Speaker, from the comment that the Minister also made at the Northwest Territories Arctic Tourism on October 28th. He talked about the government's fiscal situation. He talked about how we have been under significant fiscal pressure, but he did imply that the pressure may be off a bit right now and that we may have some time. If so, I would again say, Mr. Speaker, let us put the money into tourism. Let us spend the time to work with the Minister and find the right source for that money, but let us not support a sales tax on hotels at this time in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as well to speak on the principle of the bill and frankly add something to the discussion, in addition to the comments from our learned colleagues.

For me, one of the issues is a question. Why is this Bill coming forward now? We have just started the business planning process. We soon will be moving into the budgetary process. Why is there such a big hurry to get this out ahead of the budgetary parade? The Minister indicated that people should be prepared to take some of the pain. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the people of the Northwest Territories are in fact hurting their loins to take some of the pain.

The question is the hand that the Finance Minister intends to stick into the taxpayers pocket will go in how many times? How deep and how much does it plan to extract over the course of the next number of months? In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, good government should only come forward once with the budgetary process, to lay out their revenues and expenditures and how they intend to in fact raise shortfalls if they are anticipated, such as this tax. The big question for me, Mr. Speaker, is what would be the cumulative affect of the budgetary process?

We have this proposed tax increase. We know that we are being hit with some of the largest fuel increases in history. It is going to affect transportation, cost of food and the cost of all of our programs. Those costs are all going to go up. The taxpayers, the residents of the Northwest Territories are going to be reeling from these costs. I do not think it is fair to them to stand up now and talk about this tax without putting the whole pie on the table so we could all see how much we are going to have to tighten our belts and what that is going to mean to every family in the Northwest Territories. That for me, Mr. Speaker, is a significant issue.

I too have questions about the numbers put forward by the Minister. The numbers in terms of the money being raised and the numbers in terms of hotel usage. However, I have learned from hard experience in this House in five years that invariably they are estimates. The numbers brought to us are estimates and invariably, there is a fudge factor. There is room for fudgification. There is room to slip and slide, shuck and jive, and that is another issue of concern for me. I want to be very clear that we have blue chip information. This government should be bringing forward that kind of information for us to make that kind of decision.

The fundamental issue for me is I, like my colleagues, am not necessarily opposed to putting more money to tourism. In fact, I think that is essential as well. However I, like my colleagues, have significant concerns. I do not think that it is fair to the people of the Northwest Territories to nickel and dime them to death, to stick the Finance Minister's hands repeatedly into every pocket the taxpayer may have. We should do it once as part of the broad strategy, so that when the Finance Minister does stick his hand into the taxpayer's pocket, they know how much he is going to extract and only once. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to speak to the principle of this bill and to advise the House that I will be voting against this bill. At the same time, I would like to ask for a recorded vote.

Mr. Speaker, I had a grave concern about this idea when it was first announced by the Minister on June 21st, but I reserved my conclusion on this because I was hoping I would get enough information to satisfy me that this is something that will be good for the North and that it will do what it is going to do and what it purports to do as proposed by the Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I must say it has not been easy to go against one of the popular Ministers of this government. I remember an old lady coming up to me and saying, "I have known Joe for all my life and I know he will always do the right thing."

-- Applause

I know he means well. I know he means well and I know he does good things in many areas. However, I must tell him that he still has more work to do on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I think a lot has already been said by my fellow Members on this side. If I could just go down my list and highlight the things that perhaps have not been mentioned or something that I think that deserves mention again.

Mr. Speaker, I really want to say that our vote here is not about who loves tourism more or who loves Joe Handley more or who loves taxes the least. I think it really is about good policy making and good law making.

Mr. Speaker, I realize the Minister really believes in consulting with the people. I know he has done all that but he must have received answers that he really did not want to hear. For example, he mentioned that he hired Nexus, the consulting firm, to do a survey on this. In answer to questions in the House yesterday, he mentioned that he is not going to have the result of the survey until the end of the month. Yet he feels that he is going to introduce this bill anyway, regardless of what is in that, Mr. Speaker.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce; I know it has been a very difficult decision for that committee. Yellowknife members have met with them. We have discussed it a lot and basically the Chamber of Commerce thinks they will support it under eight conditions. I must say, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to support it if the Minister is prepared to meet those eight conditions. However, the letter, which was tabled in the House yesterday, says that the Chamber of Commerce has not received the responses that it was looking for from the Minister as of yet. I think if the Minister could keep his good name and work on that and rethink this one.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is major confusion as to how this tax will apply in enforcement and application. Mr. Speaker, I think we have to be really aware that the tax, once instituted without all of us, is there for posterity. You may think if the Minister says, "Well, if it does not work in three years, I will get rid of it." I do not know if anyone could give an example of any government anywhere who has intentionally removed a tax once it has been instituted unless it was replaced with something more favourable to that government. So to say I know what I am doing and that I will get rid of it if I do not think that it works just will not do, Mr. Speaker.

I am worried about loss of competitiveness that this tax will have on the industry. Mr. Speaker, in the summer I talked about the radio reporting on this bus operator in Toronto who was quoted as saying on CBC that he would rethink about sending visitors to Inuvik because their cost of hotel there is too expensive. I had many discussions with the operators in Yellowknife who cater to Japanese tourists and I am told over and over again that market is very price competitive and the Japanese do not come here with pockets full of money ready to spend in Yellowknife. They count every extra benefit they will get from that. They will not hesitate to eliminate Yellowknife or the Northwest Territories as a possible destination for their very valuable holiday dollar.

Mr. Speaker, I have also mentioned in this House about the fact that for some local businesses, five percent of their revenue could constitute the money that they spend on fuel annually. In this House, we have heard many questions here about the rising fuel costs and what kind of impact that would have on business operators such as hotel operators, as this will not be a good thing in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, I have already heard from people who said that a five percent increase in hotel fees will be more than a five percent increase in the final bill because most businesses will try to increase the cost on top of five percent, perhaps up to ten percent, in order to ensure that they recover the cost of collecting this tax.

Mr. Speaker, I have not had a chance to read every clause of this bill, but I see that it is quite thick and it has something like 66 clauses and about 30 of them have to do with enforcement. The Minister has assured this House over and over again that it only takes one PY to enforce this law. However, I have to doubt that very much, Mr. Speaker. I will say that enforcing 30 clauses will take more than one person to do the job.

Mr. Speaker, I compared this to the payroll tax where I would think the law to collect payroll tax is much more straightforward because almost everyone in the Northwest Territories who works here in the North has to pay that tax and, even then, we are experiencing difficulties collecting that tax. They have a need to hire extra people to make sure that the southern businesses coming to the North are paying the tax and they are registered to do so.

Hotel tax is much different, Mr. Speaker. We do not know where everybody is. There will be some bed and breakfasts that will be eliminated, some not, some lodges. How could anyone sitting in a Yellowknife office know who should pay tax, how much they should pay, or whether they paid it or not? Would it not end up that we would have five to ten people enforcing a tax which, in my view, will not bring any more than really \$500,000 net? Mr. Speaker, I have grave concerns that this tax will be collected from Northerners. It will be the people who work here, who travel in the North on personal visits as well as government businesses.

Mr. Speaker, something that has not been mentioned that is of great concern is the impact this will have on our formula financing from the federal government. I think most people have a basic understanding that we have very limited power to institute a new tax because every dollar we gain on a new tax, the federal government will take 80 cents away. It does not make any sense to me that we will institute a tax that will take the money from our people and then it will add to business

operators like hotels in small towns, not necessarily in Yellowknife, and then to have 80 cents of that taken away at the end of it. I do not think that is the kind of legacy that I want to leave behind as a lawmaker, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned that it is not fair to keep saying that you have to eat the cost from within. I must admit, Mr. Speaker, I am one of the people who has been speaking that way. I have suggested that. I think everyone out there really understands the financial difficulty this government is in. I think the business community has shown tremendous willingness to really work with the Minister and really work with this government to come up with alternatives. I commend them for that. I think that with that sort of willpower and will out there, the Minister can do a lot.

However, the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that even though this government has been saying and everyone knows about the financial difficulties, it has not demonstrated yet that it has taken internal measures to do cost cutting. Mr. Speaker, when I asked in a Written Question about the cost of travel that this government spends, the Minister answered last week, giving information on money spent on travel. It shows that last year for the fiscal year 1999-2000, no less than \$25 million were spent on duty travel by government employees. I believe that it does not include the money spent by agencies, boards and commissions or any other contract being done by anybody who is doing business on behalf of the government.

So there are millions of dollars that are being spent on travel. Assuming that this tax will really only bring about \$500,000 income, I do not think it is unreasonable to say reduce your travel money by \$500,000. If you are spending about \$30 million on travel, asking him to cut \$500,000 is not a lot.

Second of all, Mr. Speaker, as a Yellowknife MLA, I would not actively promote cutting any government jobs. I think we have suffered enough. However, I think some Members here have noticed the level of vacancy in government departments. I believe Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development alone has dozens of vacancies and every vacancy is calculated into about \$100,000 per PY. If there are 50 vacant positions, that is \$5 million.

Mr. Speaker, all I am saying is the Minister and this government have so much to work with. He has a great deal of credibility. He has a lot of support from the community. He is in charge of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and Finance, so he has all the leverage that he needs to do good government policy making. I believe for someone who is in charge of a \$750 million government budget and \$70 million with RWED, it should not be that difficult for him to come up with \$500,000 to help the tourism industry that he loves without additional burdens on small businesses and industries. Saying that, I am not instituting this tax because I really love the tourism industry, which when the people first heard that, it sounded too much of an oxymoron.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that I have said everything that I could on that. I appreciate the Minister's effort. I am going to tell him that I will work with him on any other initiative that he could bring. Maybe this could be revisited once he sorts it out, but as it stands now, I cannot support it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mademoiselle Lee. Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I feel as a government we do have to do something to assist this industry. We cannot sit back and say that we are not competitive, we do not have the resources and that we have to find new ways and mechanisms to assist the tourism industry. We have for years gutted this department to a point where we are now facing reality, where we have to compete with other governments.

Using the Yukon as an example, they have a tourism industry worth \$30 million. They are our next door neighbours. They have made it a priority, but yet, Mr. Speaker, we hear about competing in the international market. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world but we are losing out. We talk about what is going to happen with these funds that are collected via the tourism tax. I, for one, feel that it will eventually make its way back into the tourism industry, to assist them by promoting their hotels, by promoting the regions, by promoting the different sectors of our tourism economy from the fishing lodges, to the tour operators, to the guides and other people that depend on this industry to make a living.

I think it is essential that we as a government find new forms or new solutions to how we are going to assist this industry, but also expand on promoting our sectors within this economy. We have been able to come up with some stringent ways of assisting the diamond industry. We were able to have some guaranteed loans where we could assist the industry. We are managing tourism programs. Also, we have dollars within this government to assist in training and what not through the Department of Education.

I have been following this industry for quite a few years and realize we have to do something as a government because this industry is a turning industry, especially for the operators who are barely making ends meet with what they have. There are some sectors of our economy that are making a go of the tourism industry, especially with the Asian tourists, but that is just one sector of our economy. We have to start realizing that there are other elements to tourism that also need a hand out.

We have to look at our small communities. We have operators in our small communities who are trying to get their bed and breakfast operations off the ground. Again, they need to have the resources and the ability to promote their business. Right now, there are no programs in place within this government to assist them. Again, I would like to ask, where is that money going to come from?

We had an economic development agreement with the federal government where there were dollars to assist tourism but that ran out in 1996. There again, we are waiting with our hands out to the federal government to say help us. However, unless we have some agreement in place with the federal government, we will continue to find ways to drag out the tourism industry and say just wait, hold on, we will try and find some other way. I for one feel we have to come up with some solutions to this problem.

There are other ways that we can look at generating revenues. We have different programs within this government. We have the Development Corporation. I think we have to start looking

at how we can streamline some of these programs and services that we have to assist in other areas. I feel that it is essential that we realize there are presently tax systems in place. We pay GST. We find hidden taxes. We have taxes added on in regard to your interest payments that you have on credit cards. Taxing is just another form of collecting revenues.

I think we have to find a way to assist this industry. For us to simply say no to this proposition without trying to find some unique solutions to assist the industry and also to be able to work with the tour operators and the hotel operators, making them realize tourism is their bread and butter. You can say it does not really affect me, but tourism in a lot of our communities and regions is a seasonal activity. With that activity comes revenues that get a lot of those small operators, the small bed and breakfast operators in the communities, through the winter. If they did not promote, enhance, or attract tourists to the different regions in the Mackenzie Delta, Tuktoyaktuk or the Beaufort Sea, they will not be able to make a go of that industry.

I think we have to find initiatives and ways to enhance that industry. I mentioned the motion that was passed by the Hamlet of Fort McPherson. One of the things that they asked for is they urged the passing of this legislation. Also, what they would like is to empower the regions and communities to have the ability to establish a collection agency for the hotel tax and to use it to promote tourism in that area. I think it is apparent that we will have to find new ways and new forms of generating revenues.

The resources we have in the North continue to flow south. A lot of our revenues and royalties that come from the North continue to flow to Ottawa. We depend on Ottawa for our transfer payments to run this government. Yet the amount of money that they take out in royalties almost exceeds that with the developments that are happening. The federal income tax that is being taken out can be used towards this. There is one area that I feel we can continue to enhance or strive to become independent in, but also realizing that unless we settle devolution of the Northern Accord with the First Nations and amongst ourselves and retain those revenues in the North so we can use it to offset programs and services, we will continue to see programs and services declining. Also, different resource sectors striving to make a go of it, regardless if it is the fishing industry, tourism industry, the forestry industry, the trapping industry, even the oil and gas industry.

We have done tons and tons of studies but again, it takes money to implement those studies. Right now, we do not have those revenues. I, for one, feel that we have to do more than just simply saying we do not agree with this, but as a government and as Members of this House, we have to find initiatives and ways of finding new means of generating revenues. I feel we have to be able to avoid the burden that we have with Ottawa, where every dollar we generate goes to the federal government and we only get 80 cents on the dollar. We have to find a way to get around that.

The other concern I have is how is this tax going to be distributed fairly across the North, not just to the large regional centres. A lot of tourism and promotion takes place, but people within the tourism sector need the resources. I think it is imperative that we do have answers to these questions and that we do try to work together to find solutions to this problem. With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak out in support of this tax. As leaders, we are put in a position to make tough decisions, decisions such as taxing our own people. It is not a good thing but as a government, we need the money. As the Minister indicated earlier, we cannot continue pulling from within. You pull from within and promises that are made by this government may suffer.

I come from a community and a constituency that is beautiful. There is great potential for tourism in Tu Nedhe. If it cannot bring the tourists into the North, then my people cannot realize that potential. I am one of the persons in this House that supports the tourism industry. It is a clean, healthy way of generating revenue. However, we are in the middle of nowhere in the High Arctic, where even Canadians do not know where we are. How are we to expect the Germans, the Italians, the French, the English, the Japanese, the Australians and people around the world to know where we are at if we do not tell them? We cannot tell them where we are at unless we have the money to get there to have the promotional material. We need money for that.

Unfortunately, it seems taxing our people is one of the very few solutions we have to this dilemma. Lutselk'e has a flight in everyday, twice a day on Wednesdays and Fridays. Ninety percent of the time those planes are full. A lot of that travel is paid for by the government because it is related to business. I do not mind the government taxing itself if I could get my hands into that pot so that I could bring tourists into my region so that people could work. I do not have a problem with that.

I do not have a hotel in my constituency. Maybe if we could bring in the tourists, it would justify a hotel. It is badly needed, Mr. Speaker, but we have no money. We cannot do it right now. We have no money. That is the favourite word this government has.

We have to take a leadership role and make some tough decisions. It is a sad day when you realize that most of the people who will be paying this tax are your own people and in three years time, the federal government is going to claw back 80 cents. It is a sad day when this government has to tax itself for 20 cents on the dollar, Mr. Speaker. That should be a message directly to the federal government. It is a sad day when we have to tax ourselves for 20 cents on the dollar, Mr. Speaker.

My honourable colleague from the Mackenzie Delta alluded to the royalties that are being taken off this land. It is the relationship we have with the federal government. Maybe in three years time when they start clawing back 80 cents on the dollar, they will be negotiating the transfer agreement and they will take that into consideration. We are hard up for money in the Northwest Territories. Our people are hard up in the area of education, in the area of health. We need a lot of money.

I support this tax. I may be ridiculed by some of my people, but that is a leadership position I am taking. It is needed. We cannot bring in tourists otherwise. I am sure there are going to be administration problems with it, but there are always administration problems with anything new that you introduce. Other jurisdictions right across the country use it. We do not

even consider it when we are paying for our hotel bill in Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver or anywhere else. I suspect it is \$5.00 extra a night for this.

There are a lot of tourists who go into the Lutselk'e area, but those tourists are from Yellowknife. They go there by boat. They do not even come to my community. If they do, they just buy gas. They do not go to the stores. We cannot depend on tourists like that to survive. We need tourists from other areas of the world who are willing to spend money in our communities. We need to attract them. If a five percent tax on our hotels is one way of doing that, then I have no choice but to support it. The community of Deninoo K'ue, or Fort Resolution, is not a participant in the diamond industry. It is not a participant in the oil and gas industry. They have to rely on tourism.

Like I said, Mr. Speaker, we have to get the tourists here before we can start generating revenues from them. It is a tough decision but that is the way it is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member of the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to stand before the House and state that I will not be supporting this tax. I listened with great interest to the Minister's statement that it is a win-win situation for the little communities. I would have greatly appreciated if he would have gone to the little communities in my riding to paint that picture for them.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MCLEOD: I have canvassed my riding. I have gone to the hotels in my riding and there was a lot of emotion and a lot of criticism of this government when I tried to explain what was going on. In fact, in some cases I had to convince them not to shoot the messenger. It was not well received. In all, the hotel owners and motel owners in my riding spoke against it. They justified why they spoke against it. With the hotels in my riding, the occupancy by the tourists is very low. It is a small percentage. Who are the main users of those hotels in the riding I represent? It is mainly government employees and construction workers. The construction workers who are in the communities utilizing the hotels and occupying the rooms are working on government projects. So the percentage of occupancy by government dollars is a lot higher than we are being told.

In the riding I represent, almost all of the economic projects are paid for by the government. We have no real economic base. The oil and gas industry has not taken off yet. So this will be a flow-through tax. What will that result in? That will result in a higher cost of living because mostly communities that are average size or smaller will be taxing government people and construction workers.

Due to the location of Enterprise, of Kakisa and Fort Providence, which is only, in the case of Enterprise, half an hour away from Indian Cabins which has accommodations, I am sure the cost of a room per night would make a lot of people who are driving through reconsider whether they should stop on the south side of the border or bother to come across because the cost of the rooms are going to be a lot higher.

In the case of High Level, it is only three hours away from Fort Providence, so it is not a great distance. I think the location is going to be a factor in people making the decision on whether they want to come North.

The biggest issue I have with this tax is that in three years when our formula financing review will come up, there will be a claw back clause and that does not make sense to me. My colleague has done some quick math here and it results that out of every five dollars we collect, we will keep one dollar. I cannot justify that to the people of my riding and I cannot accept this tax as it stands. I will be voting against it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lakes, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the 13th Assembly, I found myself in an unfortunate situation going back to my constituents time and time again telling them, "Reductions. You will have to make do with less."

It seems, Mr. Speaker, that in the first year now of the 14th Assembly, our government is proposing taxes. We cut back, now we are going to tax. It seems like there is no other avenue. Meanwhile, we have strategies flying off here, there and everywhere in the Northwest Territories. That alone probably covers what the Minister is looking for in fees here.

Mr. Speaker, this tax has been flogged on the highways, byways, board rooms, back rooms and no doubt even in the boys' room. Mr. Speaker, the Minister himself stated this is a huge industry. It is developing and growing into an enormous potential and yes, the Northwest Territories holds a bright future in the area of tourism.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity for a number of years to work in the tourism sector. I alone with my father and family operated **Nuktigvik Tours**. We did a river and fishing tour operation. I know in that market, it is competitive. If you could not match the lower price of your competitor, you were going to be squeezed out of the market.

Mr. Speaker, in Inuvik itself, we have had a number of concerns raised with the cost of living. The cost of hotels went up and there were rumours around town that they jumped up too much and so on and so forth. Now I must say that the hotel group in Inuvik has done a lot to rejuvenate the economic activity within the community, but there is only so far you can go before you hit the wall, as they say. I know the Minister is trying to stop from hitting the debt wall. As I see it, it is a band-aid solution.

If we are going to do comparisons, Mr. Speaker, we have to compare apples to apples or oranges to oranges. I think we have to look at how we are going to do things and how we are going to operate and how we are going to tell the people of the Northwest Territories we will work for their benefit. How will we show them that we support the tourism industry?

Again, if we compare ourselves with the Yukon, Mr. Speaker, they have a huge area in tourism. More than three times the amount we spend is what they spend in tourism, and the

results show. They have a huge...the "rubber-tire market", as they call it, as well as those who fly in to Whitehorse in the Yukon...it is very good. We hold the same potential.

Mr. Speaker, what I found after working in the tourism industry when we had regional tourism bodies and the government of the day decided to pull them altogether and make one tourism association for the Northwest Territories, I saw the decline of tourism in my region.

We count on the "rubber-tire market" in Inuvik. The Dempster Highway is a vital link when it comes to tourism. Most of those people stay in campgrounds. So is that the next area we are going to look at to tax?

I have heard the Minister and another Member state that the Northwest Territories is not known. I must say we must have been doing something terribly wrong with the millions of dollars we spent in the area of tourism if nobody knows where the Northwest Territories is.

That is not a fact of just putting more money after it. It is what are we doing wrong? The idea of just putting more money into the pot does not work. I know, for example, I spoke with the Hotel Association in Inuvik along with bed and breakfast operators. They would support it on condition. However, from what I have heard from the Minister and what has been flying around about the hotel tax, there is nothing there that would meet those conditions as far as I can see to date.

We talk about getting the tourists here. Again, how will the hotel tax get the tourists here? In Inuvik, the rate for hotel rooms is equal to those at the Delta in Edmonton, Vancouver and so on. Can we do the same thing in the Northwest Territories, in Inuvik or in Yellowknife?

The potential is good but out of the \$1.1 million that might be left to the department, how will it divide that up amongst hotel groups, amongst tourism operators, outfitters, the central tourism industry organization here in Yellowknife? How will you do that?

The fact is there has been too much information going back and forth that has not been concrete. Not concrete enough to get my support. We heard initially four or more rooms will be taxed. Then we heard a commitment saying no, all rooms will be taxed, bed and breakfasts included. Now the Minister today says we are looking at four rooms or more because of some by-law situation, especially here in the city.

Mr. Speaker, when we should be trying to be more competitive, this Minister seems to be proposing to push the costs up in the Northwest Territories. How are we going to sell ourselves to the rest of the jurisdictions, to the tourists who can travel in Alberta, British Columbia, Newfoundland, and tell them come North? We want to take an extra five percent out of your wallet when you stay in our rooms.

I believe Alberta has such a good market in their area because for one thing, they do not have a sales tax like other jurisdictions in Canada. I agree with the statement made earlier by Mr. Dent regarding the area of whether we follow other jurisdictions. It is like following friends. Not all the time do your friends have the best intentions or have all the knowledge. Just following somebody for the sake of following is not the wisest way of living.

The fact is, in the legislation the Minister talked about, there would be a sunset clause and if this does not work, we will get rid of it. I understand that in the bill, there is no sunset clause. I am sure when they said the payroll tax was being introduced, we will just try this and it only costs so many dollars to be administered. Payroll tax continues to exist and it costs much more than they anticipated. Is it worth a million dollars, Mr. Speaker, to tax our people? A million dollars divided between all the interests in tourism?

We have heard Mr. Krutko say that he had support from his community to have the tax administered in the community. I know the Department of Finance is having a difficult time with self-government. Self-governments are pushing for their own tax regime and this government is hanging onto the strings. So can we even do that to communities? I do not think that would be possible.

We know it is going to go into the general revenues of this government. How is it broken out from there? Who knows how it is going to happen? It is not concrete enough.

Initiative should be applauded by the Minister. He is lucky. He is trying, and I say within the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, I know there are quite a number of strategies that are outlined for a number of years. Why do we continue with more strategies? Why do we not as a government say look, we have a serious problem here. Let us reduce some of this travel and conference industry that is supported by the Government of the Northwest Territories and put that money where it is needed, like the tourism groups.

This is piecemeal, Mr. Speaker, and we have to quit operating piecemeal. Let us put a solid plan together. Show us how this will really work. Do the homework and come back when it is ready. Right now as I see it, Mr. Speaker, this is not ready and I will not be supporting it. I will vote against this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the principle of the bill. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when this bill was first introduced some time ago, I had some grave concerns about this bill. It has been quite a while now and I have been travelling around talking to many different people. I may be fortunate or unfortunate in the fact that in my riding, I have no basic hotels. There is one hotel there but if they rent out any rooms, it is very few rooms.

I applaud the Minister for taking initiatives towards tourism. We all know we talked about tourism in the North and what it could mean if we can develop the industry. Maybe if the industry develops enough I will have a hotel in my riding. If we do not have any money to put towards tourism, I know we will not have a hotel in my riding. Is the tax the answer to tourism? I am not sure, Mr. Speaker.

Up until last night, I was in support of this bill. I had nobody come forward except for one person at a meeting in Hay River who spoke against the bill. Whether he was speaking for a group of individuals or not, I am not sure. The other people who had concerns about the hotel tax must have been in hibernation since the bill was introduced, as far as I was

concerned, because they did not make their views known to me.

However, something happened yesterday that all of a sudden these people came alive and all of a sudden my phone was ringing off the wall last night, supposedly all opposing the hotel tax.

There is one thing that I have learned since this hotel tax was introduced, we have an awful lot of accountants around. The Minister who introduced the bill has his figure that he thinks we will bring into the tourism industry. Everybody who has spoken against the bill has their figure of what it will do to the industry and what this tax will bring in. I have not heard two figures the same yet, Mr. Speaker. I, for one, am not an accountant. I would hope that this tax would do what the Minister is proposing that it will do.

Yesterday we flew to Fort Smith to a meeting there called Growing Communities and it had to do with tourism. The Minister was there and he was the keynote speaker. He did speak about the hotel tax. I did not see anybody throw any cups at him. If I took anything from the meeting, they were a little encouraged by the fact that he was going to be promoting tourism and he was going to be putting money into tourism.

I am a little surprised, Mr. Speaker, at Yellowknife's reaction to this. If anybody is making money in tourism right now, it is Yellowknife. I think if we are going to do anything in tourism in the Northwest Territories, there is going to have to be a sharing of wealth somewhere.

Although I have questions as to where this tax money would be spent, I am sure that if there is a bunch of money generated in tourism, whether it is through a tax or whether it is through a direct donation from this government, Yellowknife will be there with their hand out saying we want the biggest portion of it because we are the biggest population. That I do not doubt for one minute.

Just recently, Mr. Speaker, we went on a trip to Washington. It had to do with the oil and gas industry. Our representatives, who are tour guides in Washington, brought up an interesting point. They said, "How come you people are not down here promoting tourism as well as oil and gas?" The one person said, within about a five-mile block, there was something like 80 millionaires and they have travelled everywhere. He said if you were to promote tourism here, they are looking for a place to go. Money is no object to them. They want a place to go. It has to be promoted though. Every time I step on an airplane to go somewhere, I am amazed at the price we pay for airline tickets. The prices keep going up. Do we quit travelling? No, we continue to travel.

So, Mr. Speaker, we talk about industry being involved in tourism. I think they are very involved. I think they will sit back and complain about anything that is going to hurt them when it comes to a tax, but they will be very quick to make the profits from it. I do not know if this is a true fact or not, but I hear that the hotels in the Territories, or at least in Yellowknife, are probably the richest hotels in the world. Is five percent going to hurt them? I do not think so, Mr. Speaker. If they are that rich, I do not think they are going to turn anybody away because we are putting on a five percent tax. They will probably cut their rates by five percent to maintain their people.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I still have some concerns I would like the Minister to address if he is going to have a rebuttal to any of this, and I am going to reserve my vote until that time. I would like some clarification as to how this money is going to be distributed. I would also like clarification on whether we are collecting one dollar when we collect one dollar or are we collecting 20 cents? Those are a couple of questions, Mr. Speaker, that could probably sway my vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to take a long time to speak in opposition to this bill. I think it has pretty much all been said here today. I have spent the last two sessions trying to call into question a lot of the assumptions the government is making and discussing the disadvantages of this bill. I will quickly summarize some of these things that I picked up on along the way.

The Department of Finance thinks they are going to generate \$1.2 million and they are basing this on 60 percent occupancy. When I talked to hotel owners, they tell me that is an ambitious figure even for Yellowknife, but if you go to the smaller communities, it is more like 40 percent. They really call into question the 60 percent figure.

The Minister also says six to eight percent of the hotel spending is government spending. That may be direct Government of the Northwest Territories travel, Mr. Speaker, but it does not talk about bands, municipalities or consultants. Any of us who have travelled around the North and booked into a hotel looking around know that 94 percent of the people staying there are not tourists.

The Minister also optimistically insists it will only cost us \$100,000 to administer this tax and that businesses will gladly remit it. Initially, his figure was \$250,000. I do have a question about whether or not businesses will gladly remit the payroll tax. We have asked in this House about audit information on the payroll tax. We have asked about interest and penalties charged. There was legislation to allow for it. Mr. Speaker, nothing has come back yet because we do not really do it.

Mr. Delorey asked where the money will be spent and so have others. We have heard regional capacity building. We have also heard destination awareness. The Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce thinks, I believe, that if money is raised in Yellowknife that it will be spent in Yellowknife. I wonder how much that leaves for regional capacity building, Mr. Speaker.

This Minister may commit to tourism but this is not something that has been legislated, not in the sunset clause, the three-year sunset of this bill. It is not in legislation. The next Minister may decide to spend it on something else and there will be nothing we can do about it. Is this supposed to target tourists? I do not know.

I think it looks like it is going to target Northerners. I think it will be Northerners bearing the brunt of this tax. I think it is just one more thing to add to the expense of living in the North. So there are enforcement provisions in this bill, but there are

enforcement provisions in the Payroll Tax Act as well. They are almost never triggered.

In this House the other day, we just looked at one riding where there was \$700,000 in cigarette taxes that we could not collect. I understand the company is still operating and the owner is still living in Inuvik, Mr. Speaker, but somehow we are unable to get this tax revenue.

Like Mr. Braden, I do not see a plan. I am not optimistic. I would like him to rework this and retool this and come back to this House with something else. I certainly will not be supporting this.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I was very impressed yesterday, and I had a constituent call me about this, when Mrs. Groenewegen took herself out of the voting on a motion because she felt even though her business was in trust, she did not feel comfortable voting on the motion. My constituent said to me that they believed the bar for honesty and integrity had been raised. I would have to agree with them, Mr. Speaker. Given that her interests are in trust but she does own a hotel, I assume she will be removing herself from this vote as well and applaud her for that, Mr. Speaker. So in summary, I will not be supporting this bill. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Weledeh, you may summarize now and bring an end to the debate on this motion. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope I cover all of the main points that have been raised here. I have listened very carefully. I appreciate the compliments some Members have given to me on this bill and on my willingness to consult on this. I believe in consultation and I think it is important. We have to work with the people who are impacted from this and all sectors of the tourism industry, and no matter what happens here today, I am going to continue to do that.

I listened carefully today for some idea on an alternative by those people who opposed this. I did not hear the alternative. I do not know what it is. It is easy to say find it within, but you can only do that for so long. I was hoping to hear an alternative today. I was hoping that somebody would say instead of doing this, do this, but I did not hear that. I just hear people who are opposing it, saying we need more dollars in tourism. I think everybody said that. We need more dollars. We all agree with that. I do not think anybody disagrees with the need for dollars, but where do we get them from? How do we do this?

I heard some people say it is only going to raise \$1 million, \$1.2 million, as if that is chicken feed. I can tell you that \$1 million is a lot of money to a lot of people. You may not think so, but I think so. If I could raise another \$1 million to put into tourism, that is a lot of money. If it is \$800,000, or if it is \$1.2 million, I am not going to quibble over that. That is a lot of money to put into an industry that needs money badly and where there are tremendous opportunities. We should not downplay a million dollars. It is important, every single million we have.

I heard people say there is no plan. Where is the plan? We do not have a plan. I do not have the regulations made. I do not have the detailed plan of exactly how it is going to be done

because I am doing it through a consultative process. That is part of that process.

We have a draft tourism strategy that each of you have, and I hope you comment on it and provide us with feedback. I am working with the Northwest Territories Tourism Association and with the Hotel Association to build a plan, but this tax, as I said, is not going to come into effect for a number of months yet. We will have a plan before a dollar is ever spent out of this. I have to do that in consultation with the industry.

I cannot go out and...it would really be presumptuous of me and I think it would destroy all of the effort that I have done in consultation, to go out and build a plan and say here is the plan. This is it. I am not going to entertain anything else.

Let us be open-minded and let the industry who are going to be impacted by this have a hand in developing the plan. I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that there will be a very clear plan put together long before this tax is ever put in place.

I have made a commitment that there will be a way of measuring results and we are working on that. We will work with industry on that to make sure that this money is spent and we know whether or not it is being spent effectively. Do not have any doubt that there will be a plan. If you expect me to do a plan, the act and the regulations and everything all up front, that is not the way I operate. I want to do it in consultation.

Some people said that they did not support this because it might mean other taxes. I have news for you. This has nothing to do with other taxes. You may have other taxes anyway. It is not linking to some other trend someplace. I cannot speak for future governments. You could very well have other taxes. This has absolutely no bearing on whether or not there are going to be other taxes, as if this is setting a trend somehow.

Some people said that they wanted to look at the whole picture. I agree. We have to look at the whole picture, and I think it was Mr. Miltenberger who made that comment, and there will certainly be opportunity as we get into the budget session to look at this in the context of the overall picture, long before we ever have to finally vote on this. Blue chip information, sure. I would love to be able to give blue chip information and we will. I think we will only get blue chip information as this evolves and as we implement it. Each of these hotels are very close with their information. They compete in a very competitive world and they have to maintain a lot of privacy and confidentiality in their work.

I want to say to Mr. Delorey that we are talking about a dollar for a dollar. We are not talking 20 cents. There may be some misunderstanding. The formula financing agreement with the federal government only applies if we increase taxes. If we add a new tax, we get to keep every dollar of that tax. It is not the other way around. We have a dollar for dollar.

When we negotiate a new formula, I do not know, but I tell you, I am going to work like heck to make sure that we get a lot better deal than we have right now. It is an 80 cents to 20 cents, deal. As I say, I cannot commit future governments. I cannot promise you something in a deal that is yet to be negotiated, but for the life of this agreement, it is one dollar for every dollar. It is a new tax. I hope to be very successful. I hope that we are working in a much different environment three years from now when the formula comes due for being

renegotiated, so we have to be optimistic on that side. For now, it is a dollar.

We heard a lot today about the dollars, the lack of dollars. That is something we need to work on. I think the one thing we all agree on is that we do need new dollars.

A business plan, yes, as I said, one will be developed. Yes, there will be a clear accounting for all of the money that is raised through the tax and yes, every dollar will go into tourism and I tell you, it is a dollar for a dollar right now.

With that, I just want to say to the tourism industry that I really appreciate them working with me over the last months. If there is a better way of doing it out there, then I really hope that they come to me with it. I will work with them to help them. I appreciate the effort that all of the associations, the tourism associations, hotel associations, and everybody has put into this. I think it is a statement about the importance of tourism to the people that we represent here. I say thank you to everybody, including all the people in small communities who, even though Yellowknife will get a big benefit, so will the places in the little communities. This is their future. For many situations, they are not each going to have a diamond mine. They are not each going to have a pipeline going past them. This is a future. This is linked very much to people's traditional lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes my comments. I feel very strongly about this, the whole tourism industry, and I am a bit disappointed by the people who speak against it. I am disappointed by the absence of other clear alternatives, but we will see where this goes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. That concludes debate. A recorded vote has been requested. Is the House prepared to vote? Mr. Clerk. All those in favour of the bill, please rise.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Handley, Mr. Allen, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Nitah, Mr. Steen, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those opposed to the bill, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Roland, Mr. Dent, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the vote, Yes, 10, no, 8. There are no abstentions. The motion is carried. Therefore, Bill 13 has had second reading and accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee. Thank you. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 15: An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act and the Public Service Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act and the Public Service Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Act and the Public Service Act to provide that on the expiration of March 31, 2001, employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation who are employed in positions located in Nunavut cease to be employees of the Corporation and of the Public Service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 15 has had second reading. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to committee. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act; Tabled Document 63-14(3), A Human Resource Development Proposal Related to Non-Renewable Resources in the NWT, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome to committee of the whole. We have two items to deal with, Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act; Tabled Document 63-14(3), A Human Resource Development Proposal Related to Non-Renewable Resources in the NWT. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend that we move to consider Bill 10 then, depending on the time, perhaps start with the Tabled Document 63-14(3).

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): With that, we will take a short break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call the committee to order. We agreed before the break to deal with Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act. With that, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for this bill if she has any introductory remarks. Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do have introductory remarks. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to have this opportunity today to speak with the members of the committee about Bill 10, which proposes amendments to the Adoption Act.

The Adoption Act was passed on November 1, 1998. It represents the culmination of more than ten years of work, including the work of the Family Law Review Committee, consultation with stakeholders from across the Northwest Territories, extensive review by the standing committee of the 13th Assembly who did additional public consultations, and considerable work done by departmental staff and legislative drafters. Since implementation, the department has provided four separate training sessions throughout the North to assist workers in learning how to use the act.

The new legislation made many improvements to the adoption system.

New provisions are included for subsidized adoptions to provide financial assistance for departmental adoptions. Pre-

placement reports are now done for all children, whereas under the old scheme, private adoptions could be completed without ensuring the child was placed in a safe and suitable home.

The Adoption Act also provides for consultation with aboriginal organizations prior to placement of aboriginal children where the birth parent consents. The new system also allows for much greater involvement of the birth parents and allows for the courts to order continued access to birth parents or extended family members where it is in the best interests of the child.

Unlike the old Child Welfare Act, the new act provides for distinct processes to be followed for departmental, private and step-parent adoptions. Under the new legislation, step-parent adoptions are more streamlined. Before, children of step-parents had to be made permanent wards before they could be adopted. Private and out-of-territory adoptions were unregulated under the old legislation. The Adoption Act puts a process into place for private adoptions and strictly regulates out-of-territory placements.

The Adoption Act intentionally takes an open approach to adoptions in recognition of the best interests of the child and the rights of persons to information about who they are and where they come from. During the preparation of the act, the Minister accepted the recommendations of the standing committee of the 13th Assembly, which directed the Minister to make the adoption process completely open.

The act recognizes that closed adoptions are a southern way of doing things. It acknowledges the northern reality where it would be very difficult to keep someone from identifying information under any circumstances. The act makes no distinction between identifying and non-identifying information. Such a distinction is meaningless in such small communities where even a birthplace can be identifying.

Given this, the new act sets out to provide a formal system for disclosing information and arranging reunifications. It puts into place a support structure for adoptees and birth parents during the process of disclosing information or facilitating reunifications by ensuring they are offered counselling and given information about support services.

The vast majority of adoptions in the Northwest Territories are aboriginal custom adoptions which now are regulated by the Aboriginal Custom Adoption Act passed in 1995. Most remaining adoptions are private or step-parent adoptions. Only 17 departmental adoptions have occurred over the past four years.

Because so few numbers of children are adopted through this act, it will take several years to truly assess the benefits and impact of this new scheme. Therefore, it would not make sense to make changes outside of the spirit and intent of the act until the legislation has been in place for a few years. For this reason, the amendments being proposed are limited to changes within the original intent of the act.

The amendments to Bill 10 do not propose any changes outside of the original spirit and intent of the Adoption Act. Instead, the bill seeks to make several changes within the scheme that will improve the act. Some of the changes are being imposed as a result of the legislation having been in place for two years now.

This additional implementation time has given the registrar, the director of adoptions, frontline adoption workers and clients a chance to identify problems or issues not currently addressed in the act. Other parts of Bill 10 are designed to address oversights or gaps that were discovered during the preparation of the regulations. The latter are intended to ensure that all children who are adopted have the same rights to information about themselves. Finally, several minor rewording changes are proposed to improve clarity or make the terminology more consistent throughout the act. I would be pleased to answer any questions committee members may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Madam Minister. Does the committee responsible for overseeing this act have any comments? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Social Programs reviewed Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act, at its meeting on October 20th and November 6th, 2000. The committee would like to thank the Minister of Health and Social Services and her officials for presenting the bill at our public hearing on November 6, 2000. The Adoption Act was passed on November 1, 1998. This act provides for departmental, private and step-parent adoptions. Since the introduction of this legislation, the department has become aware that the legislation requires some practical changes to ensure the smooth running of the adoption process.

The committee members considered that these changes do not change the spirit and intent of the act. The act addresses a number of matters including providing for a deputy director of adoptions and a deputy registrar of adoptions. It expands, to some degree, the documents to be included in the adoption registry and specifically allows court documents in adoption files to be part of this record. It allows the director of child and family services to notify the director of adoptions when a child has been placed in permanent custody for protection reasons and is, therefore, available for adoption. This will increase the opportunity for these children to find homes with adoptive parents.

The amendment also allows the director of adoptions to withdraw approval that was previously given for the placement of a child when prior to the placement, information has become available that indicates the placement would not be in the best interest of the child. The legislation provides that adoption workers are to endeavour to give information as to services and supports to parents when placing a child, rather than only being obliged to give that information if the parents request it. It increases the level of disclosure required for adopting parents respecting any arrangement for consideration involved in the adoption of a child.

These changes, together with the changes that correct spelling errors or clarify wording, are intended to improve the legislative framework for the adoption process. During the public hearing of this bill, the Minister asked if the committee agreed to consider a motion to correct an error in the English version of clause 3, which described the French section. The bill was amended in committee.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if she will be bringing in any witnesses? Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Yes, I would like to bring in witnesses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that the Minister may bring in her witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my far right is Sharla Carroll who is a senior policy advisor with the Department of Health and Social Services. To my right is Cathy Praamsma, the assistant deputy minister of the department. On my left is Rebecca Veinott with the Department of Justice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome, witnesses. General comments with regard to Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act? Clause by clause? Turn to your grey binder. Clause 1?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 4?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 5?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 6?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 7?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 8?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 9?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 10?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 11?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 12?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 13?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 14?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 15?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 16?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 17?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 18?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 19?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 20?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 21?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 22?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 23?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 24?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 25?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Is the committee agreed that Bill 10 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 10 is now ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and her witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses out. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I move we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley is making a motion to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. We will rise and report progress.

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act, and would like to report that Bill 10 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a motion. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee as the seconder. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. 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, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Programs at 8 a.m. tomorrow morning; of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight at 9 a.m. Orders of the day for Thursday, November 9, 2000:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Return 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 on Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for the First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 12, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2000-2001

- Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

- Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act

18. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 63-14(3): A Human Resource Development Proposal Related to Non-Renewable Resources in the NWT

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 10, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, November 9, 2000, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

