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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2001

Members Present

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Bonjour, Madames et Messieurs. Bienvenue à l'Assemblée aujourd'hui. Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to this first Session of the new year, 2001. I would like to wish everybody a happy Valentine's Day.

Recently, I was in Ottawa to observe the selection of the new Speaker for the House of Commons. On behalf of this House, I would like to take this opportunity to extend best wishes to Peter Milliken, a former Deputy Speaker to the House of Commons, on his recent election as the Speaker of the House of Commons.

I wish to advise the House that I have received the following message from the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories:

"Dear Mr. Speaker:

I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories the passage of the Appropriation Act, 2001-2002; and Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 2, 2000-2001 during the Third Session of the 14th Legislative Assembly.

Yours truly,

Glenna F. Hansen

Commissioner"

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 43-14(3): Notice of Budget Address**

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I will deliver the budget address on Thursday, February 15, 2001. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Ministers' Statement 44-14(3): Progress in Aboriginal Rights Negotiations

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to provide an update to the Members of this House and to the residents of the Northwest Territories on progress made in negotiating aboriginal rights in the Northwest Territories. It is important that people in the Northwest Territories know about these processes and are aware of what their neighbours are accomplishing.

Starting in the north, negotiators for the Beaufort-Delta are aiming to finish an agreement-in-principle on self-government in March. This agreement-in-principle will form the basis for negotiating a final agreement that will result in new public and aboriginal government structures in the region.

Mr. Speaker, in the Sahtu, the Deline First Nations are making good progress towards their agreement-in-principle on self-government.

In my home region, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that an interim measures agreement is close to being finalized with the Deh Cho First Nations. This agreement will set out how lands and resources in the Deh Cho area will be protected and managed while negotiations are ongoing. A draft framework agreement outlining the scope of negotiations was completed last fall. Once approved, these two agreements will lead to the next stage of the Deh Cho process, the beginning of the formal land, resource and self-government negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council Agreement-in-Principle signed in January 2000 was the first Northwest Territories agreement to deal with land, resources and self-government together. At a recent meeting, DIAND Minister Robert Nault, Dogrib Grand Chief Joe Rabesca and I made commitments to accelerate negotiations and work to complete a draft Final Dogrib Agreement in time for the Dogrib Assembly this summer.

Mr. Speaker, last July, the Akaitcho Treaty 8 chiefs and government signed a Framework Agreement. At present, the parties are holding discussions on what the Akaitcho leaders call the "four cornerstones" for an agreement-in-principle. They have also begun work on an interim measures agreement.

After some delay, Mr. Speaker, negotiations with the South Slave Metis are moving ahead on a land and resources agreement-in-principle. As well, the Salt

River First Nation is close to a memorandum of intent that will establish a reserve in and around Fort Smith.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to negotiating aboriginal rights, we are breaking new ground in the Northwest Territories. This is especially the case in terms of implementing the aboriginal inherent right of self-government outside the context of Indian Act reserves. The issues being negotiated are important and complex and good deals are not crafted overnight.

Mr. Speaker, this government wants to ensure fair and just implementation that balances collective aboriginal rights with the individual rights of all residents. We want to ensure a workable governance system at the community, regional and territorial levels. We need to ensure also that the Northwest Territories can hold its rightful place within the framework of Confederation.

Mr. Speaker, this is only a brief update on negotiations. Throughout this session, I plan on providing this House with more detailed updates on the progress at specific tables. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi cho, Mr. Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Minister's Statement 45-14(3): Honouring the Spirit of Our Children

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week, more than 100 school and community education counsellors in the Northwest Territories are in Yellowknife. They are delegates at a conference called Honouring the Spirit of Our Children.

Mr. Speaker, the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by people in care-giving roles is evidenced by the high degree of interest shown in attending this conference. In addition to the participation of counsellors, 40 parents took part in a parents' night on the first day of the conference.

I am sure that we are all aware of the importance of providing a safe, caring and stable environment for children in which they can grow into happy, well-adjusted and healthy adults. Children who experience personal success will become self-reliant and contributing members of our communities.

We are fortunate to live in a country in which we can find support for our efforts to create a nurturing environment. That support often comes from caring professionals who counsel, advise and listen with empathy to the challenges we face in our efforts to foster the right kind of environment for our children.

Sponsored jointly by the departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services, the Honouring the Spirit Conference addressed topics of importance to professional counsellors and caregivers in their efforts to ensure they have the skills required to support the public.

Mr. Speaker, a healthy society of self-reliant individuals who contribute to society in a meaningful way is an important part of the vision this government has for the Northwest Territories. We are working together to ensure that we provide a network of programs and services to support the vision I describe.

Mr. Speaker, the joint efforts of my department and those of the Department of Health and Social Services, led by the Honourable Jane Groenewegen, in organizing the Honouring the Spirit of Our Children Conference is a step in the right direction. I want to thank all those involved in organizing and attending the conference for their commitment to helping us to realize our vision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Minister's Statement 46-14(3): Minister Absent From the House

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi will be absent from the House until Tuesday, February 20, 2001, to participate in the Canada Trade Mission to China. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Birth of a Healthy Grandson

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to begin by letting you know that I am happy to be back here in this wonderful Chamber with yourself and the rest of my colleagues to continue the work of the 14th Legislative Assembly on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, today is Valentine's Day. Seeing as I am one of the unfortunate and deprived Members who live outside of this expanding and booming capital city of Yellowknife...

-- Applause

-- Laughter

...I am going to borrow a line from my colleague, Mr. Roland, and send greetings and love to my wife and family back home.

Mr. Speaker, it does not seem like three months have gone by since we last sat in this Chamber together. I know that it has been a very busy time for everyone. I do hope that you all had an enjoyable holiday season.

For me, this holiday season was extra special. I would like to share with you the gift that made it special.

Mr. Speaker, on November 16th during National Addictions Awareness Week, I spoke in this House on the problems associated with addictions and the dangerous effects that drinking and smoking can have on the unborn child. I informed the House that my daughter, Michelle, who was seven and a half months pregnant at that time, had given up smoking and drinking the day she found out she was pregnant.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to let you know that at 3:00 a.m. on Christmas Eve, Michelle gave birth to a baby boy, weighing in at nine pounds, three ounces. Brent Michael Lane Hartwell is my third grandson, and he was born in his home community of High Level, Alberta. I am also happy to report that both mother and baby are healthy and doing great.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of Michelle. I want to let her know that I appreciate the sacrifice she made to give her baby the opportunity to have a healthy start in life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Congratulations, Grandpa Delorey. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement on Global Warming

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in early December, I held a press conference here at the Legislature with the five chiefs from my region. We shared a concern that long-term government visions are inefficient because they do not take advantage of infrastructure currently in place in the North Slave region.

We identified how the government is working on a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and yet, government plans overlook the partnership already in place between the government and the Dogrib Power Corporation.

This access to hydro-electric power is not factored into the department plans, despite the reality of climate change and the need to have cleaner energy sources.

Scientists all over the world forecast that we in the North will experience more global warming than anywhere else in the world. We are already seeing some of the effects right now. The transporting of goods is becoming more difficult. Winter roads freeze later in the fall and thaw out earlier in the spring.

Recently in my region, the community of Wha Ti almost ran out of fuel. The ice road could not be opened because the ice was too thin. The community was nearing a state of crisis.

Everyday in the news we hear of delays experienced by the truckers trying to move goods to the mine site. The ice road was opened three weeks later than usual and

even now, it is not thick enough to allow whole loads to be transported.

As a government, we need to be proactive and adapt to the changing climate. We need to ensure that in the next few years, we develop alternate access to remote communities and the mines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Valentine's Day Message

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back, Members. Mr. Speaker, today is a day of loving, caring and sharing with others. I would like to wish everyone a very happy Valentine's Day, especially Karen and my children on the loving, caring side of Valentine's Day.

We, as a Legislative Assembly and government, must never lose sight of the human side of the Legislative Assembly. Despite making decisions on budget, legislation, and programs that are being delivered, we all must keep in mind that there is a human side to all of these decisions.

When it comes to people we represent in the Northwest Territories, regardless of how small or remote the communities they live in, like Colville Lake, or as large a community as Yellowknife, we must never lose sight of the services and programs we deliver. We must never lose sight of the individuals' names and faces, regardless of their father, mother, sister or brother, grandfather or grandmother. Putting a face to all decisions that we make in regard to the acts we carry out and the trust people place in us shall never be lost.

I would like to put a challenge out to all Members of this House of the 14th Assembly that we never lose sight of the faces of the people who may not be with us here today and have passed on. As a loving and caring day, I for one would like to ask this government to have a heart when you make a decision, to have a heart when you bring forth the budget, to have a heart with regard to everyone we represent.

With that, I would like to wish a happy Valentine's Day to one and all, and again, have a heart.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the title of my Member's statement...I am not sure how these things work out or how we title Member's statements, but I am hoping this will be titled "Great Expectations". Of course, Mr. Speaker, I am

referring to the Maximizing Northern Employment Strategy that our Premier alluded to in his address to the people of the Northwest Territories.

I, like the people of the Northwest Territories, listened intently as he guaranteed jobs for teachers and nurses, for those of us who were trained in the North or coming to the North. Interestingly, I had a call from a constituent right after the address. She said she was so excited about the Premier's announcement because her daughter is attending university in the south. She had called her daughter and made her aware of the Premier's guarantees and talked to me about how convenient this would be, since they lived in Yellowknife and her daughter could come back here and teach in Yellowknife.

I think it is important that we do not get too far ahead of ourselves. I am not exactly sure what the Premier's commitments and guarantees really mean. I relayed this to my constituent. I think there are still a lot of details to be worked out. I think guaranteeing jobs for teachers and nurses, especially in some of the smaller communities, might not be such a thing. We know there is market demand already, Mr. Speaker.

Guaranteeing support for teachers and nurses in these small communities, or as my colleagues have alluded to many times, guaranteeing adequate housing in the smaller communities for teachers and nurses, I think that would be a thing, Mr. Speaker.

We will wait for details. We are very interested to see how this all plays out, but we are also concerned. We want to make sure that this is not just another job-creation program in the public service, a make-work project, Mr. Speaker. We have seen them before. We know that we have private sector incentives and opportunities for economic development all over the place. Why not partner up with the private sector? I really hope that is the Premier's intention here, to guarantee that we are going to work with the private sector to create jobs for Northerners.

If the Premier and Cabinet have a checklist in their back pocket and they pull it out and number one says "build great expectations", I think they can check that off, Mr. Speaker. Number two should say "deliver a well-thought out plan of action". That is what we are waiting for.

Like the public, I agree the Premier's promises are encouraging. However, like the public, I also hope that the devil is not in the details. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Declarations des deputes. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Report on Electrical Power Generation and Distribution

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, throughout the life of the 13th Assembly, I repeatedly raised the issue in this House of the need for

a broad energy strategy for the Northwest Territories. During the 13th Assembly, it was an issue that was very difficult to have any attention paid to it because of other pressing matters, such as division, restraint, cut-backs and all those other issues of the day. The reality now, Mr. Speaker, is that we are faced with an energy crisis, so to speak, with rocketing fuel prices and increased demand on petroleum products and the negative impact it is having on all of our budgets and the cost of living in the North.

Mr. Speaker, the government has come out with a number of initiatives, such as the review of the electrical generation, transmission and distribution report. The Public Utilities Board as well is working on a report, an operational, strategic review. As well, the government has done work on a Greenhouse Gas Strategy. All separately done pieces not yet linked.

Mr. Speaker, it is going to be critical for this government to, in fact, link those pieces to show the people of the Northwest Territories what in fact the energy strategy will look like. We are spending in the neighbourhood of over \$700 to \$800 million a year on petroleum products as a Northwest Territories jurisdiction. We are the energy hogs of North America on a per capita basis.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of hydro development as it is detailed in the review by the government on electrical energy is a good one. It requires more work. I encourage the government to take the steps to move ahead to provide the detail of technical, financial and regulatory basis. We also have to look not only south, but let us look at the potential north for having a replacement on our dependency on petroleum products with hydro, a clean, environmentally friendly, safe form of energy.

On the issue of rates, Mr. Speaker, the structure of NTPC, the de-regulation that is talked about, having an ombudsman that reports to Cabinet, those are all issues that require much further debate. I do not think it should be taken at face value as presented by the consultants.

I would also encourage, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board would see the opportunity...Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, to conclude, I would also ask the Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board to add to the work done by the consultants on the strategic and operational review of the PUB, to table it in this House so it can in fact be added to the mix as we try to make sense of the best way to proceed as a Territory on the issue of a broad energy strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Concerns of Tu Nedhe Constituents

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I hope everyone had a pleasant Christmas break and has come back refreshed. Now that we are back to business, I wish to acknowledge a constituent who came to our Youth Parliament here at the Legislative Assembly. Ryan McKay, a grade 10 student from Deninu Ku'e School in Fort Resolution served in the political exercise. I wish to thank him for participating and representing our people. I would also like to say hi to the people of Deninu Kue and Lutselk'e.

Since the last Session, I have taken on the added responsibility as chair of the Special Committee of the Official Languages Act. Work on developing terms of reference will begin very soon.

Our committee will be travelling to communities in the Northwest Territories to hear the views of residents on any possible changes to the act. I have also travelled to several communities with the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development to hear concerns about Bill 13, the Hotel Tax Act, and Bill 16, Amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act. There will be continuing discussions on that.

I will continue to pursue environmental health concerns raised over the rates of cancer in communities of the Northwest Territories during this session, as well on employment equity within the public service.

In addition, a look at seniors' needs is being undertaken in my constituency. A survey of services lacking in Fort Resolution is being conducted by the Deninu Kue Seniors' Society.

As a final note, I want to welcome all Members back to the House and I look forward to a productive session. I wish everybody in the Northwest Territories, especially those lovebirds, a happy Valentine's Day. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. I just want to remind Members that Members' statements should stick to one topic for each statement. Remember the two and a half minute rule. The Speaker is being a little bit generous with the time today because of Valentine's Day, but tomorrow we shall return to the strict order of the House. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement on Midnight Sun Day Care Fundraising Efforts

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the community fund-raising event held December 6, 2000. Mr. Speaker, this event was put on with the support of many groups and it was to support the Midnight Sun Daycare that was in

desperate need of funds to continue their operation in providing day care to families in Inuvik.

This would not have been pulled off, Mr. Speaker, without some key people, organizations and companies. Mr. Speaker, the first company I would like to thank is First Air for their sponsorship in flying up the alumni to Inuvik and bringing them back, as well as sponsoring the prizes that were in a raffle that was held during one of the breaks in the game.

As well, Mr. Speaker, from the alumni, Mr. Al Hamilton, Mr. Brian Baltimore, Mr. Brian Benning and Mr. Tom Gilmore, all of the alumni are from the Oilers organization that came up and put on the game with a few of the Members here. I would also like to thank Mr. Paul Delorey who came up and donned the skates after 27 years of retirement. Mr. Speaker, he did a good job. He did not end up on his keister once.

Mr. Speaker, as well I would like to thank the Honourable Roger Allen who came out and donned skates. We put on a good show. I would like to also acknowledge support from other members of the community, the mayor and some of the other players who filled our roster, as we fell short on MLAs to don the blades.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank businesses that sponsored gifts. Those are Rexall Drugs, Home Hardware, Northern Stores, Arctic Rim True Value, Northern Metallic, Shear Delight, Boreal Books, Delta Flowers and Crafts, Originals on Mackenzie, and as well, Mackenzie Delta Hotel Group for putting the players up.

Mr. Speaker, through this game we raised almost \$10,000.

-- Applause

That would not have been done without the people paying at the door to come and view this, so I would like to thank them. Mr. Speaker, before I run out of time, I would like to thank the Old Timers who put on a great game as they played against ourselves, MLAs, and the Edmonton Alumni. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Recognition of Canadian Mental Health Association Volunteers

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is Valentine's Day, as many of my colleagues have observed. Sweethearts from around the world are exchanging cards, gifts and flowers, and showing their love and affection for each other, just like we do here in the Legislative Assembly every day, especially during question period.

I think what Valentine's Day really means, Mr. Speaker, is that we have people we care about and people who

care about us. So I think this is a good day, Mr. Speaker, to show some recognition for all the organizations, professionals and volunteers who make up the care and support system here in the Northwest Territories. I would like to highlight one of those organizations, the Canadian Mental Health Association's NWT Division, which marks 30 years of service in the Northwest Territories this year. I invite Members to join me in thanking the CMHA and the hundreds of volunteers over the years who have been making a difference.

Their advocacy work, the nightly help line service staffed by volunteers, and their promotions like last week's newspaper flyer on Mental Health Week, help us to learn and cope with what can be, and for far too many people is, a devastating illness.

We still have a lot to learn about treating and understanding mental illness. Government at the national, territorial and community levels need to do more to recognize the importance of mental health in our society, and the value of making sure treatment and care facilities are in place. Something I will continue to promote, Mr. Speaker, is that we can do even more to support the volunteer and non-government organizations who deliver great service and get real value out of public sector investment.

The Canadian Mental Health Association advocates that mental illness is costly, but mental health is priceless. Good advice on any day, especially today, on Valentine's Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Job Shadowing at Range Lake North School

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to send my greetings to the people of Range Lake and to report to them on the activities I have been involved in during our time away from the House.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I have been able to do was to job shadow a special education assistant in Mrs. Auge's kindergarten class at Range Lake North School. I spent a morning with Ms. Hayley Morris, one of four special education assistants in the school. I must say I still find it hard to believe that I was with her and the children for only two-and-a-half hours, because we went through about 11 different activities listed on the board, including a snack time and time with big buddies from Mrs. Tricoteux's class.

It was very meaningful and a great learning experience for me, Mr. Speaker, to see first-hand a special education assistant at work. They are so important, not only to the students in special need, but for the teacher and the rest of the children in the class, and not to mention the parents and our school system as a whole.

It was also very obvious to me that Ms. Morris is a very dedicated professional who loves doing what she does. By the way, her student Kelton performed in the classroom, who seemed to me is a well-adjusted and integral part of the class. It was also heart-warming to see how the rest of the children in the class gravitated towards him.

I would also like to acknowledge the important role the parents play in our school system which was particularly evident that morning. Kelton's mom was there and so were mothers and fathers of about four other children in the class. Apparently it was just an ordinary day. They took the time to come and read to their children's class and that is saying a lot about the health and value we place in our schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Madam Groenewegen.

Member's Statement on Love Between Parents and Children

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is Valentine's Day today and we talk about the love and affection between sweethearts, partners, spouses, husbands, and wives, but I think it is also a good day to celebrate the love between parents and children. Mr. Speaker, it was four years ago yesterday that I received news that my father, who I was very close to, had suddenly passed away in Ontario. So Valentine's Day always reminds me of that anniversary.

In considering what to do after receiving that news, I had decided to stay here. How much I appreciated the support of the Members as the House was in session at that time and all of the kindnesses they extended to me. So today, I also think of our colleague from the Deh Cho, the honourable Member, Mr. Michael McLeod, who just recently lost his father. I think on behalf of the Members here, I would like to offer our sincere condolences to the McLeod family.

I did not know Michael McLeod's father, but I do see in his children that he must have been a good father and a good person, and we would just like to extend our condolences to his family. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Groenewegen. Indeed, the condolences of the House do go to the McLeod family and to our honourable colleague in his time of sorrow. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return to Question 291-14(3): Political Activities of Employees

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by

Mr. Krutko on November 16, 2000, regarding how many employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) are taking part in the federal election.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to indicate with any degree of certainty how many employees took part in campaigns during the last federal election. Political activity is permitted unless an employee is restricted from participating in such activities by the terms of the Public Service Act or its regulations. Further, employees are not required to seek approval from their supervisors or their deputy ministers to participate in political activities.

Therefore, unless an employee discloses his or her participation voluntarily, or applies for leave without pay and indicates that he or she intends to use the time to work on a campaign, there is no way for the GNWT to track those statistics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The Deputy Premier, Madam Groenewegen.

Return to Question 299-14(3): Making National Aboriginal Day a Holiday

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Krutko on November 16, 2000, regarding the establishment of National Aboriginal Day as a holiday.

The declaration of National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday in the Northwest Territories would provide an opportunity for all residents to participate in National Aboriginal Day celebrations, and demonstrates the importance of the day in the Northwest Territories. For these reasons, Cabinet supports the establishment of National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday.

I have filed a response with the Clerk to a petition tabled by the Member for Mackenzie Delta. I am hopeful that a bill to establish June 21st, National Aboriginal Day as a statutory holiday in the Northwest Territories can be introduced to the Legislative Assembly in the near future. I provide this return on behalf of our Premier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Groenewegen. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome my parents, Alvie and Rose Larocque, and my nephew, Mr. Kurt Wainman to the gallery. Also, they are accompanied by my executive assistant, Mr. Tom Williams. Welcome.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. 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 like to introduce two people. First, being Valentine's Day, I would like to recognize a very important and dear person in my life, my wife Marg. The second person I would like to recognize is the president of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association who is with us here today, Mr. David Murphy. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a resident of Yellowknife and a person who helped me a lot in my first two months at the Legislative Assembly as my assistant, Mr. Brad Pellerin in the gallery.

-- Applause

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a pretty famous journalist up in the gallery, Mr. Lee Selleck. He is a journalist on his own merits, and everyone knows Lee. Welcome, Lee.

-- Applause

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a long-term resident and a teacher who taught both you and I how to drive, Mr. Ed Jeske.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome, Mr. Jeske. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. The Chair would like to recognize Antonio Alvarez, a local contractor from the city of Yellowknife. Welcome.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you for taking the time to come to observe the proceedings of your Legislative Assembly. Before I proceed on to the next item, I have a ruling that I would like to present.

Speaker's Ruling

Before we proceed, I would like to provide you with my ruling on a point of order raised by Mr. Roland on Thursday, November 16, 2000, the last sitting day prior to our extended adjournment. Mr. Roland rose on a point of order in relation to an answer provided by the Premier, the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, to Oral

Question 293-14(3) regarding the contract for the chief of staff position.

Mr. Roland's point upon reviewing the unedited Hansard was that Mr. Kakfwi was referring to a document that was not before the House. I quote from page 1687 of unedited Hansard:

"Mr. Speaker, my point of order is he was referring to a document that is not before the House, and as I know the rules, that is not permitted".

In further clarifying this issue, I have referred to pages 1623 through to 1627 of unedited Hansard and examined the dialogue surrounding Oral Question 293-14(3), which gave rise to Mr. Roland rising on a point of order.

What I have been able to ascertain is that in his response to Mr. Roland's question regarding the contract for the chief of staff and certain information contained therein, Mr. Kakfwi did in fact briefly quote remarks made by the secretary to Cabinet at prior proceedings which were outside the House.

Mr. Kakfwi also made certain specific references to the content of a portion of the document in question, and I quote from page 1624 of unedited Hansard:

"What the contract does is in the section refers to appendices which refers to deputy minister-type benefits. The contract says she is a chief of staff and that she is an executive assistant to the Premier. It says that where there is reference to deputy minister, it is, should read chief of staff instead of deputy minister, in regard to conflict of interest requirements."

It is the opinion of the Chair in this instance that Mr. Kakfwi, in making reference to and describing certain contents of the document in question, has not quoted directly from it.

Notwithstanding the variety of parliamentary authorities, which limit the abilities of Members to reference or quote from documents not before the House, I am first obligated to draw your attention to Rule 23(d) of our own Rules of the Legislative Assembly, which states and I quote:

"... a Member will be called to order by the Speaker if the Member:

(d) refers at length to debates of the current Session or reads unnecessarily from Hansard or any other document. The Member may quote relevant passages which are necessary to comment on something said or to reply to an alleged misrepresentation."

It is the finding of the Chair in this case that Mr. Kakfwi, in responding to questions posed by Mr. Roland, did not exceed the limits imposed by Rule 23(d) and, therefore, Mr. Roland does not have a point of order.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all Members that it is an infringement of our rules and contrary to parliamentary practice for Members to refer

to committee proceedings that have not been reported to this House. Specifically, I want to caution Members about making reference to what may or may not have been said, or who may or may not have been in attendance in any proceedings or events outside this House. Thank you.

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 305-14(3): Access to Communities and Mines in Winter

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Transportation, the Honourable Vince Steen. This year the ice on the winter road to the mine is reported to be 14 inches thinner than last year. We all know that there have been delays and accidents using the ice road this year. There has even been a fatality. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, the community of Wha Ti was nearing a state of crisis recently because they were running out of fuel. We can no longer rely on ice roads as a safe method of transportation.

I would like to ask the Minister, what is his department doing to ensure that safe access to remote communities and the mines exists through the winter months? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 305-14(3): Access to Communities and Mines in Winter

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member refers to the situation that the department is experiencing pretty well across the Northwest Territories in regards to our winter road construction. We are experiencing problems with having sufficient ice to carry the weights. The department is doing what it normally does in ensuring safe passage on these roads and that is to take precautions through profiling ice all along the routes. We regulate the weights on our winter roads directly related to the readings from the profiles. We are ensuring that there is safe passage by regulating the weights on the winter roads. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 305-14(3): Access to Communities and Mines in Winter

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister what are the department's plans for future safe road passage to the communities and mines, because of the global warming where we will no longer have ice in order to carry our freight and our supplies for our communities and our mines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The question may be a little hypothetical, but I will allow the Minister to respond if he chooses. Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 305-14(3): Access to Communities and Mines in Winter

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is working towards establishing more and more overland routes, you would call them, or in fact working towards our Highways Strategy, establishing all-weather roads into communities, that we can justify constructing these routes into these communities.

However, as the Member is well aware, the department has to work with Indian Affairs on this because it is Indian Affairs that is responsible for the construction of new roads over and above the existing road systems we have, and that includes the winter roads. We are working with Indian Affairs as to how we can get sufficient funding towards constructing new roads into communities that are not on the present highway systems.

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

Supplementary to Question 305-14(3): Access to Communities and Mines in Winter

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad the Minister brought up a past answer he did give me. On November 16, during committee of the whole, the Minister stated that a road can be built if it is justified by industry and the public. A good example was given to me, and it was Colville Lake.

Late last year, BHP indicated that they would use a road to the Dogrib region if it was built. So I would like to ask the Minister, as he will be talking to Indian Affairs, if he would go along with the Dogrib leaders, which will give him more power to lobby for an all-weather road all through the Dogrib region? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 305-14(3): Access to Communities and Mines in Winter

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The road that we made reference to into Colville Lake is a winter road and it is only seasonal. The department did put in the road this year and we will be putting it in on an annual basis from here on. It will become part of our winter road system. We already have winter roads into Wekweti and Gameti, subject to ice of course.

It is a little bit of a different nature that we would be talking to Indian Affairs about an all-weather road into the North Slave versus what is happening into Colville Lake. Colville Lake is not an all-weather road and, at this time, we are not proposing it as an all-weather road. It is just simply a winter road. Indian Affairs has not contributed any funding towards this at this time. It is all between the territorial government and industry.

There is no funding from Indian Affairs involved in that particular road.

What I was referring to was we are trying to work with Indian Affairs to identify some process whereby we could fund new roads into these communities that are not on the all-weather road system.

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

Supplementary to Question 305-14(3): Access to Communities and Mines in Winter

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question for the Minister is, as the global warming is coming, we will be needing alternate routes to bring all the supplies into the communities and the mines. Will the Minister look at infrastructure that is there, that has been paid for by Transportation in the past, and that is the road to Wha Ti on our land - not a full road but it was used in the past? I would like to ask the Minister if he will look at that route as an alternate route to the mines and the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 305-14(3): Access to Communities and Mines in Winter

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the question. It really relates to what the department has been saying all along, and that there is more and more pressure on the department to come up with ways to fund roads into those communities that are not presently served by an all-weather road system. There is also obviously more and more pressure placed on the mines to come up with some form of a transportation route in there because, as the Member noted, with global warming and the shortened season for bringing in resupply, the mines are getting pressured more and more to have some other form or route into their mines.

We, at this point in time, have not been talking to the mines about any all-weather road system because basically the road that they maintain into the mine sites is all paid for by the mines themselves. We have not been talking to them, and they have not approached us, towards talks on an all-weather road system into the Slave Geological Province.

Nevertheless, the department has been working on some plans in the past when we did some surveys in the communities to see what the cost of all-weather roads would be into the North Slave, for instance, and we have those studies on record. With those we are trying encourage Indian Affairs to come forward with some kind of a funding program whereby we could construct all-weather roads into those communities that are not on the system. Thank you.

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

Question 306-14(3): Electrical Power Generation and Distribution

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are addressed to Minister Handley and have to do with the GNWT review of electrical generation, transmission and distribution in the NWT, specifically the component that deals with the hydro expansion and potential 200 megawatts in the Taltson system. I wonder if the Minister could inform this House how they tend to proceed in terms of taking that particular recommendation to provide the necessary environmental and economic and regulatory detail, market issues that have all been dealt with and are raised through the public consultation? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 306-14(3): Electrical Power Generation and Distribution

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, let me clarify that the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation and for the energy generation study is Mr. Kakfwj who is absent for the next few days. I will attempt to generally answer the question.

The report that has been prepared by consultants is out for consultation. We have invited people to submit their advice and comments by the end of February. Following the receipt of any advice and information, we will then, as a Cabinet, review the report and the information that has been received from various sources and determine a plan from that point on. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 306-14(3): Electrical Power Generation and Distribution

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the leadership role played by the Minister in getting this particular review done and most of the work that has been done to date.

On the issue of the recommendation of looking straight south, as the report lays out, there has been a strong suggestion that it might be worth our while to look at the market of the hydro to the north, to the mines, to tie into the Snare system to create a grid. Could the Minister indicate whether they will in fact be taking a comprehensive look at those kind of broad issues, or are they just going to look at the specific recommendations as they are worded? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 306-14(3): Electrical Power Generation and Distribution

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, I can give the Member assurance that we will look broadly at all of the advice and recommendations we receive. Certainly we have heard from people that they would want us to consider, for example, the Taltson energy for the North. We would have to look at the economic feasibility of doing that versus going south. As a Cabinet, we would be open to any suggestions or advice. We are not just sticking to the specific recommendations as they are worded. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 306-14(3): Electrical Power Generation and Distribution

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the report covers other areas that deal with the structure of the Power Corporation and possible regulatory reform and such. Will the Minister as well ensure that they take into account all of the work that has been done in that area, such as the work that has been done by the Public Utilities Board review, so we have as comprehensive a look at that particular component as well? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 306-14(3): Electrical Power Generation and Distribution

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would have to defer to the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation in terms of how he is going to handle the recommendations and the advice we receive, relative to the Power Corporation itself. Thank you.

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

Question 307-14(3): Improving Access to Support Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question this afternoon is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Jake Ootes. It is in regard to assisting constituents with income support and other associated services of this government.

Very often here in Yellowknife, constituents have to go from place to place to get their services. My question, Mr. Speaker, is what changes or what improvements can the Minister advise of that may be underway to streamline the service to income support clients in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 307-14(3): Improving Access to Support Programs

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the income support process was partially changed last fall when we contracted the Women's Centre to allow pre-qualifications to be submitted into the computer system so that some of that work is now done by the Women's Centre. It was found that many of the clients originally went to the Women's Centre and, as well, to the Salvation Army. It was felt because the three organizations, the Women's Centre, the Salvation Army and the other organization that was involved in this, coordinated together, it was felt the Women's Centre could possibly handle this, so we did that. That was one of the steps we have taken on streamlining this process for easier access for the public, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to individuals who are on EI, then they go to the Genesis Group for support there. There is a contract out with the Genesis Group. That is not directly related to income support, but there may be people who were wondering where they go for support for training advice and so forth. That is the Genesis Group here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 307-14(3): Improving Access to Support Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that information. That is very much the kind of reform that I think clients are looking for. I would like to ask, can that same kind of thinking be extended to other departments? Frequently, constituents have difficulties in many areas, not only income: justice, education, health. Is there any move among government to look at streamlining on a broader scale? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 307-14(3): Improving Access to Support Programs

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is certainly merit to what the Member is stating. We have created a Ministerial Committee on the Social Envelope, which involves the social envelope Ministers. It is chaired by the Honourable Jane Groenewegen. It is a subject we can put on the table for discussion. As I say, we have done it in our particular department. We are meeting on a consistent basis to start looking at more coordinated approaches in service delivery in all communities. When you speak of justice and other areas, this may be another concern we should put on the table. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 307-14(3): Improving Access to Support Programs

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, a signal of some progressive moves there. I would like to ask the Minister to what degree do you plan to potentially bring in other levels of the community? For instance, the non-government organizations that are involved in caregiving, clients themselves and other boards in the region and across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 307-14(3): Improving Access to Support Programs

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been some discussion as we were doing our planning. Certainly there is recognition on our part from our discussions that are very important to ensure that we develop the partnerships across the Northwest Territories with NGOs, with private business whenever we can. We know that service delivery, in many cases, is more efficiently delivered by the non-government organizations and by private enterprise. We are very strongly supportive of that approach.

We have not reached the stage where we can be definitive about exactly what we are doing, but that is certainly part of our discussions.

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

Question 308-14(3): Public Inquiry into the Death of Effie Blake

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak of an individual who is no longer with us. She was a mother, a grandmother, a sister, a daughter, a teacher and a friend to the community. Mr. Speaker, her life was taken from her at a young age of 52 years. The Canadian life expectancy is somewhere in the range of 70 to 80 years.

Canada is recognized as the best country in the world to live, yet a disease such as tuberculosis still prevails in a lot of our aboriginal communities.

Mr. Speaker, people have been asking for a public inquiry. I have tabled documents in this House, petitions from my riding. There has been a Ministerial Forum on Health. A report was filed in this Legislature. Yet, Mr. Speaker, these instances continue to arrive.

Through asking questions on a public inquiry, it is not a question of putting blame on any individual. It is to find a way to improve our health care system, to make recommendations to improve our health care system so other people will not have to go through what Ms. Effie

Blake had to go through for over two and a half years before finally dying from a disease that, in this day and age, is treatable and preventable.

Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of Health. What will it take for this government to launch a public inquiry into the death of Effie Blake of Fort McPherson?

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

Return to Question 308-14(3): Public Inquiry into the Death of Effie Blake

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Member for Mackenzie Delta that as a department, we take this issue very seriously. We were very saddened by the results of Ms. Blake's illness. My office has talked with Ms. Blake's family. I have requested in writing that the coroner's office undertake an inquiry into the specific circumstances surrounding Ms. Blake's death. I have spoken with the chief coroner today, as well as having written a letter and sent it off to them. We as well are very interested in getting all the details we can to ensure that an unfortunate incident such as this one does not occur again. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 308-14(3): Public Inquiry into the Death of Effie Blake

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Madam Minister, for that. I look forward to seeing the results of that inquiry. I for one would like to ensure that the inquiry is open to the public, so we do have input from other individuals or people who may have had a similar experience. I would like to ask the Minister, will she be tabling a terms of reference in regard to how the inquiry will be taking place and exactly what the method of that inquiry will be? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 308-14(3): Public Inquiry into the Death of Effie Blake

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be making a statement on the overall approach I will be taking on this issue within the next day or two. I also would like to inform the Member that on September 21st, a three-member panel led by Dr. Ann Fanning of Edmonton, who is a world expert on TB control, was appointed to conduct a review and report back to us. We now have a final draft of this document. We are just waiting for the final copy of it.

When we are able to receive this final report from Dr. Fanning as well, I hope that we would be able to, when she comes here, make a briefing available to any Members who are interested in this and as well that she

would have the opportunity to speak to the family, to Mr. Krutko, to any Members and really assist us in ensuring that we have the proper processes and procedures in place to ensure that we do not have this situation occur again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 308-14(3): Public Inquiry into the Death of Effie Blake

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is in regard to keeping this process transparent and open. Will the Minister make the report that will be coming forth from the doctor, that she mentioned, public?

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

Further Return to Question 308-14(3): Public Inquiry into the Death of Effie Blake

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is important to differentiate between the two reports. The report that will be coming forward from Dr. Fanning has to do with the overall subject of tuberculosis and how it is screened for and treated, and those kinds of mechanisms. What I have asked the chief coroner's office to undertake is a public inquiry into the specific details surrounding Mrs. Blake's specific case. Certainly, when we have received confirmation on that back from the chief coroner's office, my hope is that the inquiry will be public and then we will be able to receive the input of people who would have information which could contribute to this particular inquiry. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 308-14(3): Public Inquiry into the Death of Effie Blake

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister table the recommendations of the outcome of the inquiry so that they can be hopefully put into legislation and taken into account in our health acts and legislation that governs the health care system in the North, so that we can make these changes? So that this does not happen again?

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

Further Return to Question 308-14(3): Public Inquiry into the Death of Effie Blake

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Fanning report, which is close to being completed, will be made available, as I said, to Members and hopefully a briefing by Dr. Fanning herself. As to the terms of reference for the inquiry portion specifically related to Mrs. Blake, these

terms of reference will be in the hands of the chief coroner to determine. It is my hope that this would be a public process. We are talking about two different things here.

The terms of reference under which we asked Dr. Fanning to conduct this report that she has done, we can make available to the Member. Thank you

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

Question 309-14(3): Evaluation of Chief of Staff Position

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Initially I did not have a question in this area, but my memory is now refreshed as to where we left off when we recessed our session. At this time I have a question for the chairman of the Financial Management Board with respect to the job classification system that we have in place, and how the chief of staff position falls into it, especially when we relate it to the pay and benefits.

It is on public record that the Premier stated that where it refers to deputy minister-like benefits in that area, it is still a chief of staff position. I would like to know from the chairman of FMB, does this fit into the job classification system and how does it fit in there if it does? How often do they make these kind of changes? There is a big difference in pay levels between executive assistants and deputy ministers. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. I just want to remind Members to be aware that sometimes they are asking more than one question. In this, I sort of heard more than one, but I will allow the Minister to respond to whichever one he wishes to deal with. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 309-14(3): Evaluation of Chief of Staff Position

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The position of chief of staff is a new position. It is one that is has not been in the job classification system of the government over the years because it did not exist until the beginning of this government.

In terms of the benefits, including salary and so on, then it does fit pretty much in the same category as do deputy ministers. Whether or not it is actually built into the system yet, I am not certain. I would have to check on that and get back to the Member on whether or not it is there already.

Certainly at some point though the intention would be that this position would fit in the category similar to deputy ministers. Thank you

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

Supplementary to Question 309-14(3): Evaluation of Chief of Staff Position

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully those guidelines for deputy ministers would also be attached. Further, Mr. Speaker, with the Hay Plan job classification system and the pay equity case that is going on, which impacts that job classification system, how does this impact on that? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 309-14(3): Evaluation of Chief of Staff Position

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there is any impact at all in terms of pay equity with regard to this specific position. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 309-14(3): Evaluation of Chief of Staff Position

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to the earlier question and his response to it that he was not sure if this position has already been put into the job classification system and what needs to be done in that area, it clearly states, Mr. Speaker, in page 1624 of Hansard where the Premier states that the contract says that she is a chief of staff and that she is an executive assistant. Mr. Speaker, executive assistants are, I believe, classified in the job classification system. Is that not a fact? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 309-14(3): Evaluation of Chief of Staff Position

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I believe there is a category for executive assistants. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 309-14(3): Evaluation of Chief of Staff Position

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the pay range for that category?

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

Supplementary to Question 309-14(3): Evaluation of Chief of Staff Position

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that as notice. I do not have the information with me on

exactly what the pay range is for that category. Thank you.

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

Question 310-14(3): Addressing Highway Emergencies

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to touch on an issue that I have brought up in this House a number of times and it has to do with safety on our highways. From the latest information I have, the Minister of Health is the lead Minister on this, so I will direct my question to her.

I have been driving a number of times, since the last time I brought this up in the House, between here and Hay River especially, and I do not see any signs out there. I wonder if the Minister of Health could give us an update on what is being done with safety on our highways as far as responding to emergencies on the highway? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Health, Madam Groenewegen.

Return to Question 310-14(3): Addressing Highway Emergencies

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, an interdepartmental committee with representatives from Health and Social Services, Municipal and Community Affairs and Transportation has been established to clarify mandates and to establish parameters for the development of emergency response services, and MACA is the lead department on this initiative. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 310-14(3): Addressing Highway Emergencies

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clarification, if I want to ask a further question would I have to direct it to MACA then?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Yes, the question should only go to the person that you originally asked your question of. However, in this case, the honourable Minister is also the Acting Premier and she, in that capacity, can redirect a question if she wishes. Mr. Delorey, your question.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is, if the review is going on, have there been any results reached in any area? One of the areas that is important is the trucking industry as far as being able to respond to accidents on the highway. I was wondering if she could report on anything that has been done with the trucking industry as to information being established.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for Health, Madam Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 310-14(3): Addressing Highway Emergencies

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to redirect Mr. Delorey's question to the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. The honourable Minister responsible for MACA, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today the information I have is that the municipalities operate, some have those services in their communities, but they are on a responsive basis. For instance, if there is an accident they would be responding. Although just to make the Member aware, the RCMP is the primary contact, and it not only involves our department but also Health and Social Services and the regional health board. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 310-14(3): Addressing Highway Emergencies

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we drive from High Level north into Alberta, the signs show up very quickly about 911 and a response on the highways. I was wondering if anyone had looked into what it would cost to extend the 911 into the Territories or, if not, throughout the Territories? Could it be extended to cover a certain portion of our highways? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for MACA, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is sort of a new issue with us, so we will definitely take that and discuss it with our department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. That was not taken as notice, so final supplementary, if you wish. No supplementary. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 311-14(3): Non-Renewable Resource Strategy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Minister responsible for RWED, Mr. Handley, and it relates to the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy. Before Christmas, and also before the last part of our election, our Premier came before this House and gleefully announced that we were going to get a couple of million dollars towards some bridge building in the Sahtu, and that we were to consider this as a down payment on our Non-Renewable Resource Strategy. Mr. Speaker, to me that means that there would be regular incremental payments subsequent to

that, and I am wondering if the Minister can tell us how that is coming.

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

Return to Question 311-14(3): Non-Renewable Resource Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we did receive roughly \$3.7 million from the federal government through DIAND for bridge construction all along the Mackenzie winter road. Since that time we have had a meeting. Mr. Kakfwi and myself met with Minister Nault. We have had several discussions with him. The Premier has had a meeting with the Prime Minister. I am meeting with the Minister of Finance on, I believe, March 4th, so we are continuing negotiations.

The approach from the federal government to date has been that they would not be writing us a cheque for the whole amount that we have asked for under the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy, but they would be looking favourably at various priorities that we negotiate with them.

Our priorities tend to be pretty much in all of the areas, largely on people and infrastructure, and we will continue to work with the federal Ministers to ensure that we get more than that first down payment. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 311-14(3): Non-Renewable Resource Strategy

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will acknowledge that the Premier and Mr. Handley have before told us that we would not be receiving one lump sum cheque, and I can appreciate that. This concept of a down payment on our Non-Renewable Resource Strategy - is that the Premier's take on the matter, or is that Mr. Nault's? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 311-14(3): Non-Renewable Resource Strategy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the question is essentially asking me to give my opinion on this, so I will ask for some direction.

I have to take that question as notice because I do not know if I can answer that. You asked for my opinion on Mr. Kakfwi's view, whether it is his opinion or Mr. Nault's opinion. I will take it as notice. Thank you.

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

Question 312-14(3): Update on Stanton Regional Hospital Reorganization

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today goes to the Minister of Health and Social Services regarding the situation at Stanton Regional Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, many of the Yellowknife Members have been approached by our citizens over the last few months, who are concerned about what is going on, in terms of the amalgamation idea of a surgical unit with pediatrics and the general happenings with the hospital.

I was wondering if the Minister could, just for the benefit of those people and the people out there, update us on what is happening exactly with this unit? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 312-14(3): Update on Stanton Regional Hospital Reorganization

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just by way of a little background in response to Ms. Lee's question, in the fall of 2000, Stanton Regional Hospital Health Board developed plans to amalgamate surgery and pediatric units. The planned amalgamation of the units ceased due to concerns from staff and clients.

After the deferral of the amalgamation, Stanton took steps to reopen the surgery unit. A major requirement, in order to do that, was to hire nursing staff.

It is my understanding that if sufficient staff can be hired, the surgical unit will reopen March 5th, 2001. If sufficient staff cannot be hired to have both units, pediatrics and surgery, opened, the most likely option is that Stanton will open the surgical unit and care for the pediatric patients on that unit and, if necessary, also use half of the old pediatrics unit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 312-14(3): Update on Stanton Regional Hospital Reorganization

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of questions on this in this House and the Members were assured that the plan to amalgamate the units were scraped and that they were making all of their efforts to keep the units open. However, the lack of development in hiring in that unit has made some people to doubt that idea, or perhaps think that the plan was going to go ahead anyways.

I have had people coming and saying, "I do not think that they are ever going to reopen it and they are almost purposely not hiring." Could the Minister advise this House as to what efforts are being made to staff the unit with nurses and so on? Could the Minister do that, please?

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

Further Return to Question 312-14(3): Update on Stanton Regional Hospital Reorganization

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of factors that have contributed to the staffing being such that it is difficult to reopen the surgical unit. There have been a number of recent resignations from pediatrics and movement of staff among in-patient units.

The most recent report I have is that there were still five vacancies on the pediatric and surgical units which had to be filled in order to reopen the unit. I could not tell you exactly today if that number is still five or if it is something less than five. However, I can assure the Member that it is my understanding that the hospital is trying in earnest to identify and recruit the positions to proceed with the reopening of the surgical unit. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary to Question 312-14(3): Update on Stanton Regional Hospital Reorganization

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I do not think that I need to put it on record. I think it has already been said that for most people who are using that hospital or the staff that are working on it, whether they are nurses or doctors or anyone else, most people agree that amalgamating those units is not a good idea. A way has to be found to open that.

The date is starting to come very closely, it is March 4th or something, that they are working towards. However, I do not think it is just about hiring. I do not think we can hire the nurses on this. We have benefit packages that are attractive enough to hire them. We have had a retention and recruitment section working hard to hire these nurses, without any success. So I think that people have to be assured that there are extra steps being taken to attract the nurses, maybe at a similar rate that we did with doctors. It cannot be done just by trying, without having the packages. Would the Minister consider something like that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 312-14(3): Update on Stanton Regional Hospital Reorganization

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have not had any indication from the people who are recruiting for the Stanton Hospital that there has been a problem with the compensation packages.

There is a national and international shortage of nurses at this time and, certainly, we have taken unusual measures in order to retain and recruit registered

nurses in the past. We have had the nurses market supplement which this government had committed to and we are looking at extending that as well, to ensure that what we have to offer nurses is competitive.

However, we still are faced with a shortage. We have some long range plans in place to address those shortages, but I have seen the advertisements that have gone out and, like I said, it is my understanding that the Stanton Board is doing everything that they can.

The nurses are part of a collective agreement with a lot of other professions and it is difficult to isolate them, in terms of pay and benefits, when they are part of an overall unionized, collective unit.

So the only thing extraordinary that we have done is the nursing market supplement and, again, I can only assure that we are doing our best to work with the boards to identify people to fill these positions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Chair would like to caution Members about long preamble for supplementary questions. Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Final Supplementary to Question 312-14(3): Update on Stanton Regional Hospital Reorganization

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Final supplementary. The Minister, in her answer, indicated an existence of some sort of a long-range plan to recruit nurses. As well, she mentioned a nursing market supplement. Can I ask the Minister to table this document in this House, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The Honourable Minister for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 312-14(3): Update on Stanton Regional Hospital Reorganization

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of our long-term plans for recruiting nurses is to train Northerners to fill these positions. That will not be an immediate solution to the problem and I will be making a Minister's statement during this session on our nursing program, which is very successful.

As far as the details of the nurses market supplement, I could make the details of that particular incentive available to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member from Tū Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Question 313-14(3): Increasing Revenues From Canada

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for Mr. Handley, the Minister

responsible for Finance and the overall budget of the Northwest Territories.

This is a budget session and we will be looking at the budget pretty soon. I am anticipating that the budget is not going to be that great. We have already heard in answers from other Ministers and questions from the Members that there are shortages in funding.

I am wondering what the Minister of Finance and his colleagues are doing to get more money from the federal government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The question was pretty straight-forward. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 313-14(3): Increasing Revenues From Canada

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe the question was what are we doing to get more revenues, more dollars from the federal government.

We are continuing to meet with, as I mentioned earlier, the Prime Minister, the Minister of DIAND, the Minister of Finance. We are continuing to advance our Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy and that one, as I said, we are talking and meeting again with Minister Paul Martin on March 4th.

So that one, we are continuing to push ahead. We believe the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy is a good strategy and I think the responses we have had from the federal government have been generally supportive of it. However, we have not found the way yet of being able to advance it, in terms of commitments for more than small amounts of money.

On the other side, we are also working, through my department, on an economic development agreement. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development continues to take the lead on that one and we are still hoping to have an economic development agreement soon.

As well, we continue to talk with the Department of Finance to ensure that we are getting a fair return through the Formula Financing Agreement and that one, again, we will be continuing to advance. We have to keep in mind on that side, though, that the federal Minister of Finance has taken a position that he will not make major changes on the agreement until it is renegotiated in 2004.

Those will be the main initiatives. In addition to that, other departments that continue to look at funding for areas, such as transportation, for health and in other areas. So we have a number of initiatives all going all the time to ensure that we are getting maximum benefit through funding from the federal government.

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

Supplementary to Question 313-14(3): Increasing Revenues From Canada

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was listening to the radio, CBC Radio, yesterday while I was driving and one of the comments made was the federal coffers are so high that money is coming out of the Liberals' ears.

While here in the Northwest Territories, our government is introducing taxes, such as the proposed hotel tax, to penny-pinch \$1.3 million from the people of the Northwest Territories to inject into the tourism industry.

Our Minister of Finance and our Government Leader are negotiating with the federal government. This Assembly has been negotiating since day one. The last Assembly negotiated since day one. The Assembly before that, too. When is this government going to do something different, something outrageous, to get the attention of the Canadian population and the federal government to get some results?

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

Further Return to Question 313-14(3): Increasing Revenues From Canada

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope it does not come down to the point where we have to become outrageous in order to get the attention of the federal government.

As the Member has pointed out, I heard it this morning as well, that the federal government is doing very well in terms of their overall surpluses. So I hope that helps us.

I think we need to discuss this whole issue more. We have had a strategy, mainly through the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy, and as well as an EDA that we are working with.

I think the main thing that we have done differently than previous governments is, through the Intergovernmental Forum, we are trying to work in partnership with the aboriginal leaders as well, to have them onside.

We are also working, and I continue to work every opportunity I have, with business to get them onside. However, I believe, as the Member suggests, it may be necessary to look at other ways of getting attention to the opportunities that are here. Tomorrow when I give my budget address, I intend to highlight that point as well. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 313-14(3): Increasing Revenues From Canada

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This government's charge for delivering programs and services such as health, education, housing, et cetera, while resource

development happens, the royalties of those developments goes to the federal government. We, here in the GNWT working with our aboriginal partners, are spending a great amount of dollars developing plans and strategies to extract these resources, yet we do not get anything from the federal government. We do not receive any royalties.

If we do create a dollar, they take 80 cents. That does not seem fair. Yet the federal government is saying they are helping us. They are giving us a million dollars for roads, for bridges on winter roads, one percent of the total budget they are going to give us. That is treating us like children. This is not working.

Again, I ask, what will the government do to make things different? Are we going to continue negotiating or are we going to go down in Ottawa in masks to make a stand and say no? Or are we just going to give the key to Mr. Bobby Overvold here in DIAND's head office? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. I would just caution Members again to ask one question and limit it to one question when you direct it to Ministers and stick to the same topic. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 313-14(3): Increasing Revenues From Canada

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have to continue to work with the federal government. I do not see any other way. The difficulty for us and the one hurdle we have not been able to get over yet has been to get the federal government's attention and agreement that it is worthwhile to make investments in our people, our infrastructure, our businesses now. That certainly is a frustration after working hard on it for a year to not be able to say that yes, we have them completely onside.

We need to do that though in partnership with the aboriginal leaders. We need them onside as well. I hope we make a lot more progress through the Intergovernmental Forum. There is certainly concern if we continue to see non-renewable resources extracted and very little benefit coming to the Northwest Territories. I think a lot of people are asking that same question of why are we doing this if we are not getting a fair return on the royalties and other benefits from it? I think the aboriginal leaders are probably asking the same question. I certainly have the same question in my mind.

I think we need to talk in this House. We need to look at alternatives before we, as the Member says, all en masse go to Ottawa or some other activity that might be considered to be outrageous. If there is any advice, I am open to it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 313-14(3): Increasing Revenues From Canada

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that the territorial government is working with the aboriginal governments to a large degree in preparing people of the Northwest Territories. We are in a catch-22 situation where we need resource development to create employment.

The question I have for the Minister is, in his expert judgement or knowledge, although we want to work with the federal government, is the federal government working with us? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 313-14(3): Increasing Revenues From Canada

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we put together our strategy last year, the first step was to meet with the Minister of DIAND as the lead Minister for the North, meet with the Prime Minister, with the Minister of Finance. All of them said that they understood our situation and asked us to put together our strategy. What do we need in order to have good, sound investments in the North?

We put together the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy. We have been explaining that in both the political level and also at the bureaucratic level, to ensure that people understand that. We have taken it to the aboriginal leaders on two occasions, once with the Intergovernmental Forum and once with the Aboriginal Summit.

I believe most aboriginal leaders are generally onside. They may not agree with us on every piece of it, but generally speaking, they are in agreement with what we are trying to do.

I think we are making some progress on this. We have to be very careful as a government that we do not alienate our partners in it, particularly the aboriginal leaders but also the industry side.

Is the federal government working with us? I think they are. I think we need to get their attention and understanding of what is happening in the North. As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is coming to Yellowknife on March 4th. I am meeting with him here. I hope to again have him in Yellowknife to get a better understanding of the opportunities that exist here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The time for oral questions has elapsed. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return to Written Question 13-14(3): Employment Opportunities for Northwest Territories Post-

Secondary Students Graduating in Spring 2001

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by Mr. Bell on November 6, 2000, regarding employment opportunities for post-graduate students in the spring of 2001.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Minister Ootes, I understand that you have to read the whole question once you begin the question. Continue reading.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It had a little note on here that said you had the option of reading the written return. Those little yellow notes are hard to read.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question asked by Mr. Bell on November 6, 2000, regarding employment opportunities for post-graduate students in the spring of 2001.

There are currently 135 students receiving student financial assistance, who we believe will be in a position to graduate from their programs in the spring of 2001. Although the department does not know the number of those students planning to return north, there are a number of initiatives underway to encourage students to return to the Northwest Territories.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has contacted all potential graduating students enrolled in teacher education programs and has provided contact numbers of education authorities in the Northwest Territories. There are also ongoing efforts by education authorities to recruit teachers currently living and working in the Northwest Territories as well as graduates of the Aurora College Teacher Education Program.

In January, Premier Stephen Kakfwi announced the government would guarantee jobs for northern graduates from recognized teaching and nursing programs. Term positions with the GNWT will also be provided for graduates in priority occupations. In addition, employment opportunities are listed through the student financial assistance newsletter and website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Written Question 15-14(3): Fort McPherson Water Quality

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 15-14(3) asked by Mr. Krutko on November 9, 2000, to the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs about why residents of Fort McPherson have to pay more for water that is contaminated with THM's, particularly when people do not trust the water that comes out of their taps.

Various measures, such as the use of water filters and frequent water quality testing, indicate that THM's in the

Fort McPherson water supply continue to be within acceptable levels as set out in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water.

In addition, the Member is aware that a new water source has been found and a new water supply system is under construction. Construction of roads, tanks and the facility are underway and will be completed by spring. This system will begin supplying the community's water next summer.

Department representatives are already assisting the hamlet to review the operating costs of the existing system and to understand the higher than expected costs. There are options available, such as an extended payment schedule for the Public Works and Services invoice for operating costs. Until this review is completed, the hamlet cannot determine the appropriate water rates and Municipal and Community Affairs cannot assess the financial circumstances of the community government. A thorough understanding of the financial situation is needed before any consideration of additional funding could be made.

Return to Written Question 16-14(3): PeopleSoft Project

Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Written Question 16-14(3) asked by Mr. Bell on November 15, 2000 to the Minister responsible for the Department of Finance regarding the PeopleSoft Project.

The following information is an update of what has taken place in relation to the PeopleSoft system since May, 2000:

- June 2000 Preparation and testing for new tax updates
- July 2000 Implementation of new tax updates
- August 2000 The new recruitment module brought on-line.

Teachers were brought back onto the system for the new school year.

Analysis for the development of the Grievance and Disciplinary Tracking module began.
- September 2000 Payroll processing time cut down from 2 days per cycle to 1.5 days per cycle.

Re-introduction of payroll commitments.
- October 2000 Completed software upgrade to Version 7.01.
- November 2000 Four weeks of user training took place.

Completed software tools upgrade to Version 7.01.

- December 2000 System changes and payment of retroactive pay to excluded and senior management employees took place due to new terms and conditions of agreement.

Preparation for calendar year end and T4's began.

Preparation, testing and implementation of January 2001 tax rates.

Preparation for system changes and payment of retroactive pay to UNW employees due to the new Collective Agreement began.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 14: An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Legislative Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, and wishes to report that Bill 14 is ready for consideration in committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 94-14(3): Northwest Territories Law Foundation 18th Annual Report, Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2000

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Law Foundation 18th Annual Report, Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 13, tabling of documents.

Tabled Document 95-14(3): Annual Report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, April, 1999 - June, 2000

In accordance to section 99(3) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table the Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly on operations of the office of the Conflict of Interest

Commissioner during Mr. Robert C. Clark as Acting Conflict of Interest Commissioner. The report covers the period from April, 1999 to June, 2000.

Tabled Document 96-14(3): Changes to Indemnities and Allowances (Schedule C of the Act) Regulations

In accordance to Section 21(3) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I wish to table a copy of the Change to Indemnities and Allowances, Schedule C of the Act, Regulations.

Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

Tabled Document 97-14(3): Response to Petitions 1-14(3), 2-14(3), 3-14(3), 4-14(3) and 5-14(3)

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Rule 42(10), I wish to table responses to the following petitions: Petition 1-14(3) presented by the Member for Nunakput and responded to by the Speaker; Petition 2-14(3) presented by the Member for Mackenzie Delta and responded to by the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs; Petition 3-14(3) presented by the Member for Mackenzie Delta and responded to by the Minister responsible for Transportation; Petition 4-14(3) presented by the Member for North Slave and responded to by the Minister responsible for Transportation; Petition 5-14(3) presented by the Member for Mackenzie Delta and responded to by the Premier.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Finance, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 19: Appropriation Act, 2001-2002

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 16, 2001, I will move that Bill 19, Appropriation Act 2001-2002, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Item 20, report of the committee of the whole. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development at adjournment today. For tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, and at

10:30 a.m. of the Special Committee on Self-Government and the Sunset Clause.

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 15, 2001:

1. Prayer
2. Budget Address
3. Ministers' Statements
4. Members' Statements
5. Returns To Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Budget Address (1st of 7 allotted days)
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 15th at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

