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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, June 6, 2003****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 50-14(6): Western Premiers' Conference**

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be attending the Western Premier's Conference in Kelowna, British Columbia, starting Monday night, for Monday and Tuesday, along with the Premiers of British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nunavut and Yukon. The Northwest Territories will be leading two agenda items at this year's conference.

I will be speaking to the issue of devolution, in the context of a general discussion on the state of federal/provincial/territorial relations and options to improve the currently rather strained relations between provinces and territories and the federal government.

I intend to make the case that devolution is an important step towards rebuilding these relationships by setting the stage for mutually respectful intergovernmental relations.

All jurisdictions must manage and control the scope and pace of development of their resources and benefit from that development. We will make it clear that a devolution agreement will allow northern governments to influence the scope and pace of future developments and will ensure, as well, that Canadians are ready to seize the economic opportunities brought on by development of northern resources.

It is imperative that First Ministers realize that a devolution agreement is an important element in ensuring that northern governments have the financial resources to invest in their people and their economies, and that it is, in fact, in the national interest to support a fair and equitable agreement.

The Northwest Territories is also leading the discussion on diamonds. As you know, Minister Antoine and the Department of RWED have worked hard to raise the national awareness about diamonds.

I will continue to make the case that Canada needs to develop a Canadian diamond strategy that aims to maximize the benefits to all Canadians from all stages of the emerging diamond industry, including exploration, mining and value added. I will seek support from Premiers to invite the federal government to join the provinces and territories in the development of a Canadian diamond strategy, including an open exchange of the issues associated with the promotion of a Canadian secondary diamond industry.

As in previous meetings of this nature, I will, of course, work closely with my northern colleagues, honourable Premiers Okalik and Fentie, to ensure that our collective northern voices are heard loud and clear.

I will report back to the House on any progress upon my return. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On GNWT Capital Planning Process In The Deh Cho**

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to make a statement on the capital planning process. This issue has been a concern for quite some time now, it's been raised in this House many times, it's also an issue that was raised to the Non-Tax-Based Community Affairs committee and we heard complaints from all over the North. In fact, my colleague Mr. Lafferty made a statement regarding this issue two days ago. Granted this government has made several attempts to rectify the situation, last winter the Premier sent a letter to all the communities in the Northwest Territories, asking them for input on capital plans. I'm not sure what the outcome of that was, we haven't seen anything yet.

So I took it upon myself as an MLA to go to the communities I represent to meet with the chiefs and to meet with the leaders, to bring in some of the Ministers. Almost every Minister on that side of the House came to the communities and met and talked about capital planning and capital projects. Some came twice, in fact. There was a lot of time, a lot of energy and a lot of money spent on this whole process.

So when it came to this year's capital planning, I was quite comfortable with the meetings we had, with the 20-year needs assessment, with last year's business plans, that we were going to have a fairly decent capital plan in place. I was quite pleased to see that the Minister announced that we would have government officials attending the communities, having meetings with the leaders and working on developing a long-term plan.

So you can imagine my surprise, Mr. Speaker, when I was informed that this group was actually presented plans that didn't reflect anything that we talked about. In fact, I'll show you Hay River's plan. For the next three years we have \$25,000. What happened to the school that we agreed to? The reserve is putting in \$250,000 of their own money. It's not here. The road improvement program; that's not here. We had an arena, we had a health centre in the 20-year plan. That's disappeared. Where is it?

Mr. Speaker, we have NWT-wide paving programs that have been announced and swimming pool programs that are not reflected anywhere. So I ask where did this new plan come from? When I ask the Ministers to explain it, they say they don't have any say into what goes into the capital plan. It's up to a deputy ministers' capital planning review committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. McLeod, your time for Member's statements is over. Mr. McLeod.

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

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

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, when I approached the Ministers for some answers they claimed it's up to a review committee made up of deputy ministers. Many of the Ministers have never met this committee. So I ask who's representing my interest? Who meets and lobbies the deputy ministers for projects in my riding? And what is my role as an MLA in this whole process? The Ministers certainly seem to have little say. I don't even know where to direct my questions.

The responsibility for capital planning for this government lies with an invisible, in-the-shadows group of deputy ministers whose names we don't even know.

AN HON. MEMBER: Foggy bottom.

MR. MCLEOD: Maybe, Mr. Speaker, that's who we, as MLAs, should be meeting with. Maybe that's who should be going to the communities to talk to the community leaders. Maybe we should be reducing the number of Ministers on the other side of the House and making these people responsible, because they're doing all the work. They're the ones being charged with the responsibility. We're always hearing task teams, deputy ministers' review committees.

We need a system, Mr. Speaker, that is going to be clear, that places the responsibility back into hands of the Ministers. We need a system that will give us a say as MLAs, and we need a system that's going to be clear and transparent so our people in the communities can take part.

Mr. Speaker, the system we have now is complicated, it doesn't work, we don't know who's in charge and we have to fix it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Wood Buffalo On NWT Highways

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the past few years there have been numerous accidents involving bison along our highways. I think it is time for the Department of Transportation to put more safety measures in place. Bison are moving further north, and signage alerting motorists of wildlife is needed. I think it would be wise for the department to put large signs on Highway No. 3 indicating buffalo between Yellowknife and Edzo and along the Rae access road.

A few weeks ago, one of my constituents hit a buffalo at kilometre 268, which is between Yellowknife and Stagg River. Their vehicle was totaled. I am concerned that unless safety notices are posted alerting motorists of wildlife, there will be more wildlife hurt and motorists injured and more vehicles will be damaged.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions on this statement.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On NWT Track And Field Championships In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon in Hay River the closing ceremonies for the 13th Annual Territorial Track and Field Meet will take place. This year's meet got kicked off in fine form again on Wednesday night, as 1,142 athletes and their 130 coaches poured into the arena under the banners of their schools. Whether the delegation from the little school in Kakisa or rather large from as far away as the Samuel Hearne in Inuvik, school spirit soared as the audience applauded to the backdrop of music and flashing lights.

The 300 volunteers required to carry off this event were readily identifiable in the crowd in their bright yellow jackets, sponsored by Hay River corporate contributors.

Also cheering on the athletes on stage were eight Members of this Assembly, and I would like to thank them for making that effort at the end of our very first busy day of session. Your presence, Mr. Speaker, and that of Minister Jim Antoine, Minister Roger Allen, Minister Vince Steen, Members Michael McLeod, Leon Lafferty, Mr. Delorey and myself, I am sure, conveyed the government's support of this event for these young people.

The lighting of the torch, the athletes' oath, the greetings from Sharon Firth and Michael Argue attending as part of Sport North Esteem Team and the musical presentations all made for a very exciting event.

I look forward to hearing the stories and highlights about outstanding efforts and achievement of this year's meet in the days ahead. Thank you again goes to the volunteer efforts of Hay River for hosting what I'm sure was another very successful territorial Track and Field Meet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Tribute To NWT Seniors

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to all the seniors in our communities throughout the Northwest Territories for the crucial role that they play in giving us guidance, providing us wisdom and also showing us the road to respecting others.

Mr. Speaker, the seniors are a key aspect to how our communities function. Yet, Mr. Speaker, still today we see a lot of barriers put in the way of our seniors to partake in just the day-to-day work of our councils, or in providing language programs, or even in pursuing sewing as a hobby. Mr. Speaker, I think as a government we have to bring down these barriers so that seniors can play a meaningful role in all our communities.

We talk about seniors' fuel subsidy programs, where there's an inequity in the way that it was calculated based on seniors income. I raised that issue in this House and there has been some direction to change that.

We have a system that basically deals with property tax rebates, where you have to go in every year and reapply. We suggested that they consider that once you register as a senior, automatically that system will continue.

Mr. Speaker, there are other initiatives in our communities that we feel are crucial to keeping our seniors in our communities and making sure that they don't have to be sent away to long-term care wards either in regional centres or elsewhere. We need more seniors' independent housing in our communities. We need to ensure that there are elders' homes available to our seniors so we can offer them an alternative to being sent away; to keep them in our communities so that they can be close to their loved ones and families, especially their grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important as a government that we take that extra step and make that extra effort to make the lives of our seniors more comfortable. We need to simplify the policies, procedures and red tape so that the seniors don't have to deal with the extra pressures and stress of worrying about why their pension was deducted, or why was a fuel subsidy taken away, or why did we not allow them some improvements to their independent houses through housing programs.

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

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we as a government do everything we can not only to improve the lives of our seniors, but to simplify the bureaucracy that seniors have to go through. That's something we can do here in this House for the benefit of our seniors.

With that, again I would like to thank all our seniors in the Northwest Territories for all that they do for us day in and day out, and wish them good health and mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Krutko. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement On Regulatory Process Impeding Northern Development

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to a matter that has proven time and time again to be a hindrance in northern development. The matter I refer to, Mr. Speaker, is the cumbersome regulatory

process in effect in the Northwest Territories which does absolutely nothing to show prospective developers that the North is open and ready to do business.

Mr. Speaker, I was very disturbed to learn that a large international seismic company by the name of Western Geco is unable to return to Hay River this year due to their uncertainty about our unyielding regulatory process. As a direct result of this, NTCL in Hay River -- a wholly northern company -- has lost a \$2.5 million contract, and that is totally unacceptable to me.

Western Geco is an international seismic company that conducts seismic studies and gathers data, which in turn they sell to oil and gas companies. The project in question is the study of the Mackenzie and Liard rivers, and it could be said that this is indeed part of the big picture, that being oil and gas development and the Mackenzie Valley pipeline.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that Western Geco has conducted these same seismic studies worldwide, in such places as Europe, Asia and the Amazon. Last year alone, Mr. Speaker, Western Geco spent between \$5 million and \$8 million on this project, and a fair chunk of that was spent in the Hay River area. However, most of it was spent proving that their system is environmentally friendly and it did not kill fish.

But, Mr. Speaker, due to the uncertainty surrounding our regulatory process, Western Geco lost momentum on this project and has reassigned their equipment and personnel to other areas until next year; providing, of course, that they are approved by then.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that due to the hoops that companies like Western Geco have to jump through, such as uncertainties on timelines and the length of time to be approved, a review must be undertaken by this government of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we as a government be seen as proactive and encourage developers to come and do business in the North. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is crucial that we devote more resources to such groups as the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board so that these long, cumbersome processes are shortened. We need to stop coming up with roadblocks that impede development.

Mr. Speaker, this would go a long way to ensuring that companies such as Western Geco are able to do business in the North, and prove to developers that the North is a realistic place to come and do business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Samuel Hearne Secondary School Graduation Ceremony

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, June is a special time of year. Not only does the colour return to the land in the form of gardens and the greenery that we now see; as well, Mr. Speaker, it's a special time of year for students across the Northwest Territories, as the majority of students look at this month as the end of their school years between kindergarten to Grade 12.

Mr. Speaker, it also marks the end of a journey for some of those students, as some of those students look towards their graduations and their final exams during this month. I say this because, Mr. Speaker, I will be travelling back to my constituency today to attend the graduation ceremony of Samuel Hearne Secondary School. It has always been a pleasure to travel back and see the students and their parents as they finish this part of their journey, and then embark on their next as they look at life as an adult and take that journey in earnest, to move forward and take their skills and put them into practice.

So I'll just inform the House and my constituents that I'll be glad to be home this evening and take part in that activity. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Community Wellness Coalition in Yellowknife

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I, along with a number of my colleagues, had a chance to attend a Community Wellness Coalition meeting. This is a group of concerned citizens who have decided to band together to do something to change the state of alcohol and drug abuse, specifically in our community, Mr. Speaker. It's not just a Yellowknife problem clearly. A lot of the people who are in need are from surrounding communities, because I think as we all know, as many gaps as there are in these services in Yellowknife, the problem is even further exacerbated in the communities which have even fewer services.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about something that I found very interesting around this recently. The RCMP have become obviously very involved in trying to combat the problem, and it's no secret when you look to their motivation, Mr. Speaker, when you find that 90 percent of their calls and 90 percent of their work is alcohol related, when it speaks to callouts in the city of Yellowknife. That's amazing, Mr. Speaker, especially when you consider that we don't think of people who are drunk in public as criminals. They really are people in need. But 90 percent of the RCMP workload on callouts is alcohol related. It's simply amazing.

They sent a number of members of this detachment to Anchorage, Alaska, to study a program and a way of coping and dealing with the problem in that city, and they invited a member of our local media, Ms. Jennifer McPhee, from the local newspaper to tag along. I'm glad they did that. It was an amazing and great way to use the media to their advantage. We know that the media has such reach and has played an amazing role here in galvanizing public support for this cause. I've had a number of people stop to talk to me about the innovative Anchorage approach, and ask me if this was something that we were considering and discussing. I can reassure the House and reassure the public, that after the Community Wellness Coalition meeting, this is certainly on the radar of the coalition, it is something they are discussing, and I think we can give full marks and full credit to the RCMP for looking to find solutions and do something about this. We know they are under-resourced. That's a challenge that we continue to grapple with, and something that this Assembly is going to have to find a solution for.

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

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

MR. BELL: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the RCMP for offering to take Ms. McPhee along on this research mission. I think we'll see in the coming months that this will have an impact like few other approaches could. I also want to thank the local paper for agreeing to send their reporter along to do the work. Clearly, she had to be out of town, there were other stories that she couldn't cover. There simply would have been a cost to a small business like the newspaper for doing something like this. I think as politicians quite often we like to criticize the media, feel that we're unfairly treated, and obviously that's because of the immense reach. Simply there are times, that to be honest, we'd rather they didn't have the reach when we're in compromising positions. By the nature of the media, you can see that this reach that they have is affecting our community, it is galvanizing support for this cause. I'm glad to see that. I wish the Community Wellness Coalition all success, and we'll continue to play an active role in this coalition. I think it's great to see something happening here. It's great to see members of our community mobilizing to find solutions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Successes At 9th Annual Skills Canada Competition

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This being Friday, I am pleased to make a statement on a good news story. Mr. Speaker, 29 competitors and 12 advisors from Skills Canada Northwest Territories and Nunavut, along with over 600 other competitors from across Canada attended the 9th Annual Canadian Skills Competition from May 29th to June 1st in Waterloo, Ontario. The two-day competition challenged participants through projects that tested their theoretical and practical knowledge in various trades and technology areas.

Skills Canada NWT/Nunavut experienced unprecedented success at these competitions, bringing home one gold, four silver and two bronze medals; a total of seven medals. Of the 29 NWT and Nunavut competitors, approximately 25 percent of the team placed in the top three in Canada. This is an enormous accomplishment that makes us all very, very proud indeed, Mr. Speaker.

The winner who received a gold medal in worksite safety is Isabel MacDougall from Iqaluit; and silver medal restaurant services, Joel Fortier from Iqaluit; from Team NWT a silver medal was received in heavy equipment mechanics by Reg Evans of Fort Smith; another silver medal in graphic design by Richard Walsh in Yellowknife; another silver medal in worksite safety by Mara Smith of Yellowknife; bronze medal in job interview by Amanda Johns of Inuvik; and a bronze medal in prepared speech by Mandy Lyons of Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, Allyson Stroeder, executive director of Skills Canada NWT/Nunavut deserves a lot of congratulations for this, but attributes the success of the team to the partnerships

that the organization has been building in the North. For example, Mr. Speaker, this organization is the only one in Canada to insist that their competitors have completed the Workers' Compensation Board safety and the young worker program in order to compete in the worksite safety event. It is paying off, because the team won the gold last year and they won again this year.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that not only these medals, but the team spirit was so strong that this team tied with Alberta for the Spirit Award in the yelling and cheering contest at the closing ceremonies.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the NWT and Nunavut team have made their presence known to all other teams across Canada, and I'm sure everyone in the House joins me in sending our heartfelt congratulations for a job very well done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Government Response To Affordable Rent Petition

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, on March 5th of this year in the previous session, I tabled a petition of some 500 signatures from people in Yellowknife who are looking for answers to sustained and unaffordable increases in the cost of their rent.

Two days ago in this House, the Minister of Justice filed a response to that petition and in one area, Mr. Speaker, it was a fine answer, in fact one that had already been addressed where we were looking for more affordable housing to be built. Indeed, the Housing Corporation has assisted by making equity financing available to more builders, and much has been made of that and my compliments are duly given.

But, Mr. Speaker, on the issue of addressing affordable rents and the increases that many people have been experiencing, the Minister's response was a pathetic and flimsy and shabby and lazy attempt at taking the concerns of 500 people seriously. All the response did, Mr. Speaker, was dodge into the area of rent control. I'm running out of breath on this one, Mr. Speaker. I've said over and over and over, rent control is not something I want or the market wants. What we do want is a way for low and middle income people, who are seriously being hurt by rental increases, to be able to address this issue and find some way of resolving what is an unsustainable pressure on all sectors of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, the response demonstrated absolutely no innovation. It demonstrated absolutely no consultation, and it demonstrated absolutely no sensitivity to the situation that is affecting so many people here in Yellowknife and I think in communities that are also under the pressure of resource activity in the NWT. We're fortunate to have the kind of economic activity that we do have, Mr. Speaker, but the consequence of high rents is something that must be managed.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his Member's

statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Braden, you may conclude.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I reject that portion of the Minister's response to my voice and that of 500 other people in Yellowknife. With the resources that he has available as the Minister of Justice and as the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, I know he can do better. I would like him to go back and readdress the issue of affordable rental housing in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement On Developing A New Wildlife Act

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I got a letter from the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, responding to questions I asked in our last sitting about the Wildlife Act on March 12th. In his answer, Mr. Speaker, the Minister noted that rather than making amendments to the Wildlife Act -- because significant amendments were required to ensure consistency between the general provisions of the act and wildlife harvesting and management provisions of land claim agreements -- it was determined that it would be more prudent, timely and cost-effective to draft a new Wildlife Act.

But, Mr. Speaker, we've had, I think, one of the longest consultative processes ever undertaken for an act with our new Wildlife Act. Consultation has gone on for a number of years; very, very detailed consultation, in particular, for the last four years. In fact, we've spent, as a government, somewhere around \$1.5 million over the past four years on the consultation process, and that was outlined in the letter the Minister sent me as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, if we don't bring this legislation forward in the life of this Assembly, this expenditure is put at risk. How many times have we seen initiatives get lost as elections come and go? Often, a new crew of legislators will have different priorities or may face a new rash of critical issues, and things that were higher up on the agenda of the Assembly before slip off and don't get done. I'm worried that what we have here is an opportunity missed.

We were first told by the Minister in the year 2000, when this process was started, that we would see new legislation by the fall of 2002 at the latest. Later on that slipped, and we were told that we would see it in the February/March session of 2003. Then later still, we heard, well, we'll certainly have it done by June 2003 so we can have it in the House and completed by October.

But now we've been told, Mr. Speaker, that we can't do it in the life of this Assembly. I'm really sorry to hear that. I know that I've had a look at the latest document that has been put out, which is called "Drafting a New Wildlife Act for the Northwest Territories - A Progress Report" and it's set out in there what would be included in the new act.

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his

Member's statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and honourable Members. Mr. Speaker, I've talked about what's in this document with my constituents. I know they were certainly pleased with what they saw. They thought it reflected a reasonable compromise between what I'm sure the department heard from different points of view, and they were prepared to accept the provisions set out in here as being quite acceptable. So they saw no reason for this not to proceed.

I know we've heard from other Members in this House that their regions felt that we should proceed with a new act. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely disappointed that we have been told now that we won't see a new act. I really don't understand why, when the Minister last told this House that legislation could be tabled in this session. Why then, if that's possible, could we not table it in time that we could take it to second reading, get it to committee and have a chance of having it passed in October of this year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Member's Statement On Participation In NWT Track And Field Championships

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make my statement on the participation of youth in my riding, Inuvik Twin Lakes, in two major events in the Northwest Territories that happened to occur at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, the youth from Inuvik Twin Lakes have been participating in the NWT track and field championships in Hay River during this past week which concludes today. Mr. Speaker, I have seen examples of the dedication of sports teams, coaches and volunteers that put up such successful events. As the MLA for Inuvik Twin Lakes, I want to personally thank Dave Reid and Ruth Hoddy, for the dedication and supporting the following members of Samuel Hearne Secondary track and field team. Those students are: Dennis Dosedel; Holley Lenin; Ryan Binder; Derrick Seabrook; Danny Fehr; Gerrald Kisoun; Shane Gordon; Kyle Taylor; Noel Cockney; and Alex Groepper.

Mr. Speaker, travelling to other communities often overlaps events such as this, so with your concurrence, I would like to add a few extra words to compliment the youth of my riding. Today I want to take this opportunity to welcome the fiddle dancers to Yellowknife. They are the dancers from Ingamo Hall. They will be performing at the Elk's Hall tonight and the Aven Seniors' Manor on Saturday.

Mr. Speaker, these events allow the youth of my riding to travel to other constituencies not only to participate in events but to develop new friendships and new perspectives. I want to congratulate both groups for representing my riding and also the town of Inuvik. I wish them well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Exploring The Nahanni Region

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the opportunity in this Legislative Assembly as an ordinary MLA to stand up and say a few things with regard to my views as MLA. I just wanted to maybe talk briefly about this time of the year after the long cold winter we endured, after three months of close to 40 below, it's much appreciated to see this kind of warm weather coming about. Mr. Speaker, I grew up in the Fort Simpson region about 30 kilometres up the Mackenzie in a place called Rabbit Skin. In my language we call it Gah Dhiah. I always looked forward to seeing water and travelling along the Mackenzie River growing up and I still occasionally do that whenever I have an opportunity to go into my constituency. Three of the last four years, Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to explore our backyards down in the Mackenzie by going up the northern Nahanni River twice and canoeing out of there. Last summer, I canoed out of the Root River. It's a beautiful experience. I would rather do that on my holidays than go south and spend lots of dollars and be more tired coming back.

---Applause

So I like that experience. It brings me to the point that the students from the Charles Yohin School in Nahanni Butte collected money and organized a trip for themselves and their parents to the Nahanni National Park and that's where they are today. They've been there for a few days. It's a great experience for young people and their parents to experience our own backyard, which is a world class heritage park. As well, in Fort Simpson, for a number of years, the Grade 8 students have organized and raised dollars to also experience the Nahanni National Park. They also take a trip to Nahanni National Park with some of their parents as tutors and so forth. They raft the South Nahanni River. So it's a great experience for our younger people and for their parents and I think it shows that we have to concentrate on looking at taking holidays in our own backyard rather than going south. It's a great experience for the younger people to learn about our country. Thank you very much. Mahsi.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On National Seniors' Week

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is National Seniors' Week and as a Member of the Legislature for the Sahtu, I wanted to add a few comments as well. In our language, in the particular dialect of Fort Good Hope, the word for elders or seniors is denehisha, which means somebody held in high esteem. In the other dialects of the Sahtu, it is odah, which also means the same thing. It's somebody held in high esteem. This is a value that is shared with the Inuit, with the Inuvialuit, with the Metis and all northern peoples. It's something that many of us have been raised with and this is something I believe that all of us should be very proud of and try to support this rather unique tradition.

Last night, there was a gathering elders, seniors, from across the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon, as well as every province across the country. They have a rather unique evening of entertainment. Mr. Speaker, as you know, no other jurisdiction in this country could possibly see an event take place like that where the Speaker of the Legislature would actually be the master of ceremonies. As well Members of the

Legislature Jane Groenewegen and Mr. Paul Delorey were amongst the many people who came to show the seniors and elders that we are close to our communities, close to our people. The commissioner, Glenna Hansen, and I provided some entertainment, as well. The remarks were very well received that people across the country came to see that this is a very unique and different jurisdiction. I wanted to share that with people because I think this is one of the many elements as to why people will continue to come here.

If I could ask unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, to conclude.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his wonderful statement. Are there any nays?

---Laughter

There are no nays, Mr. Premier. You may conclude.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to share something on a personal side. My father-in-law who has been coming here to the North since 1982, he came to Fort Good Hope in the middle of the winter, he's been here, Hay River, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson. We've taken a river trip down the Mackenzie River together. In 1998, Neil and his wife Ellen Wilson, brought for the first time Neil's younger brother Cec, along with his wife Lois, from southern Ontario. One day he remarked to his younger brother with tremendous pride and humour, he said, "Cec, here we are elders, back home we are nothing but a couple of old guys." I just wanted to share that with you because people have been picking this up, the rather high esteem with which we hold people who are in their senior years and elders in our society. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. I believe the comment was made that it was the first time a Gum Boots performance was opened by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories and the Premier of the Northwest Territories as leading acts. It was a great evening.

---Laughter

Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Members' Statement On Acknowledgement Of Elder Helen Gruben

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as seniors' week draws to a close, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the time and effort that Helen Gruben has contributed towards the seniors' society as a representative of the Delta area. Ms. Gruben has served now for four years on the board and has assisted, I am sure, with many decisions and recommendations to the government as to ways to improve services to our seniors, as well as ways to improve our social programs overall. Mr. Speaker, I know that Ms. Gruben has spent many days travelling to meetings that have taken her away from home and I would like to, on behalf of my constituents, thank her for all the time that she spent on senior society issues and bringing back senior society concerns and issues to the boards on behalf of the seniors in my riding. I would personally like to thank Ms. Gruben for all her time and effort, Mr. Speaker.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take the opportunity to wish my daughter Shannon a happy birthday for today and

my son Warren a happy birthday for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Any other Members' statements? Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Further Return To Question 255-14(6): Awarding Of Campground Contracts In The Deh Cho

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to oral questions asked by Mr. McLeod on June 5, 2003 regarding the awarding of the Twin Falls Campground contract.

Since amalgamation in 1997, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development in the South Slave region has utilized the request for proposal process over tendering to obtain the finest services for tourists visiting the NWT. The tendering process does not allow for creative innovation. In the past, the region found contract services to be somewhat basic when utilizing the tendering process.

The region uses the 30 percent innovative criteria to obtain the most creative services for a reasonable cost. Innovative criteria includes services that are beyond regular operations and maintenance of the campground. These services include: meet and greet sessions, guided trail walks, shuttle services to the airport, evening talks, story telling and arranging with other operators for additional tourism experiences. By including innovative criteria, the South Slave region is able to ensure that the best possible services are being provided for the visiting public. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 4, returns to oral questions.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I would like to direct your attention to the presence in the visitors' gallery of a former Member of this Legislative Assembly who served in the 11th and 12th assemblies: Mr. Henry Zoe.

---Applause

He represented the riding of North Slave. Mr. Zoe, welcome. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, I rise as the humble husband of Marie Wilson to recognize our friends Bob and Menna Weese of Toronto. Both are former senior civil servants having served the governments in Saskatchewan, Ontario and the federal government. Bob is currently director for intergovernmental relations for General Electric Canada, taking part in the Canadian Chamber of Commerce meeting here. It's Bob and Menna's first trip to Yellowknife. Their sons Dylan and Bryn are both seasonal constituents of mine who work at Great Bear Lake. They are both qualified fishing guides and Dylan is a fish biologist. They are long-term friends.

As well, attending with them are friends of theirs, Mr. and Mrs. Bishop. I would like to welcome them also. Welcome.

---Applause

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize Cindy Gilday who is well known for the environmental battle they fought with the Deline uranium project. I would like to welcome you to the House and thank you for that effort. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone who has attended the Assembly today and welcome back Mr. Zoe. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 264-14(6): Delays Caused By Regulatory Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. As I alluded to in my Member's statement, I am very concerned about the delays that our regulatory process imposes on developers looking to do business in the North. I was very upset to learn about a recent example of NTCL, a local Hay River company, losing a \$2.5 million contract as a direct result of uncertainties with our regulatory process. This is not the first time I have heard of businesses just giving up in frustration after experiencing delays with our cumbersome regulatory process, in some cases delays of up to two years. Could the Minister please indicate to this House what his department and this government, as a whole, is doing to address the obvious problems of long delays in our regulatory process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We are having temporary delays with our sound. The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 264-14(6): Delays Caused By Regulatory Process

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regard to the honourable Member's question about the development of environmental assessment timelines we, in the government, particularly the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, are aware of the different projects that go forward and go through the regulatory process. There is a problem. I recently wrote a letter in April to Minister Nault who ultimately has the responsibility. We stated that there is no clear process or timeline stipulated in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, and, therefore, the length of time it takes to go through the process is quite lengthy and, in some cases, it comes to a point where you have the experience of Western Geco deciding not to move ahead this year. However, I hear that they will come again in the future to try this project again. I wrote a letter to the Minister indicating that a set of guidelines needs to be established under the section that deals with that in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. Particularly, guidelines should be established in consultation with the responsible Ministers and the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board to set out the transparent process and timelines under this section of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. I have taken the action of writing to the Minister. I haven't received a reply as yet. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 264-14(6): Delays Caused By Regulatory Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged by the fact that the Minister is indicating that they are dealing with the federal Minister on this. I certainly hope that a company like Western Geco will stay the course and be willing to come back next year. There is still no guarantee that they are going to get their permits for next year. Would the Minister indicate if he feels that a full review of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act is warranted due to the delays that we are experiencing now?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 264-14(6): Delays Caused By Regulatory Process

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, it is federal legislation, so as a Minister in this department, the course of action we are taking is we are identifying a section in the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, particularly with Section 135 that deals with these guidelines that have been very vague and there's no clear process or timelines stipulated in that section. We're making suggestions to Minister Nault of DIAND that if he could establish such guidelines so that the different companies, the different proponents that want to do development in the North, such as Western Geco, will be treated in a manner that is clear, consistent and transparent. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 264-14(6): Delays Caused By Regulatory Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you hear of cases whereby companies have spent enormous sums of money, and waited in some cases up to two years for their environmental assessment and their final report of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, only to have it sit on the federal Minister's desk for months on end before he will give his approval. Is that issue being addressed? The waiting period that it takes the Minister to address issues after it's gone through the environmental process; is there anything being done with that particular issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 264-14(6): Delays Caused By Regulatory Process

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, there are meetings and discussions that take place when the opportunity arises, whenever Minister Nault travels into the North, or at different times when I have the opportunity to be at different meetings or conferences that I attend in the south. We talk about a number of different issues. This has been a subject of discussion in the past, in regards to the length of this process. Over the last year or so, there was a lot of discussion about trying to streamline this whole process, that it takes a lot of time before a proponent receives a final go-ahead or refusal. It's time consuming and it's costing a lot of dollars for companies. In

some cases it's very frustrating. Yes, we relay the concerns to the Minister. Our approach here in this letter is to say that we've identified an area in the act where I think he has the authority to be more concise and clear with a timeframe to be put in place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 264-14(6): Delays Caused By Regulatory Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the process that we have in place today and the delays and, in some cases, rejection being experienced by companies applying for permits and licences for what could be considered, by comparison, very small projects, how does the Minister envision a project the size of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline ever getting off the ground in this regulatory process we have today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 264-14(6): Delays Caused By Regulatory Process

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, this whole process has been identified as being very cumbersome, and we all know that and we've been relaying that information to the federal Minister. Again, it's federal legislation and we are a stakeholder in this whole area. We don't have control of our resources, and perhaps through devolution, down the line, we will gain control of that and we will be in the driver's seat at that time. But for the time being, in the case of the pipeline, for a number of years there has been work with the different regulatory agencies to try to streamline the process of approval of this project through the Environmental Impact Review Board. There is work being done currently to try to find a way to have this thing go as quickly as possible. I think there is agreement between the agencies, to try to speed this whole process up. Thank you.

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

Question 265-14(6): Frustrations With The Capital Planning Process

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask some questions regarding my comments from my Member's statement, or at least the frustration that I'm feeling right now regarding the capital planning. Mr. Speaker, a number of us who represent smaller communities have recognized and have received now our copies of the capital plan for the next five years, and it's quite frustrating to see in my case a whole winter's work, many, many meetings all go down the drain. The slate is just practically wiped clean. Yet, when we look at some of the budgets for the Ministers, they're still managing to hang on to some of their projects. There seems to be a different approach when we have regular Members versus Ministers. I would like to ask the Minister of FMB to explain the difference between how a regular Member gets an item put on the capital plan, versus how a Minister gets an item put on the capital plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for FMB, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 265-14(6): Frustrations With The Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The process for getting items onto the capital plan is the same for all of us. The communities' needs are identified. Through the business planning process, recommendations are made to us. We review it during the business planning review, and then the main estimates are eventually voted. But it's exactly the same for regular MLAs as it is for Cabinet Ministers. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 265-14(6): Frustrations With The Capital Planning Process

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that our needs are all equal, just some of us are more equal than others. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if he would present to this House before the end of the sitting, a breakdown of the capital budgets for all our ridings, per riding, so that everybody can see what's being spent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 265-14(6): Frustrations With The Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On January 21, 2003, I gave to the chairs of each of the standing committees a copy of the infrastructure plan broken down by constituency. That's for the 2003-2008 five-year plan. So everyone should have that. If you want another one, I can get you another one.

In terms of the next five-year plan, that one is one that we're just in the process of preparing right now. In fact, the teams are out and holding community meetings. So that will be some months before I can provide that one. But for 2003-2008, everyone should have that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 265-14(6): Frustrations With The Capital Planning Process

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, that's the very reason I asked for a breakdown of expenditures. Presentations that are being made by his staff are not the same as the breakdown that was presented in January. It's not the same as the 20-year plan that was presented to us, and it's not consistent with the business plans, and it's not consistent with the five-year capital plan. We had projects sitting on the 20-year plan for 10 years that have disappeared off the radar screen. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would review the situation and tell us what is going on and who's in charge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 265-14(6): Frustrations With The Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as part of our long-term planning, we do a 20-year capital needs assessment. That's a needs assessment, that is not a plan. It's not a capital plan we're committed to for the next 20 years, it's assessing what our long-term needs are. We also do five-year plans, and those all come through the planning process as we put together our business plans and eventually our main estimates.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to look at any discrepancies that the Member has, if he wants to bring them to my attention. But, right now, I don't know for sure specifically which projects he's referring to. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 265-14(6): Frustrations With The Capital Planning Process

MR. MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he would review the whole capital planning process. It's been a frustrating system that doesn't work. It's clear as mud, as they say. It has been expressed by many of us here over and over that it's not working. We have a group of deputy ministers that are not accountable to us, we can't even ask them questions and the Ministers don't seem to be talking to them. Can we review the situation and look at a system that will put responsibility back into the Ministers' hands where it belongs, and where we can have some input, and the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for FMB, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 265-14(6): Frustrations With The Capital Planning Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, people have been raising concerns with regard to the capital planning process for a couple of years. As a follow-up to that, in fact on February 16th of this year, 2003, we did a capital planning process update. We advised the Members of what we were doing and how we were changing community consultations. Starting in May and June, we've had teams of people going out and meeting with the communities. We have advised the MLAs of when these teams would be in the communities. So we're going through that process now. As part of that process, we are asking communities for feedback on the planning process. So we are doing that review, but we want to do it with all of the MLAs and I expect that by the time we have all the information back, before the end of June, pull that all together and it's part of the planning process, we can have discussions on any concerns communities are raising with us or MLAs are raising and try to further refine at that time. But we are going through a process of review right now, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 266-14(6): Improving Seniors' Assistance Programs

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Seniors, regarding the issues I raised in my Member's statement knowing that it's

Seniors' Week and also that we have programs and services in place for our seniors. Mr. Speaker, there seem to be barriers in place in regard to how seniors are able to access these programs or else that they have to continue year after year and reapply for different programs. Mr. Speaker, I'll use an example of a program. We have a seniors' home repair program which is basically capped at \$20,000. In most cases, Mr. Speaker, our seniors have lived in their homes and owned their homes all their lives, yet as they get older and the cost of maintaining their homes is high, that \$20,000 doesn't do much. Now they're being told you maxed out the amount of the allocation, based on \$20,000. Yet we also offer another program with regard to the fuel rebate program, and again we have a set amount of how much fuel you're allocated to maintain your home. Again, that hasn't changed for several years. I would just like to ask the Minister exactly what the Minister responsible for Seniors is doing to remove these inequities and barriers for our seniors to simplify the programs and make them more responsible.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 266-14(6): Improving Seniors' Assistance Programs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the issues raised in the NWT action plan for seniors was that very issue. What was committed to and what is underway was the striking of an interdepartmental working group with a seat for the NWT Seniors' Society, to address a way to deal with barriers, as my colleague mentioned, to better coordinate the services for seniors which currently are located in several different departments. The initial request was to somehow consolidate all seniors' services under one umbrella or secretariat. That was deemed not to be the most effective way to proceed. That was an alternative that was suggested, that being the interdepartmental group, and they are currently at work on that particular issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 266-14(6): Improving Seniors' Assistance Programs

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regard to my statement, I also touched on the area of accommodation for seniors in our communities so our seniors do not have to leave our communities and go to Inuvik, Yellowknife or wherever to have to go into long-term care. So I'd like to ask the Minister, have you looked at the area of accommodations and programs being delivered in the communities and having to go and access those programs elsewhere?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 266-14(6): Improving Seniors' Assistance Programs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at that issue and we are trying to beef up and improve our continuing care programs, home support, home care and supportive living to help seniors stay in their homes as long as possible. I know as well the Minister of Housing has a very aggressive initiative underway with seniors' housing, that there is in fact some housing being built in Inuvik,

Hay River and Smith. We, as well, are looking at ways to upgrade and improve the facilities that we currently run in our multi-bed residences that deal with more long-term care needs. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 266-14(6): Improving Seniors' Assistance Programs

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister, do you have someone in house whose job it is to really look at the programs that are presently being delivered by this government for our seniors and see where we can streamline our programs and make them more accessible and user friendly for our seniors?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 266-14(6): Improving Seniors' Assistance Programs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we do. That is a discrete program area that we administer and it is part of the responsibility of senior staff. We have a very close working relationship with the NWT Seniors' Society, as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 266-14(6): Improving Seniors' Assistance Programs

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister exactly what are the reporting mechanisms that are used so that the Members in this House and seniors in our communities know that we as a government are actually doing something concrete. I'd like to ask the Minister what's the reporting mechanism of this information that you say is being put together, and how does that information get back to the Members of this House and seniors in our communities?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 266-14(6): Improving Seniors' Assistance Programs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the initiatives are communicated in a number of ways. Yesterday in the Great Hall we released the update on the seniors' action plan, the NWT seniors' profile. As well the Housing Corporation and Education, Culture and Employment both have information pamphlets and processes that they make sure are available at the community level for the areas they administer of housing and fuel subsidy and such. We, as well, through our services and social workers and people we have on the ground in the communities speak to those issues. We have a business planning process and we have, of course, the contact MLAs can have at their pleasure with Ministers. Thank you.

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

Question 267-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow up on some questions that Mr. Roland was asking of the Minister of RWED yesterday, regarding the Gwich'in MOU. The Minister, in response to the Member, said that there were about \$29 million worth of contracts in the area and they've been negotiating up to about half of that, so about \$14.5 million. I couldn't help but notice in the listing of projects by community, that they include things like the standing offer for electrical power. In there it's noted as currently sole-sourced to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Another one is natural gas, which is currently sole-sourced to Inuvik Gas. Is there an intention by this government to change the sourcing of power and gas in the region?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 267-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intent was, since this is the first time we're doing that, we agreed that the contract list would include all known contracts. The department came forward with contracts over \$5000, with the exception of things like utility payments, electrical and water and sewer which are not included. I think the electrical would be the electrician type of work and so forth. It's important to list all known contracts so we can establish the percentage of Gwich'in participation. It's a multi-step process, and we are just beginning to do that. The rationale behind this was to show the Gwich'in that every contract they would review to see which contracts are available. Like I said, we are doing a lot of work with them and there's still a lot of work to be done. The intention here is to include everything that the department has come forward with and I think the view here is if we excluded contracts, then it could be possibly raised later on and the question asked what we have omitted. So we wanted to start with everything that is possible out there and from there we would go through a process with them of eliminating some of the bigger projects that are probably impossible to do.

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

Supplementary To Question 267-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess my interest is to find out what the quantum is. Yesterday, the Minister said it was probably going to be half of the \$29 million that would go to the Gwich'in side of the MOU. I am trying to get an understanding of what is going to be left over. If we are listing electrical power and gas as parts that are left over, that really doesn't mean that there is 50 percent left. There is no possibility of anybody else supplying those. So why are we showing electrical power and gas in this listing of contracts and including it in the \$29 million?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 267-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the departments came out with the lists, I also raised that

question. I was told in terms of the electrical contracts, my understanding was for electrician-type of work. The intention was not to go after the electrical power. As for what is going to be left over, I am told through the process there will be lots that will be left over. The MOU is attempting to correct a problem with the Gwich'in involvement in GNWT contracting. We should easily achieve 50 percent in communities where Gwich'in represent a majority of the population. The intention is to make sure that concerns that are raised include them in there. I think the Gwich'in also understand and there is a lot of pressure on them as well that this is something new that we are all working with together. The intention is not to hand it over to another source of electrical power. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 267-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I was really hoping to get from the Minister was that we weren't looking to replace the supplier in the region. For confirmation, would the Minister confirm that when it says electrical power in this listing of projects, they are not really talking about the supply of power, but rather about the provision of electrician services? Is that what I am to understand from this?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 267-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's correct.

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

Question 268-14(6): Access To Supplementary Health Benefits

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services questions about the consent form for supplementary health benefits that the federal government requires aboriginal people to sign so that they can continue to receive benefits from that program. The Minister stated that they would continue to ensure that all residents would have access to health care and that they wouldn't be impacted and that, if they didn't sign these forms, there would be a way of working around this. I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, on looking into this a bit more, if for example an aboriginal person goes to the drugstore to have a prescription filled or goes to get eyeglasses, what happens in that case? Is it going to be that the individual will have to pay first and then seek reimbursement from the federal government or from this government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 268-14(6): Access To Supplementary Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the immediate attention that we are paying right now is trying to work with the federal government and Health Canada to ensure that their consent form is appropriately

crafted and it's implemented so that it is, in fact, fully implemented. The uptake across Canada has been very slow, something akin I would think possibly to the gun registry. So we have to make sure that the first battle we have to fight with the federal government is an issue of concern to the three territories. We have a meeting planned at some point in the not too distant future with the Minister of Health, and that's one of the items on the agenda because it affects so many of our constituents. The Member has raised some specific concerns that are quite detailed. The fundamental commitment is that nobody is going to be deprived of health and social services in the Northwest Territories. The level of detail that my colleague has asked, I don't have available at my disposal at this point.

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

Supplementary To Question 268-14(6): Access To Supplementary Health Benefits

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has given some response about meetings that will occur. So when will these meetings occur to straighten this out or to get more clarification? As the father of six children, Mr. Speaker, who are aboriginal and qualify -- and there are many people in the North who have that -- all of a sudden are we looking at having to come up with resources to pay what was covered on our behalf through a federal responsibility.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 268-14(6): Access To Supplementary Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again, we have been in constant, ongoing contact with the Minister of Health trying to get a date nailed down. There has been some kind of date set, but that has had to be readjusted for various reasons. We are still trying to get the final date, but it is going to be in the next couple of months. We also at the official level have had extensive contact. The Government of Nunavut has come out very clearly, strongly and publicly about their concerns, advising their constituents not to sign until the point is clarified. So we are looking at that particular approach as well, the key point being to get the federal government to recognize that the process they've engaged in is not perfect. The very least they should do is extend the deadline far enough down the road to work out these administrative issues. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 268-14(6): Access To Supplementary Health Benefits

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister inform the House and residents of the Northwest Territories about the result of these meetings? It's one thing to have meetings, but another to start putting things into practice. So as soon as possible, will he be able to do that for us?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 268-14(6): Access To Supplementary Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to that fully. We want to keep everybody in the North apprised of this, especially the beneficiaries of this program. It's a very important one. As things progress, we will be keeping everybody up to speed. Thank you.

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

Question 269-14(6): Somba K'e Treatment Facility

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services and it is about the Somba K'e facility on the Dettah road. I had occasion to visit the facility. It's in a beautiful, pristine location. Mr. Handley was kind enough to take me on a tour of the facility in his constituency. I guess it was amazing to find, for me, that no clients had been at the facility and this was a couple of months back. No clients had been there since early February. I know that both the Department of Health and the Standing Committee on Social Programs are very interested in getting that facility reprofiled as a youth drug and alcohol treatment centre. The Minister was having Public Works and Services do a technical assessment. I wonder if the Minister can provide me with an update on what that technical assessment is and how close we are to getting that facility for youth drug treatment. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 269-14(6): Somba K'e Treatment Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct, the health and social services department and Yellowknife Health and Social Services in particular had an interest in exploring the possibility of using Somba K'e as a child welfare facility. We currently have some funds in the capital plan to upgrade the current facility and territorial treatment centre, but it seemed very old and possibly not worth fixing and the money possibly better invested elsewhere. We did have some discussions with the Housing Corporation and the Somba K'e board. We did some preliminary assessments with Public Works and other technical people. The indications were that it would cost more money than we had in our budget to upgrade the building to make it acceptable by Canadian standards for the specific needs we had in mind for a child welfare facility. So at this point, Health and Social Services is not an active player in the future of Somba K'e. The building is under the care and custody of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

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

Supplementary To Question 269-14(6): Somba K'e Treatment Facility

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that's very disappointing news to all of us. I am wondering then, if it looks to be cost prohibitive to make the facility suitable as a youth drug and alcohol treatment facility, is there some other capacity in which the Department of Health could see this facility being used to meet the needs in our social envelope? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 269-14(6): Somba K'e Treatment Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the interest that we had for use as a possible child welfare facility as a replacement for TTC was clearly because there was money in the capital plan that would have allowed us to make that investment and make that possible change if it was appropriate. It was not seen to be appropriate, so we will deal with the child welfare concerns for a facility on a different path. The fate of Somba K'e I can't speak specifically to. I agree with the Member that it is a facility that has potential and there may be an opportunity for various groups in Yellowknife to come together to come up with a plan, but at this point the Department of Health and Social Services has no clear identified use for that building. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 269-14(6): Somba K'e Treatment Facility

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has been very upfront with this Legislature in the past in saying we didn't have money for bricks and mortar. I think the frustration here is that we have the bricks and mortar, at least lumber and nails out at Somba K'e, and we would like to get use of that facility. Am I to understand the Minister when he says that if he were approached by a community group, does this mean he would be amenable to an overture from a community group interested in using that facility as a drug and alcohol treatment facility? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 269-14(6): Somba K'e Treatment Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NWT Housing Corporation holds the mortgage on this facility. If there is an identified program need that comes to light that has consensus and makes good program sense, be it with health and social services or any other program area in government, then I would say that as a government we are interested in seeing what is possible. We know the needs exceed our resources. As the Member says, if we had the bricks and mortar, then is there a constructive, creative way to put those resources to use? I would hope that there would be. That work has not been done yet, but Health and Social Services would have to be at the table to do what they can to assist in that process.

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

Question 270-14(6): Affordable Rent In Yellowknife

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you. My questions this morning are for the Minister of Justice, Roger Allen, and concern the issues I raised earlier today about response to the 500 signatures seeking some redress to the issue of rent increases here in the city. I made it plain, Mr. Speaker, that I don't like the response that was given. I believe it is quite

inadequate and I would like to ask the Minister how he can account for this totally inadequate response to the concerns of 500 people seeking redress for affordable rents. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

Return To Question 270-14(6): Affordable Rent In Yellowknife

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important to give a bit of a background too. We had agreed at some point over the last several months that rent control legislation would not work in the small jurisdiction of the Northwest Territories. So, if I may, with the concurrence of Mr. Speaker, I'd like to speak in the context of what we have been doing jointly between Justice and the Housing Corporation in its mandates. Recognizing that rent control legislation would not work in the Northwest Territories, we began a consultation process with the developers and had spoken at length across the territories. They have agreed that rent control legislation wouldn't work as well. What we may have failed to do, Mr. Speaker -- and I would like to acknowledge that today -- is we may not have met with the people who signed the petition to find a solution to their concerns. I am prepared to do that as I do with all other interest groups -- to meet with them and find out what their concerns are, as well as finding suitable solutions. I am prepared to go that next step as soon as we can. Also we need to confirm that we have developed a consensus amongst the territorial developers that their affordable housing strategy is not working, but again we cannot control market rents. Hopefully at some point in the near future we can eradicate some of those questions. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 270-14(6): Affordable Rent In Yellowknife

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can put to bed now any more reference to rent control. I don't want it. Nobody wants it. It doesn't work. If the Minister is prepared to undertake an expanded consultation, I would hope that he would look at other jurisdictions as well and see what they have done. In some of my research offshore in Europe, there are some communities that are trying to address this situation too. There are answers out there. The Minister, Mr. Speaker, I hope will take all look at not only this but also at amending the entire tenancy act that we have that's some 15 years old. I wanted to ask the Minister, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister initiate steps to look at all conditions of the act that could perhaps be addressed by the next Legislative Assembly? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 270-14(6): Affordable Rent In Yellowknife

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that the Member has raised this because we tried to introduce some legislation for the Residential Tenancies Act, although it couldn't fit in this legislative agenda due to other pressures such as the Family Violence Act that we pushed to have as a priority. Certainly, we will continue to entertain that thought and support it. I think there is indeed research compiled to see if we can introduce other methodologies. Of

course, the cost drivers are something that concerns the developers and we want to respect that. Again in order to address the housing shortages, as we heard in October and February, we encouraged the development of new facilities and the numbers are on the increase. We have 335 new rental units in Yellowknife to try to eradicate the pressure. It's difficult to try to implement some sort of rent control versus facilitating housing developments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 270-14(6): Affordable Rent In Yellowknife

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the Housing Corporation and developers in Yellowknife and the NWT are to be complimented for responding to the need, but the act itself...The Minister has said he would be prepared to go out and talk to people about specific rent increase measures. Would he expand that then to include a consultation to form the basis of modernizing the entire act? Can we get a commitment to go that far? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 270-14(6): Affordable Rent In Yellowknife

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly it's one of our objectives. In the context of providing affordable housing, we need to look at all aspects of the issue including the legislation, including how other jurisdictions have dealt with it. At one point, we proposed to go to the Scandinavian countries and look at their system that would be complementary to ours in terms of the circumpolar housing issues. So, absolutely, I'm interested in discussion at all levels and gathering some feedback from those interest groups on how we can address the overall issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 270-14(6): Affordable Rent In Yellowknife

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, then given the Minister's acknowledgement that some more consultation could be done on the issue of high and sustained rent control, will the Minister commit to bringing back to this Assembly an earnest and much more serious consideration of this petition? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister of Justice, Minister Allen.

Further Return To Question 270-14(6): Affordable Rent In Yellowknife

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may speak to some of the context here, I'm also meeting with my Yukon colleague on the 23rd of June to look at how they have implemented some of their program administration. As well, I will continue to speak with my colleague from Nunavut, and work out some mechanism where we have input from a cost analysis perspective. Yes, I am prepared to consider all the points that my honourable colleague made. Thank you.

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

Question 271-14(6): Proposed Territorial Sport And Recreation Board

MS. LEE: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of MACA, and I'd like to pursue further some of the questions that were raised in this House regarding the proposed new sport and recreation board. I've had a chance to talk to people more in the know about this issue, and I got some more information that I'd like to pursue with the Minister. What we were saying yesterday, and what I was asking, is that if the Minister and the board and the government feel that the Sport North board, as it exists now, is not meeting the needs of the people, then a simple thing to do is to facilitate better communication. I have one suggestion and that is whether or not the Minister would send his regional sports and recreation officer back to meet with the Sport North AGM and do that after they've been asked to go to all the community leaders and ask them what their concerns are, write up a report, go back to Sport North and have a discussion, instead of bringing a whole new policy, setting up a whole new board and creating a structure that nobody who is really doing the work is interested in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 271-14(6): Proposed Territorial Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been informed by the department that when the department originally was receiving the concerns and complaints from the smaller communities and the smaller territorial sports organizations about lack of representation, lack of opportunity at the Sport North board level, the Minister at the time did give Sport North the opportunity to respond to these concerns and to restructure the board to address these concerns. What I've been told and what I said yesterday, was Sport North did not choose to do this, which really left the department with little choice but to go back to these people that were raising these concerns and ask them what they would suggest as an alternative. What came out of that was the suggestion for a territory-wide board, which would allow for participation from small communities and by the smaller types of sports organizations to have some say as to how the lottery money was spent, as well as to how smaller communities could participate in sports activities. That was what originally happened. Sport North has been involved up until now with meetings with the other sports organizations and with the regional recreation groups as well as the department, trying to resolve this thing. Up until the 25th, they did agree, although somewhat reluctantly, to form the territorial Sport North. At the 25th meeting, the department explained to the Sport North board how we expected this board to be constructed, and what the timelines were to put it in place. That's what I have up to now, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 271-14(6): Proposed Territorial Sport And Recreation Board

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's very valuable for us to repeat the same questions and answers over and over. I just want to simply state to the

Minister and ask the Minister to follow up on this, that it is true that Sport North has been involved, but they have been involved under some conditions and concerns that they have that want to get incorporated. They're not going to support, I don't believe, a territorial board unless those very important concerns are raised. Now the Minister is saying only because they are participating, they are in agreement with what's going on. I would suggest to him that that's not the case. The Minister has already indicated yesterday he has lots of questions about this. He should be paying more attention to some of the major concerns the board has, and act accordingly. Would he do that, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 271-14(6): Proposed Territorial Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm just as concerned as the Member is as to where Sport North is in relation to accepting this board. Up to now, it was indicated to me that, although reluctantly, they did in fact agree to forming this new board. So I'm prepared to approach the president of Sport North, and sit down and see what exactly we can do to resolve this issue; whether or not in fact we're going to end up putting the board in place or some other alternative to the board. I am not sure that we're going to be able to resolve this in the near future, but I'm opening the door to consultations with Sport North. Hopefully, I'll have input from the other sports organizations and the recreation boards as well. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 271-14(6): Proposed Territorial Sport And Recreation Board

MS. LEE: Thank you. I have a question that I'm hoping could... Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to say that I have not been talking to either the president of the board or the board of directors or staff of Sport North. I don't want anybody to get into trouble on this one, if that's the case. I want to say that I'm hearing from the volunteers who know about the work of Sport North. Having said that, my question to the Minister is would the Minister make a commitment to meet with the president of Sport North, listen to his concerns and get the reply and do it in writing and present it in this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 271-14(6): Proposed Territorial Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have said already I am committed to meeting with the president. At the present time, I am told that the president is out of the territory, but he will be back in a week or so and we would then set up a meeting and take it from there. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 271-14(6): Proposed Territorial Sport And Recreation Board

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate his commitment to the first part of my question, but the second part of the question is will the Minister report to this House in writing, within the next 90 days, as to what the concerns of the president were and what his replies to those concerns are? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 271-14(6): Proposed Territorial Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, I can't commit to meeting with the president before the House closes because he's not in the territory. I have committed to meeting with the president, responding to his issues, and report those issues back to the House, but I can't guarantee it's going to be by Friday.

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

Question 272-14(6): Bison On NWT Highways

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Joe Handley. In my statement I mentioned numerous accidents on highways in the Northwest Territories. Most of them are happening with collisions between bison and motorists. I would like to ask the Minister if more signage can be posted on Highway No. 3 and the access road to Rae. When you travel to Fort Smith there are rarely any signs there and there are bison on that road, also. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 272-14(6): Bison On NWT Highways

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm assuming Mr. Lafferty means for people to read, not the buffalo.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I agree, a collision with a buffalo can be a pretty serious happening and one that we don't want to treat lightly. I made note of the Member's statement and, yes, we will take a look at it. If it is a serious situation and we find that buffalo are migrating further and further toward Rae and, in fact, toward Yellowknife, then we may need to change our signs, to put more in this direction. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 272-14(6): Bison On NWT Highways

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister if he can look at different ways to make it safer, not only with the signage but maybe widening the reflective line on the highways so that if an animal crosses you can see that the line is blocked, or even posting reflective posts on the side that

will show if an animal is crossing in front of them. Or even, it may be comical, but maybe using paint balls with reflective paint and shooting these bison so they can be noticed in the dark. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 272-14(6): Bison On NWT Highways

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we'll look at all of the options, but I'm not sure about paint balls.

---Laughter

I'll talk to my colleague, the Minister of RWED, to see whether or not that's something that would be worth trying.

Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to look at whatever alternatives we can. There are a lot of buffalo that do stand around the highways to get away from insects bothering them. I don't know that widening the lines, putting reflectors up, will help. The one thing, Mr. Speaker, is we want to make sure that we don't have so many signs up all along the highway that people begin to ignore them. If that happens then the signs become useless. It may also be, Mr. Speaker, that one of the options we haven't looked at would be slower speed limits in the areas where there are a lot of buffalo. But, again, I don't know if that will make a lot of difference with some drivers. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 272-14(6): Bison On NWT Highways

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hate to hear lowering the speed limits. The last time I complained about Highway No. 3 in 2002, they lowered the speed limit between here and Rae and it hasn't changed. The Minister keeps saying that the highway is safe, the highway is maintained well, but the speed limits have not returned to their normal limit. So sometimes when you stand up here and you try to do something for your residents and the people in the Northwest Territories, you get a negative impact. I would like to ask the Minister if he can talk to his department and try to do these things before it gets dark in the fall. The signs I'm talking about are big one metre by one-and-a-half buffalo signs on the highway between Providence and Edzo. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Minister Handley.

Further Return To Question 272-14(6): Bison On NWT Highways

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of options that we could look at. I mention lowering the speed limits because I have noticed personally that some people don't slow down much when they come up on a herd of buffalo that are standing in a ditch or even on the side of the road. Those animals can move fast. They can decide to cross the road in the other direction, and maybe we need to do more education with the traveling public to say when you see buffalo, no one can predict what direction they're going to go, and maybe we should slow down a lot more than some people do. I know from experience that they can move very quickly. I don't think slowing down the speed limit on the whole road would

necessarily resolve the problem, but I think just taking more caution would. So education will definitely be part of the response that we would want to make, and I think it's something that we will look at seriously, but not try to frustrate people. I will work with the Minister of RWED. If there is something we can do before we start getting more darkness in the fall, then we'll see if we can do that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 272-14(6): Bison On NWT Highways

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the Minister is agreeing to working with the Department of RWED. He's sort of trying to give me some answers and saying some things might not work. We won't know that until we've tried them, so I'm encouraging the Minister and asking him if he would try some other methods and if he can give me a timeline when he would contact the department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 272-14(6): Bison On NWT Highways

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'll get a quick briefing note from the department within the next few days. But in terms of looking at any detail to any alternatives, I need to talk with the Minister of RWED and others and look at what the options might be to resolve this in the long term. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period has expired. The chair recognizes the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous consent to go back to item 6.

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

REVERT TO ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 273-14(6): Impact Of CARS Contracts On Municipalities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transportation. As you all know, municipalities for years have always maintained the airports, have had the CARS contract. But in the last couple of years contracts have been put out to a tendering system where now the municipalities are finding themselves in financial difficulty, carrying a debt on their books because of the impact of that decision. So I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation is there any way that the municipalities, along with the Department of Transportation, can work out some arrangement to deal with these deficit situations we find in our municipalities? In some cases it's almost \$60,000 of unforeseen debt that has come because of this privatization. I'd like to ask the Minister, have you heard of this problem and are you willing to sit down with municipalities to resolve this concern?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Minister Handley.

Return To Question 273-14(6): Impact Of CARS Contracts On Municipalities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, while it may be a problem in some communities, I have not gotten any information that would suggest it's a problem across the North. But I certainly would be interested in discussing any specific issues where we have municipalities that are running deficits because of the need to maintain the airport. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 273-14(6): Impact Of CARS Contracts On Municipalities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that through the audits of these different municipalities, it has come to the attention of the auditors that there have been these unforeseen impacts on communities which are now showing up as debt on the books of the municipalities. I would like to ask the Minister exactly if there is any way the communities can be compensated for this impact because of the decision to privatize those contracts and leave the hamlets with the outstanding debt.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 273-14(6): Impact Of CARS Contracts On Municipalities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, if the communities entered into a legal agreement to take over the airports and they now run deficits, then it's difficult to compensate them. But I can certainly look at any situations that have resulted from a bad deal somehow, from the community's perspective. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 273-14(6): Impact Of CARS Contracts On Municipalities

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also ask the Minister of Finance if he can work with his colleague, the Minister of MACA, to see how we can try to avoid such unforeseen problems in the future, so that whenever we have contract arrangements with the municipalities, that they aren't saddled with unforeseen debt because of a political decision made by this government.

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

Further Return To Question 273-14(6): Impact Of CARS Contracts On Municipalities

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will work with my colleague, the Minister of MACA, to look at these situations. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. I'm sorry. You are trying to get the chair's attention?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

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

REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize some visitors in the gallery today, particularly a constituent: Percy Kinney, also the coroner and a man who has worked very hard to have the legislation that we took through committee yesterday completed. Also three students from the St. Pat's SADD group who have also provided us with a lot of support. Thank you very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, the chair would also like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of Chief Coroner Percy Kinney and he's also a justice of the peace, I believe, and a justice of the peace administrator of our government. As well we have Matthew Harvey, Lindsay McKay and Vicky Marquez. The chair will now recognize the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague from Weledeh, I would like to recognize Mr. Gary Walsh from the Department of Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome to the Assembly. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to Opening Address. Item 10, petitions. The chair will recognize the honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

Petition 5-14(6): Specialist Physicians At Stanton Territorial Hospital

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of specialist physicians at Stanton Territorial Hospital. Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 883 signatures of NWT residents mostly in Yellowknife, but some from many other communities including Tuktoyaktuk, Fort McPherson, Rae-Edzo, Inuvik, Lutselk'e, Paulatuk, Fort Smith, Fort Good Hope, Aklavik, Holman Island, Wha Ti, Wekweti and Gameti. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Premier of the Northwest Territories exhaust any and all avenues of resource to reach a settlement necessary to keep the specialist doctors we have at Stanton Territorial Hospital. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committee. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 14: An Act To Amend The Public Service Act

Bill 15: An Act To Amend The Workers' Compensation Act

MR. DENT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight has reviewed Bill

14, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, and Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, and wishes to report that bills 14 and 15 are ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole, as amended and reprinted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 52-14(6): News Release: Specialist Negotiations End Without Contracts

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two documents I would like to table. The first one is the press release entitled Specialist Negotiations End Without Contracts.

Tabled Document 53-14(6): News Release: Range Lake MLA Urges Northerners To Get Involved In Specialist Crisis Debate

The second press release, Mr. Speaker, dated June 4, 2003, Range Lake MLA Urges Northerners to Get Involved in Specialist Crisis Debate.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTIONS FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 21: Family Violence Prevention Act

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 9, 2003, I will move that Bill 21, Family Violence Prevention Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Bill 22: Waste Reduction And Recovery Act

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 9, 2003, I will move that Bill 22, Waste Reduction and Recovery Act, be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 23: An Act To Amend The Safety Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have two notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 9, 2003, I will move that Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Safety Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 28: An Act To Amend The Official Languages Act

As well, I give notice that on Monday, June 9, 2003, I will move that Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Bill 24: Midwifery Profession Act

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 9, 2003, I will move that Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 25: Municipal Statutes Replacement Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 9, 2003, I will move that Bill 25, Municipal Statutes Replacement Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Bill 26: Youth Justice Act

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, June 9, 2003, I will move that Bill 26, Youth Justice Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also, with your concurrence, I have another motion for first reading.

Bill 27: An Act To Amend The Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, June 9, 2003, I will move that Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 15, notices of motions 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: Minister's Statement 44-14(6), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I will call Committee of the Whole to order. We have one item to deal with: Minister's Statement 44-14(6). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): It's on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. I don't see a quorum. Please ring the bells.

---Ring of Bells

I recognize a quorum. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those against? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The House will come back to order. May I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. I need a seconder for the motion. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee, seconds the motion. The motion is in order.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 5: An Act To Amend The Motor Vehicles Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 5 has had third reading.

---Applause

Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, may we have the orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight at 12:20 precisely today, and on Monday at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, and at 12:00 noon of the Board of Management.

Orders of the day for Monday, June 9, 2003:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements

4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004
 - Bill 21, Family Violence Prevention Act
 - Bill 22, Waste Recovery and Reduction Act
 - Bill 23, An Act to Amend the Safety Act
 - Bill 24, Midwifery Profession Act
 - Bill 25, Municipal Statutes Replacement Act
 - Bill 26, Youth Justice Act
 - Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
 - Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 44-14(6), Specialist Negotiations
 - Committee Report 12-14(6), The Circle of Self-Government: Report of the Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-government and the Sunset Clause
 - Committee Report 13-14(6), Strengthening GNWT Support to Smaller Communities: Final Report of the Special Joint Committee on Non-Tax-Based Community Affairs
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, June 9th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 12:10 p.m.