



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

14th Assembly

**TERRITORIAL LEADERSHIP
COMMITTEE**

Monday, January 17, 2000

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**JANUARY 17, 2000****MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr. Allen, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Mr. Whitford.

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Good morning. I would like to call the meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee to order. I would like you to rise and I ask the Member for Hay River South to lead us in prayer this morning.

ITEM 2: PRAYER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Our Heavenly Father, we do thank you for this day. We thank you for each and every Member that has come to this table. We pray that you would give us wisdom and guidance. As we choose our leaders today, we pray that you would inspire us to work on behalf of all our people. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

ITEM 3: REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I think all Members have a copy of the agenda in front of them. The next item on the agenda is the review and adoption of the agenda. Are there any additions or deletions to the agenda?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): If not, is the agenda adopted? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

ITEM 4: OPENING REMARKS BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Thank you. This is the first meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee for the Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly. In front of you, in addition to the agenda is a package of information and various forms including the guidelines and procedures for selection of the Leadership Committee. These guidelines are available to the public and are at the front of the public gallery as well.

There are eight items listed that will assist Members in addressing how they are to proceed throughout this committee today and perhaps tomorrow.

Also, I would like to advise that we have interpretation services in Chipewyan, South Slavey and North Slavey, which are available to Members over the next two days. I think you will also get used to the translation receivers, which are before you. Your volume and channel selection is in front of you as well.

Members should be aware that they are not required to turn their microphones on and off. That will be done automatically for you.

Once you have chosen your Speaker-elect, that individual will assume the Chair of the Territorial Leadership Committee and will preside over the proceedings.

Also in front of Members, built into your desks, are the timing mechanisms. When speeches are being made, the clocks will count down the time available to you and you are asked to be mindful of the time limits that have been set and agreed to by all Members. In fairness, the Speaker-elect will be somewhat flexible on the time limitations. However, the cooperation of all Members will be appreciated in adhering to the limits.

Your proceedings are being broadcast on the Yellowknife Community Access Channel. CBC Radio will also be carrying certain portions of the proceedings on their network live, later on today.

This is a less formal committee than the House itself. When Members do wish to speak, they have the option of remaining seated or standing. Probably the best thing for the majority of the time would be if you remain seated, unless you are making a speech and choose to stand at that time. However, the choice is yours.

The next item on the agenda is item 5, election of Speaker. We will now proceed to item 5 on the agenda.

ITEM 5: ELECTION OF SPEAKER

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): You have in your packages the Speaker selection guidelines. As per the guidelines, my first duty is to open the floor for nominations for the position of Speaker. Are there any nominations? Mrs. Groenewegen.

Nominations for Speaker

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chair, I wish to nominate Tony Whitford, the Member for Kam Lake, for the position of Speaker.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Whitford, the Member for Kam Lake, do you accept the nomination?

MR. WHITFORD: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Are there further nominations for the position of Speaker? Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I wish to nominate David Krutko, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, for the position of Speaker.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Krutko, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, do you accept the nomination?

MR. KRUTKO: I accept.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Are there any further nominations for the position of Speaker?

I see no further nominations. Nominations cease.

Therefore, we will prepare a ballot for the position of Speaker. We will need a few minutes to prepare those ballots. We will take a five-minute recess. When the bells ring, you are to return to the Chamber. Thank you.

-- Break

Voting for Speaker

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): I would like to call the meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee back to order. The ballots have been prepared and in accordance with the guidelines you will proceed to vote.

You proceed to either clerk on either side of the table here to receive and sign for your ballot. Once you receive your ballot take it to the voting compartments on either side of the Clerk's table to my left and to my right, then place them in the ballot box.

Once all Members have voted, the ballot box will be taken to the Clerk's office for counting. Upon the ringing of the bells, you will return for the announcement of the voting on the ballots. Members, please proceed now to receive your ballots and to cast your ballot for Speaker.

-- Voting commences

As indicated, the ballot box will now be taken to the Clerk's office and upon the ringing of the bells Members can return to the committee. Thank you.

-- Ringing of the bells

Results of the Vote for Speaker

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): I will now call the meeting back to order. I would like to declare that you have elected the honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Tony Whitford, to be your Speaker.

-- Applause

This will require, as all Members are aware, the formal ratification according to the guidelines by the House on Wednesday. I would ask the Speaker-elect, Mr. Whitford, if he would now come and assume the Chair of the Territorial Leadership Committee.

Speaker-Elect Assumes the Chair of the Territorial Leadership Committee

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you very much for placing your trust in me. I was just instructed by Mr. Hamilton that I am not allowed to use my little whistle to bring you to order. I would like to call this meeting back to order.

Prior to proceeding to the next agenda item, I would like to express my appreciation to all the Members for electing me to

be your Speaker-designate of this Assembly and I will say more on this Wednesday when the House is officially open.

ITEM 6: CONFIRMATION OF THE PROCESS FOR THE ELECTION OF PREMIER

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The next item on our agenda is item 6, the confirmation of the process for the election of Premier. At this point in time I would like to open the floor to discussion on the selection of the Premier. The Chair recognizes the Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Motion To Select Premier By A Vote Of All Members (Carried)

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I MOVE that the Territorial Leadership Committee agree that the Premier will be chosen by a vote of all Members in a secret ballot election in this committee.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you. We have a motion on the floor. Is there any discussion on the motion? No discussion on the motion? Question has been called. All those in favour, please raise your hand. Thank you. Down. All those opposed, please raise your hand.

The motion is carried unanimously. Item 7. The Chair recognizes the Member for Nunakput.

ITEM 7: PROCESS FOR ELECTION OF CABINET

Number Of Ministers

Motion To Establish Number Of Seats On Cabinet (Carried)

MR. STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I MOVE that the Territorial Leadership Committee agree that the Cabinet will be composed of six Members, in addition to the Premier.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Steen. We have a motion on the floor. Is there any discussion on the motion? No discussion. Question has been called. All those in favour, please raise your hand. Thank you. Down. All those opposed? The motion is carried unanimously.

Selection Of Ministers

Item 7b, selection of Ministers. Is there any discussion on item 7b? The Chair recognizes the Member for Mackenzie Delta.

Motion To Establish Selection Process For Cabinet Ministers (Carried)

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I MOVE that the Territorial Leadership Committee agrees that the selection for Members of Cabinet will be a vote of all Members in a secret ballot election in this Committee.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The motion is in order. We have a motion on the floor. Any discussion on the motion? The Chair recognizes the Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be supporting this motion today. I think we have had lengthy discussion in Caucus on various options and proposals that we might look at on how the Premier would select his own Cabinet. I think there was almost unanimous agreement that we should go with the status quo at this time. I respect that.

Several Members took me aside and mentioned they would like to have time to take this to their constituencies and discuss this before agreeing to anything of this sort. There was agreement that this proposal might have some merit, and hopefully we will get a chance to look at this and many other things in the months to come. I respect the wishes of all the Members that we maintain our current format. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Chair now recognizes the Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am also pleased to speak in favour of this motion, although I would like to make some remarks in relation to an issue that both Mr. Bell and myself raised in our campaigns.

This issue was the subject of some attention during the course of the campaign and the days leading up to our business here this morning, Mr. Chair. The commitment that we all have is to seek ways to improve government, to evolve our young democracy, and to build on the strengths of our consensus system. The process we had been exploring was to transfer the authority to choose the Cabinet from the Assembly as a whole to the Premier. The value and the merit of that idea, from my perspective, Mr. Chair, was to create a better, more cohesive relationship between the Premier and the Cabinet.

I would reflect on Mr. Bell's comments that, while the discussions we had were very constructive and vigorous, it related more to a process than to the issue itself.

The requirement that many Members had in order to consider this idea more fully was to take it back to their constituencies, and to hopefully look at this and other ideas in the future that will help us create a better government and ensure evolution in the way we deliver our service.

Therefore, Mr. Chair, I am pleased to speak in favour of this motion. I would like to thank my colleagues for giving this idea due consideration and for their openness in considering this and other ideas in the future. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. The Chair recognizes the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Floyd Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As well, I am in favour of the motion. There has been much discussion regarding this amongst the Members, and within our communities.

We are always changing in our system of government. This shows how new people to the Legislative Assembly is a positive way to bring forth change to evolve into a more representative government.

There has been concern shared by the public about accountability and transparency in our government. We will continue to work in a way that will try and bring that transparency, so the public will retain their confidence in this forum.

As we heard earlier from both speakers, this is an area to look at. I agree we need to have some form of change to make this system more representative and accountable to the public at large. I think there is an opportunity here to work together to make a difference for the people.

I respect the forum we have here, with people bringing new ideas to the table. I must say for the two gentlemen here to come forward and present this has taken a lot of strength, considering they are approaching this as new Members. Thank you for bringing this forward and creating the debate. Hopefully, we can continue to work together as we are here today. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. There is a motion on the floor. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify by raising your hands. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

Item 7c, regional representation. The Chair recognizes the Member for Thebacha, Mr. Michael Miltenberger.

Regional Representation

Motion To Establish Regional Representation On Cabinet (Carried)

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I MOVE that the Territorial Leadership Committee agree that the six Cabinet Members will be chosen on a regional basis with two Members from the northern electoral districts, two Members from the Yellowknife electoral districts, and two Members from the southern electoral districts.

AND FURTHER, that the northern region include the electoral districts of Inuvik Boot Lakes, Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mackenzie Delta, North Slave, Nunakput, and Sahtu;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Yellowknife region include the electoral districts of Frame Lake, Great Slave, Kam Lake, Range Lake, Weledeh, Yellowknife Centre and Yellowknife South;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the southern region include the electoral districts of Deh Cho, Hay River North, Hay River South, Nahendeh, Thebacha and Tu Nedhe.

Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. We have a motion on the floor. Any discussion on the motion? Question has been called. All those in favour of the motion, please signify by raising your hands. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

Item 8, the election of the Premier.

ITEM 8: ELECTION OF THE PREMIER

Nominations For Premier

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Are there any nominations for the Premier's position? The Chair recognizes the Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I nominate the Member for Sahtu, Mr. Stephen Kakfwi for the position of Premier.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Kakfwi, do you accept the nomination?

MR. KAKFWI: Yes, I accept the nomination. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Are there any further nominations for the position of Premier? The Chair recognizes the Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mr. Chair, I would like to nominate Mr. Floyd Roland, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake for the position of Premier.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Does the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake accept the nomination?

MR. ROLAND: Yes, I do.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Are there any further nominations for the position of Premier? There are no further nominations. I declare that nominations are closed.

The nominees are Mr. Kakfwi and Mr. Roland.

Each candidate is permitted to make a twenty-minute speech. The candidates will present in alphabetical order so I call upon Mr. Kakfwi for his presentation.

Candidates' Speeches

Mr. Kakfwi's Candidate Speech For Premier

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair and congratulations. Good morning to my colleagues and people of the public who are attending in the gallery. I would like to take a minute to thank my constituents in the Sahtu, the women and the children who are up here in the North, the teachers who are on strike, the elders, the youth and the children who all have a stake in the decisions we are going to make today and tomorrow and for the duration of our term.

I want you to know that I am grateful for the privilege of serving the people of the North again, as I have for 12 years. I am grateful for the support from the Sahtu, support from my family, my wife and children.

I visited a friend of mine in the hospital last week. He has cancer. He is under a lot of pressure to decide what to do. He put this all in perspective. No matter what happens today and tomorrow, I have my health, my family, and the achievements I have been able to accomplish today. I have all of that, and that makes me grateful.

This is the third time that I have put my name forward to be Premier. Of course it is difficult to do again. No one likes to lose. It is difficult on family and friends. It is a painful experience. So why do I do it again? I think I am compelled because of the support that many of you have given me. It gives me the courage to not be afraid. Winston Churchill once said; "You can never win if you become too afraid to lose".

I think it is important. As politicians we are going to face difficult decisions like this in the future. What do we do if we are afraid

of criticism? If we are afraid of what people will say when we make difficult choices. I want you to know that I believe in myself. I believe my convictions and principles will serve you well. It is a sincere offer to serve again. I do it with my heart and with my convictions. As someone said, I still have fire in my belly. After all these years, I am not tired. I am not burnt out.

I see an exciting opportunity to lead the North into the new millennium. New and better relationships, and a new, stronger Cabinet; an Assembly in which all of us will treat each other with respect, set some targets and work together to achieve them. That is what I see. The commitment to serve aboriginal people has been my life story since I was 23 years old. I am 49 this year. There is nothing else that I choose to do. This is my life commitment.

I want to thank you for your support. I want to thank you for the words of encouragement that you have given me. When I was 12 years old, I started a life away from home for six years. In many ways I came from a very traumatic, broken life. When I went away to Brandon College, I met a man named Father Pochat. That man was my father figure for six years. I was afraid to go there because of the experience I had in Grollier Hall. He taught me that I should never be afraid. Fear should not prevent me from trying to do things.

I mention him because he was in the hospital earlier this week. I was concerned about him and I thought about the contribution he made to my life. Also, I want to acknowledge Alexie Arrowmaker, a very distinguished Dene elder. He is known from one end of the valley to the other. I want to thank him for simply mentioning me by name at the signing of the agreement-in-principle in Rae. This man is very difficult to get acknowledgement from. In all the years that I have served, I think he has acknowledged me twice. I want to thank him and I want him to know that I noticed it.

I want to talk to the youth. In Deline I heard a young woman rise in frustration, fear and anger to say, "If self-government is not going to keep my family at home, if it is not going to get my people to stop drinking, if self-government is not going to help give me a stable home and if it is not going to do anything about alcoholism and drug abuse and violence, then why do I want self-government?" There is anger out there. They want to know, what is this government going to do for us? Where is this better life? Who is going to work on it? And why is it that they have to choose between this government and aboriginal governments?

I know the women, the children and the youth are the most vulnerable; they need a commitment from us to do something for them. I want to do that. What is my message today? It is that all my life, all I ever wanted was a better life for myself, for my family, my relatives, for the Dene, and it grew to the Metis, to the Inuvialuit and all northern people. That is my commitment. By being in this government, serving as your Premier, I will set some measurable and achievable targets to make life better for all of us: for all women, for our families, for our youth, for our elders, for our children, for our teachers, for those people that work for us. That is how I want to do it. That is what I want to do.

There is a new beginning. Some of us have been elected for the first time; some of us have been re-elected. People should have confidence that we are going to do something, that we will achieve something. I would like to suggest that I have the

confidence, the experience, the conviction and the strength to deliver that with you to the people of the North.

We have two women elected to this Legislature. I know Jane Groenewegen from Hay River is prepared to serve as a Member of Cabinet. Capable, strong, determined, principled people like Jane must be given an opportunity to serve. I point her out because she more than anybody has put so much on the line in order to serve people and the public in the last term.

I want all of you to know specifically that this individual has my full support and endorsement. These are the kinds of people I want to see on Cabinet: strong people, people that do not owe anybody anything out there. People that are not going to be patronizing friends, people who are going to work for the interests of everyone. We will be committed to being accountable, and to being strong members of a team. This is what we need. We need to work together so that every community in the valley and region can be assured that we will try to get something for them.

We are not going to come here to just meet and talk. Give us some targets, give us some objectives and we will work to achieve them.

A teachers' strike is pending now. I want to mention a letter I received from a constituent, Jill Taylor, from Norman Wells. It is a very moving letter, a letter that compels me to ask what is going on in the hearts and minds of our teachers? What compelled them to go on strike? What is it? Do we really understand what is going on in their hearts and their minds? Is there something we can do to come closer together again? I just want you to know that I read the letter and it is staying on my desk and I hope we can do something to resolve the differences we have. We do not have any money. We are going into a massive deficit but we still have the will. We will look at the issues and try to come together somehow, to address the needs that we all have.

We cannot abandon each other simply because there is a lack of money. We need to compromise and we need to reach out and try to understand one another. We are prepared to do that in every instance. There is a Minister of Youth. We need to reach out to the youth and let them know there is a portfolio assigned to a Minister. This Minister can find some way to reach out to the youth and to see what it is this incredibly fast growing segment of our population need and want. What is it they see for the future?

Over the years, I worked in many capacities. More than anything, I have always believed that I can do things. I am an ordinary person with some wonderful opportunities that I have seized and wonderful people I have worked with... capable people. That has been the secret: finding opportunities, seizing them and finding the right people to get the job done. And it did not matter if it was in Good Hope, if it was in the Dene Nation, or if it was in the different ministerial assignments that I have had over the years. That has always been the secret to achieving results.

I think we can do that with aboriginal governments. Mr. Antoine has led the way in developing a position, along with Mr. Dent and myself, to agree that we will share lands and resources with aboriginal peoples and aboriginal governments in the North that will embody a Northern Accord. This will give us the agreement necessary so that aboriginal governments will have

assurance that when it is time to be established and set up, they will have the respect, the integrity and the financial capacity to be independent and to be equals.

In the meantime, this government must continue to have the respect of people because it is serving everyone. They all elected us here. There will come a day when some of our people will choose to go with aboriginal governments. We must prepare for that as well. I have been there.

I have worked as hard as anyone to get recognition of aboriginal rights. As a strong supporter of claims and self-government agreements, my track record is there. Of course, some of you have said, not everybody is happy with you. That is true.

The Premier will know; people call for resignations on a moments notice. It is difficult to keep everybody happy. One thing is certain, my enemies, if there are any, (and I will not concede there is even one), will always do their worst. But, I tell you; I will always do my best.

There is a need to recognize the support of the chiefs, the Metis leaders that I received. They may not be as vocal as others, but they are there. I have worked for years as president of the Dene Nation. I have served with aboriginal people. I have been elected since 1987 for the Sahtu riding.

I have been elected by each Legislature that I have served on to be a Minister. That tells you I can get the job done, I can get along with people and maybe I do not smile enough. That has been a criticism. People have called me names – called me Stoneface. It is true. But that is the way I am, maybe because of the traumas I have had. Let me tell you, I work hard at trying to smile all the time...it does not come easy. But I am working on it, as my children would say.

There are many things that I know I can do better. But I do have a good record for getting things done. There will be compassion, compromise and moral commitment to sit down with every group in the Territory. People that support the Deh Cho proposal who could sit down and make a commitment. What is it that we can do to help get the respect and recognition the proposal deserves? What about the Yellowknives Dene First Nation? When has anybody ever sat down and said, "Okay, for the next three days, we are going to sit and talk about this until some of your concerns, interests, and issues are addressed." We need to make some commitments. We need to focus one at a time on achievable results.

There are many other things that could be said but I think the main message today is simple. I want a better life for everyone. I want to work so that we have a good future. We do that through making sure this government is a good government. We make sure this government is accountable, that it has the resources and the lands necessary to be independent and provide the same for aboriginal governments for the day when some of us choose to live under that government. This is what the people of the North expect and I believe that is what we can deliver. Thank you.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakwi. Members, before we proceed to our next speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize in the gallery the former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, Mr. Sam Gargan.

-- Applause

In addition to that we also have Mr. Gargan's predecessor and government leader, Mr. Richard Nerysoo.

-- Applause

We also have the honour of the presence of the current Speaker of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, Mr. Levi Barnabas.

-- Applause

He is accompanied by two former Members of this Assembly, who are now Members in the Nunavut government, Mr. Kelvin Ng and Mr. Kevin O'Brien.

-- Applause.

Thank you for recognizing the former Members. I would now like to call upon the second nominee for Premier, Mr. Floyd Roland.

Mr. Roland's Candidate Speech For Premier

MR. ROLAND: Thank you Mr. Chair. Before we begin, I would like to start off with a bit of a tradition. I would like to start by sending greetings back to my folks and my constituents back home in Inuvik. Thankfully, my wife and children are here today to witness this process. To my beautiful wife, Shawna and my children, thank you very much for your support and understanding. Without it, I would not be here today.

To the residents of Inuvik, thank you for your continued support and your sincere encouragement to seek the position of Premier. You put me in this position and I will do my very best to honour your trust and the trust of all Northerners, no matter what the end result is today.

To all Members and residents of the new Northwest Territories, Happy New Year and welcome to the 21st century. This is an opportunity for a clean new start and fresh new leadership committed to positive change. I hope to have the good fortune of gaining your support so I can provide effective and open leadership with a strong Cabinet team and able Ordinary MLAs.

We need a Premier who is committed to working on behalf of all Northerners. A Premier dedicated to ensuring that it is the residents of the Northwest Territories that benefit from government programs and services, not government or its agencies.

We need a Premier who is open, honest and a straight shooter who will not dance around tough questions with open-ended rhetoric, and who will not shy away when the heat is turned up.

We need a Premier who can build relationships in Ottawa and the provinces.

We need a Premier who can bring all groups together, to support aboriginal groups in their quest for a fair and timely settlement of land claims, self-government and treaty-land entitlement for the mutual benefit of all.

We need a Premier all MLAs and the public can trust and have confidence in and who will instill confidence and enthusiasm in our public servants by providing clear direction.

We need a Premier to create the necessary environment that will help produce healthy communities and attract private sector investment in order to expand economic development opportunities for Northerners.

These are some of the qualities I believe are necessary for the position of Premier.

Although there are many priority issues to be dealt with, the most immediate and the key to our economic viability, in my view, is to ensure the establishment of an intergovernmental process with federal and aboriginal governments that will allow us to discuss issues of mutual concern. Specifically, I am speaking about the issues of economic development, northern control of northern resources and resource revenue sharing.

As you are aware, the realities this government's economic situation demand that we must create new revenues to ensure that we continue to provide essential services, such as education and health care to our residents.

New revenues are essential if we are to effectively manage the current and projected deficit we are facing. This deficit is not sustainable. We owe it to ourselves and especially to our children to take bold new steps to find a northern solution to this difficult problem. It will not be easy. We will have to be creative and take some risks but I believe we can be successful.

A northern solution to this problem is northern control over northern resources. This will provide northern governments, not Ottawa, and Northerners, not Ottawa bureaucrats, control of how development takes place in the Northwest Territories.

This important element, along with a resource revenue sharing agreement, is really what devolution is all about: taking control of our future and taking appropriate risks to increase the economic pie for the benefit of all Northerners.

Unlike other provinces, the management and responsibility for minerals, oil and gas, land and water, remains with the federal government. The only way we are going to be successful in generating more revenues for our government is to reach an agreement with the aboriginal governments and the federal government on northern control of northern resources.

Just as important, we must ensure that a fair resource revenue sharing agreement is negotiated that ensures adequate funding to all governments, be they public or aboriginal, in order to maintain programs and services for our residents.

Agreements dealing with resource issues are being signed between provincial and aboriginal governments across Canada. We in the Northwest Territories have an opportunity to develop a new model that better serves our residents.

There has been a lot of discussion over the past several months on the establishment of an intergovernmental forum,

that would bring together aboriginal governments and the federal and territorial governments to discuss these matters on a government to government to government basis. This forum is a practical means to facilitate these important discussions and as Premier, I would strongly support and participate in this process.

The intergovernmental forum and the results it can produce, in my opinion, will lay the foundation for not only generating more revenues for all governments, but will also provide the required spark for economic development.

The intergovernmental forum provides the opportunity to strengthen our partnerships with aboriginal governments and the federal government. It will provide us the opportunity to begin developing an overall, comprehensive strategy to ensure our economic potential and obtain a greater share of the benefits from the minerals, diamonds and oil and gas, that for the most part, currently only go to Ottawa.

As Premier, I would commit to the development of a comprehensive economic development strategy that takes into account the economic needs of all regions of our Territory. A strategy that respects the environment, that preserves the land, water and wildlife that have sustained our people since the beginning of time.

Economic development, no matter where it takes place, is beneficial for all residents so long as it is undertaken in an environmentally sustainable way. This is not an issue that should pit regions against one another or be seen as pitting urban communities against rural communities. Economic development is NOT about carving up an ever-shrinking pie. Economic development is about increasing the size of the entire pie so as to provide more benefit.

It is about supporting small business. It is about supporting one of our Territory's still underdeveloped renewable assets, tourism, which is about our land and our people.

As Premier, I support tourism because it is something that all residents can participate in. Tourism provides economic opportunities for small business and other important parts of our society, such as hunters and trappers. As a former tourism operator, I know first hand the benefits that this important industry can provide. Tourism is an important means of recognizing all our cultures and the strength that this diversity brings us.

However we need tools to accomplish this. Since the phasing out of the federal government's Economic Development Agreement several years ago, we have been without any federal funding to stimulate economic growth in the Northwest Territories.

The fact that the Northwest Territories does not have access to economic development agencies run by the federal government, such as the Western Economic Diversity Agency or the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, is totally unacceptable. Why is the Northwest Territories excluded?

It is unacceptable that the federal government has not delivered on its budget promise of three years ago to provide some action on this front.

I think we must take a stronger position with the federal government that ensures they provide economic development

funding similar to what they provide in other regions of this country. As Premier, I will ensure this issue is forcefully put forth.

We need to take a stronger position with Ottawa and obtain access to funding so that we can plan and be prepared for when the full development actually occurs.

It is apparent that oil and gas exploration and development would provide an economic impact greater than diamonds. Unlike the diamonds, we want to be ahead of the game and be ready with skilled workers and prepared businesses, not reacting and playing catch-up. We need to look and plan ahead and be prepared if we are going to create economic development opportunities for our people.

I would like to give you a brief history of my background.

I am Inuvialuit. While I am proud to be Inuvialuit, I take just as much pride in being a Northerner. I am committed to working just as hard for all Northerners, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, no matter where they come from.

I have a long history of public service in community and regional organizations including terms as president of the Inuvik Hunters and Trappers Association, president of the Western Arctic Tourism Association and councilor and deputy mayor of Inuvik. I have also been a small business owner and a public servant.

I was first elected to this Assembly in 1995. My first three years as an Ordinary Member provided me with an excellent opportunity to view the operation of government from outside of Cabinet. More importantly, it provided me with an appreciation of the important role non-Cabinet Members play in the decision making process.

During my time as an Ordinary Member, I had the good fortune to serve as chair of the Western Coalition. The mandate of the Coalition was to work towards establishing a stable and viable new Territory after division. In many ways, the Western Coalition illustrates what can be achieved when government, aboriginal, business and community leaders work towards a common goal.

As Premier, I would be committed to continue to work with aboriginal, business, and community leaders to create a strong, stable, and more economically independent Northwest Territories.

As Minister of Transportation, I saw first hand the economic benefits and the increase in the standard of life the development of transportation infrastructure can bring to a community.

I recognize the important link between economic development, tourism development and transportation infrastructure. Even small developments such as access roads to small lakes or gravel pits provide benefits. As Premier, I am committed to increasing our transportation infrastructure in order to attract private sector investment and provide benefits to our residents.

As Minister of Housing, I witnessed first hand the one significant problem that raises the cost of our social programs, such as health care and education, the lack of adequate and affordable housing for many residents, especially those in our small rural communities.

Inadequate, over-crowded housing leads to more pressure for our health care and education systems, because many of our children do not have proper shelter.

As Premier, I am committed to strongly pressure the federal government to live up to its obligations here in the Northwest Territories.

The recent federal announcement on funding for the homeless is a tragedy for Northerners. Northerners without a home do not sleep on the streets in winter. They sleep in already over-crowded homes. We do not need money for the homeless – we need more money for more homes. I am committed to making the access to more federal funding for housing a priority.

As Minister of Health and Social Services and Minister responsible for Social Policy Renewal, I quickly came to understand the real meaning of “forced growth” and “sustainability”. I have had to work closely with my provincial, territorial and federal counterparts to deal with many issues, such as a lack of federal funding and a national nursing shortage.

It was against the advice of many people that I requested the Health and Social Services portfolio, perhaps one of the toughest portfolios in government. When I spoke to Premier Antoine, he seemed shocked and relieved at the same time. I knew it would be hard and sometimes unpleasant work, with demands outstripping resources.

As Premier, I would be committed to working in partnership with Cabinet and Ordinary Members to maintain funding for health and social services, education and housing programs. This can only be achieved by re-allocating scarce resources and finding new sources of revenues. However, these are the core services that we provide to our residents and they need to be maintained and improved.

Being a Minister requires a lot of hard work and time away from home and family. The job of Premier will also require a lot of hard work and time away from family. I accept this and my wife and children accept this. In fact, it is for our children that I have committed myself to public life.

Our new government has many challenges ahead of us. We need a new fiscal relationship with Ottawa. We need to further develop our partnership with aboriginal governments and get the intergovernmental forum off the ground so we can get a resource revenue sharing agreement that will spark economic development and generate the revenues we so badly need to provide essential programs and services.

As Premier, I will be counting on the experience of my Ministers and key staff to put together a solid team to lead our government. I will also be counting on the energy and constructive criticism of Ordinary MLAs to keep us on our toes.

I want to acknowledge and continue the good work of Jim Antoine, who stepped into the Premier’s job at a very difficult time, yet made tremendous strides in building this government’s relationship with aboriginal organizations.

I would like to acknowledge all the MLAs I had the good fortune to work with and learn from over the past four years.

By working together, we can overcome these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities to strike out in a new direction in the 21st century.

As I look forward to the new century, I do so with great optimism and excitement, as we have before us unparalleled opportunities. Opportunities that can best be challenged by new, vibrant, honest and energetic leadership, and a new Legislative Assembly committed to moving forward together.

I believe I can bring you this leadership.

Thank you.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The next step is to open the floor to questions of the candidates by the Members. Members are permitted to ask up to four questions each of the Premier candidates.

Before we open the floor to questions, is it the plan of the House to take a break and then when we return, we can proceed to the next part? The House shall take a break.

--Break

Questions by Members

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Welcome back to the Territorial Leadership Committee. We are on item 8, selection of the Premier. The next step is the questioning of the candidates. Each of the Members is allowed to ask up to four questions to each of the candidates. If Members would like to indicate if they would like to ask all four questions or reserve a couple for later, please do so.

I will select Members randomly. The Chair recognizes the Member for Mackenzie Delta, followed by the Member for Weledeh.

Improving Health and Social Services and Education

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The past four years was probably one of the toughest times of this Legislature. Yet we still seem to have major difficulties at hand in the areas of health and social services and the problems we are having with the teacher’s strike.

I would like to ask the two candidates running for Premier what are they going to do to change the way government is being developed? How are they going to improve the health and social services and education problems we are currently facing? What is the method they will use to resolve these problems? Do they have a magic wand, or do they have a strategy on how they will do it?

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Chair recognizes Mr. Kakfwi, then Mr. Roland.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The issue of governance was high in the former Legislature. The way we govern ourselves and the issue of self-government.

Fundamentally, our elders, our women, our children, our families, all want good programs as well as fair and equitable

services. I believe that is what those forms of government should strive for.

For instance, in the Territory today we are quickly accepting, as permanent fixtures in the political landscape, regional forms of autonomy. They are called forms of government, but they are there.

In the North, we have the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit negotiating a form of government for that region. They want resources for it. They want power. They want authority.

The Sahtu has always taken a strong position that they want a form of regional autonomy. They would be negotiating for themselves in a form of self-government.

The Deh Cho proposal embodies that need, that call by aboriginal people in the region to have some form of government for themselves that gives them the autonomy they need to survive as a people.

The Dogribs just negotiated an agreement-in-principle that embodies their desire.

These are regions that are forming, and we have to address that as a government. We have to reorganize internally and regionally to recognize that there are no longer Fort Smith regions and Inuvik regions that we can rationally continue keeping in place. We have to change with it.

In regard to specific things in health and social services, I know there is a report on health and social services, and that a forum was set up. This government and this Legislature has to look at it I believe in the retreat and the Caucus we have in February. One of the things we have to look at is the report on health and social services that was put before the previous government. There is one on education. The new Premier and the new Ministers have to look at that. I think we can put out a plan that will improve on the present situation. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. I am just going to point out that I am the Chair of the committee, and not the Speaker. We will now recognize the Member from Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we are going to have to sit down as Members and set priorities. As we have seen in the last couple of weeks, the fiscal outlook today for this government is not a good one. So we need to sit down as a team and look at our priorities. What is important to us? What areas can we continue to work on and expand? What areas are we going to have to look at lowering?

For example, we know we need to get new revenues to keep our programs. That has to be one of the biggest priorities. Residents of the Northwest Territories expect a level of delivery of programs and services that meet their needs.

Now in the campaign in Inuvik, there was a lot of concern over education and health and social services, as I am sure we have heard throughout the Territories. But to meet the demands that are placed on the table today with the existing resources, we will not be able to manage. As Members, your view is important to begin that planning process, to set priorities. We have to set new priorities for the new government. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Chair recognizes Mr. Handley, the Member for Weledeh.

Resolution of Land Claims And Self-Government Agreements

MR. HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to ask a question of both candidates for Premier. The resolution and implementation of land claims, treaty entitlements and self-government agreements, in my view, is critical for all residents of the Northwest Territories. I think finalized settlements will move us along in terms of community wellness, will move us closer to resource revenue royalty sharing, increased economic activity, and provide much needed clarity on a lot of fronts. Some people have said the GNWT is not doing everything it can to facilitate these agreements. I would like to ask each candidate, what you would propose as Premier to facilitate fair and speedy resolution of these agreements?

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Handley. I will direct the question to Mr. Roland this time.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we have heard many times, it is critical that we bring closure to the ongoing discussions that are happening throughout the Territories.

I believe in a previous government, there were eight or nine tables of the self-government processes or land claims processes that were underway. We need to work and continue to work on the process that we started as the intergovernmental forum.

What are the key issues that we want to deal with first? I believe that if we continue to spread ourselves thin as we have in previous governments, we will still be muddled in mud for the life of this Assembly. We have to set clear priorities.

We know if we are going to get revenue resource sharing, that it is going to take partnerships with aboriginal groups – true partnerships, not ones that are forced. That does not work. You cannot forge partnerships by threats. I think we have to review the role that we have played and sit down in this intergovernmental forum and discuss with the aboriginal governments what their priorities are and see if we can adapt our government to fit that.

We are a government of all people and we have to recognize that. But it is going to be a process where it is a partnership between land claims groups and public government.

We have to continue to push the federal government to have a clear mandate because they are the ones that are setting the mandate, and that further confuses the issue for ourselves in the North. If we are going to make a difference in this Territory, we are going to have to go forward with one voice. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I go on the assumption that aboriginal people will have self-government. It is their right. They will also have land and resources for their government.

When I say I think we could do something for the Deh Cho, when I say we could do something for the Yellowknives Dene First Nations, in those areas where there is no resolution in sight, it is not because I am trying to be outrageous in my commitments. I truly believe it can be done.

What you need is a creative element to the approach, to the discussions, and the resolution to stay there and introduce a political element to the talks, to find some way to keep talking until there is a way to move it. I know it can be done. We cannot let our officials keep making and discussing these things. They need our support. They need our on the spot involvement. I think that is going to be critical and that is the commitment I make today.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Any further questions for the candidates, Mr. Handley?

MR. HANDLEY: No.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The Chair recognizes the Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Recognition of the Akaitcho Government

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This question is for Mr. Kakfwi. In your speech and your response to Mr. Krutko's and Mr. Handley's question, you mentioned most aboriginal governments, the Deh Cho, the Sahtu, and the Gwich'in. Have you mentioned Yellowknives?

As you know, the Yellowknives are part of a political organization called the Akaitcho government. They are comprised of Fort Resolution and Lutsel 'ke. You failed to mention those two communities and you failed to mention the Akaitcho government.

My question to you is what would this government do differently to work with, not only the Akaitcho government, but with all aboriginal governments, including the Metis people, another that you failed to mention?

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The big-ticket item that is before this government and aboriginal governments is a desire and a tentative agreement to meet together through the intergovernmental forum to discuss a number of things. One, in my view, is how aboriginal governments and leaders can have input into the direction and priorities that this Legislature has.

I am not sure the aboriginal governments will accept that invitation, but it is one that I have always proposed. The other is that we set up the intergovernmental forum to discuss how to take over the control of our future by creating a better public government and by creating aboriginal governments and making sure they have sufficient land, resources and revenues to build and serve the constituents.

Land claims have to be articulated by the aboriginal groups themselves. I have not been briefed on it recently. I am not the Minister responsible, but I know the type of things that the Yellowknives are immediately faced with are different than those faced by Lutsel'ke, Fort Resolution and Fort Smith.

There are different ideas and processes underway and the first thing to do is make a commitment to sit down and really understand what it is that they are trying to do, what is it that they want and see if there is any way that we can help to create some momentum. If there is an impasse, we will try to break that so everybody feels there is some movement and support for the things they are striving to do. I think that is something that is new. That is what I would do. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Would you like to ask another question, Mr. Nitah?

Assisting Akaitcho Treaty Entitlement

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your response, Mr. Kakfwi.

To find out what they want to do, you say. We have been in the process of one form of negotiation or another for the last 20 years. I think it is clear what each aboriginal government wants to do. They have repeated it over and over again.

Specifically the Akaitcho Territory Government is currently pursuing treaty entitlement. They are renegotiating with the federal government, but there is a roadblock, specifically with this government. For that reason, I think they are exploring litigation.

To go beyond that, what would either candidate do to assist this process rather than hinder it? Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. I think there is a question for each of the candidates. I will allow Mr. Roland to respond first.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As pointed out by the Member for Tu Nedhe, land entitlement treaties was an ongoing issue for the lifetime of previous governments as well. For example, in the 12th Assembly they had the CDSC process where a number of recommendations came out to the government to follow and implement. In the previous Assembly, we had the Constitutional Working Group.

In both of these it was very clear that if we wanted to see movement and partnerships develop here, it would have to be done in the true meaning of partnership, where we would see the land claims situation move parallel to this government.

They have to do some catching up and get settled before they are in a position to make decisions. I think we have to review the recommendations from previous governments and see what we can accomplish sitting down together with the aboriginal groups through the intergovernmental forum.

To go through a priority listing to ask ourselves what are the first things we can achieve within the life of this Assembly, and move forward on that basis. But I do not believe we can move forward in the same fashion that we have in the past, where we have sat down, talked with groups, and at the end of the day they walk out of the room feeling like they have been misled one more time.

There is a real feeling out there by groups that previous governments have not been trustworthy. They have said one thing and done another. I understand fully where they are coming from.

We are going to have to sit down with them. I believe the intergovernmental forum is the place where we start those discussions. It has been in the works for awhile, and I believe that is the proper way to go, where we sit government to government and nail out the priorities, and we can start building from those priorities. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is important to speak directly to aboriginal governments and aboriginal leaders. I think that is the most important thing, in response to Mr. Nitah's question. I made a commitment to meet with the Yellowknives and Deh Cho leaders to hear from them directly on what it is that they are setting as their goals and objectives. I would get briefed from the government's side.

That is the way to proceed. We hear directly from each other, and there is a commitment to meet for two or three days with each party to be clear and to assure them we have really heard what their position in division is. We have an opportunity to ask questions, for them to discuss ways in which these can be achieved and move along. That is what the commitment is, and that is the way to start.

There is a firm belief and support that the aboriginal leaders also support the intergovernmental forum. It is a forum where aboriginal governments will sit with the territorial and federal governments to discuss issues between governments.

I think it is a tremendous idea, and it will set the basis for establishing the relationships we all want to see developed. That is the forum that is going to do it. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The Chair recognizes Mr. Nitah.

Reluctance to Mention Akaitcho Government

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a question for Mr. Kakfwi. I have mentioned the Akaitcho Territory government a few times, but I sense a reluctance from Mr. Kakfwi to use those words, Akaitcho government. I am just wondering why?

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Akaitcho government. I said it.

--Interjection

MR. KAKFWI: You are not detecting anything. I am just trying to respond as positively as I can. There is no reluctance on my part at all. I am excited about the prospects. I am trying to suggest, if I am elected Premier, I will commit to work with you. You are the one who has goals and aspirations. You have to give me that opportunity. There is nothing in the tone of my voice or my expression that should lead you to think otherwise.

I am interested. I want to be supportive. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The Chair will recognize the Member for Yellowknife Range Lake.

Role of Non-Aboriginal People in Land Claims and Self-Government Negotiations

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question for both candidates with respect to the land claims and self-government issues.

I ask this question with the understanding and appreciation that a speedy settlement of land claims and self-government negotiations are desirable, not only for aboriginal people, but for non-aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories as well.

I also ask this question with the recognition and appreciation to address and recognize the rights of aboriginal people, and an appreciation of the outstanding obligations to the aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories.

I believe this is also important in order to create certainty in our economy and for all of the people in the Northwest Territories, in particular for the business community. My question to both candidates is; I would like to know what your vision is as to how the public government fits into the process, and how the non-aboriginal people, who have no direct claim in the process, but obviously have great stake in the process, fit as well, understanding that we all have to have a place and future in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Ms. Lee. I will go to Mr. Kakfwi first, then to Mr. Roland. Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It has always been my view, due to the demographics, that it is not possible at this time to see a proliferation of governments. It is my view the people of the Territories are being well served by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Many of us set out in the early 70s' to gain recognition of our rights as aboriginal people. Our right to self-government. I have been there through the years and I have held at the highest political level of government in this country that the right to self-government is in the Constitution of Canada. I was there to help achieve that, because I support my people when they say they want to have the right to set up their own government.

But I also support and respect those people who choose and elect people like myself to represent them in this government. We have to make sure this government serves those people that elect us in the best, most efficient way possible.

We also have to support aboriginal leaders who strive to obtain funds of aboriginal government negotiated, recognized and implemented, so they too can provide an option to the people. Those people who elect to live under an aboriginal government should have every right to do so. They should be respected, recognized and given the proper resources to do that.

How do they all fit together? At this time, it is all starting to grow from the community level. Maybe there is an Akaitcho government. I do know the people in Lutsel'ke will have a community government. Fort Resolution will have a community government. The Yellowknives will have a community government.

The community governments have the inherent right to choose to put it at the regional level and the territorial level. That is their business. That is what the process of negotiations is going to be. There may be a regional Akaitcho government. Aboriginal governments may elect to be part of a larger, central government. How they are going to fit together is what they are going to work on.

There is some order and logic to the process, even though it has not really unfolded yet. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we simply have to look at our recent election. People across the Northwest

Territories voted for who they thought would best represent their situation. It was not biased, and will not be in the future, on what your status in the Northwest Territories is.

We have to build on a true partnership. Partnerships start, I believe, from the ground level up, and start with integrity. We are going to have one, large task to show the aboriginal governments of the Northwest Territories that we mean business this time around.

We do not have a lot of control over some of the issues that are facing this government, mainly because we do not have control over the decision making process that comes directly out of Ottawa.

I know there is a reluctance for the aboriginal governments to recognize this government as well, and that is based on past relationships.

For example, when people come into my office in Inuvik, I do not check them off the list as being a Gwich'in, or an Inuvialuit, an immigrant, a non-aboriginal Northerner. I believe we are here to represent everybody equally.

In doing that, we must also show the land claims groups and aboriginal governments are equal partners to us. How do we do that? That is going to be one of the things we are going to have to wrestle with.

As it clearly shows in previous governments, there is no magic answer to pull out of the hat. I believe we have to start building on respect and trust with one another. How does that occur?

That starts when our first meeting with the intergovernmental forum, or the aboriginal governments one on one. When we make a statement to them, we have to stick with it.

All of us have to be involved in the process as well. I do not see this as being a portion of this government going out and doing something, and coming back and updating the rest. If we are going to build true partnerships and unity in the Northwest Territories, it has to be done with everybody having equal participation in the process.

That is where the intergovernmental forum comes into play. How do we do that? We truly need to address that. As rich as we are in the Northwest Territories for our minerals, oil and gas, we are considered by the large corporations as being one of the most unsettled areas, so much so that they are afraid to come and invest in the North. They are not sure what is going to happen. That hurts everybody.

That is why our hand, as I see it, is being forced here, which is good. It is time we sit down as public and aboriginal governments and set out our priorities. If we fail, both groups fail.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next on my list is Mr. Braden, the Member for Great Slave.

Including Ottawa in the Integration of Government Systems

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To follow up on this very useful discussion about public government and the way we are going to integrate the systems as we know them now with the emerging constitutional rights of aboriginal governments, I

would pose a question to both candidates to see where they would come to the floor in helping to bring Ottawa into the picture.

The perspective I have, Mr. Chair, is that both the Government of the Northwest Territories and the aboriginal governments are coming from positions of weakness. There is not a level playing field in terms of where we stand with Ottawa. I am encouraged with the expectations that we may see in the intergovernmental forum scheduled for just a few weeks from now. But would the candidates please advise us as to how they see us getting the federal government to really take some ownership and some partnership in truly developing the North for aboriginal and for non-aboriginal people.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Braden. The question will be directed to Mr. Roland first and then to Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you Mr. Chair. One of the largest hurdles we are going to have to cross is how do we in the North deal with Ottawa. Mr. Braden's statement is quite correct. We come from a point of weakness as long as we continue to work and walk down our own paths.

I see that we must first come to some agreement in the Northwest Territories and build on a position of power: where we have all peoples speaking together, where we recognize our differences and realize that our differences make us stronger, not weaker.

I am fairly new to this. For example, in my role as Health and Social Services Minister and Minister of Social Policy Renewal, I see the meetings we go to with our federal/provincial/territorial counterparts, as critical. At those tables, we need to express our concern and express them, I believe, a little stronger than we have.

In previous governments, we have tried to work with the federal government. We realize they hold a large hammer because they are sending the budget down our way. But there comes a time in history, and I think the evolution of the Northwest Territories, where we must stand together, to be counted together and build on our strengths, not knock each other down and create weakness.

Yes, I believe it is important to bring Ottawa into the picture. Minister Nault has come to the North a number of times and shown that he seems to be open to the idea of this process of working together. We have to expand on that. But we have to start from a position of power in the Northwest Territories and that means going to Ottawa in true partnership, not one pitted against the other.

Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you. I know many of the things that we need addressed by our aboriginal people and aboriginal governments, as well as the Government of the Northwest Territories, requires that we know how to deal with Ottawa. That tells me one thing. We need someone with experience, someone that knows how to make deals, someone that knows how to address the issues of aboriginal people and aboriginal governments.

I believe I can do that, because I have done it before. To give you an example: during the constitutional talks for the Charlottetown Accord, we dealt with every national aboriginal organization across this country: the Inuit, the Inuvialuit, the Metis, the First Nations and every provincial government, every territorial government, plus the federal government for six months. We were able to get them to agree it would take a leap of faith and say we do not know what it is, but the inherent right is in the constitution. That is what we accomplished.

So being confident and having the experience in dealing with Ministers and Premiers, and other governments is required. I have done it before and I can do it again. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The Chair now recognizes the Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell, followed by Mr. Dent. Mr. Bell.

Making Education and Training a Priority

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to pose a question to both candidates. I think that everybody in this room, and all citizens in the Northwest Territories, would agree and realize that we are faced with serious health concerns. We hear that 20 percent of expectant mothers consume alcohol during their pregnancy. I think this is a staggering rate and scares us all. One of the key things we have to realize here, and probably all of you agree, is that we have an education problem, which is leading to a health problem.

We are all very focused on stimulating economic development in the Territories. But I worry that as we continue to stimulate economic development, we continue to lose employment to southerners who are trained. I would like both of you to answer this question; how does your government intend to make education a priority for Northerners so that we might curb some of the health concerns we are faced with and so that we might train Northerners for northern jobs? Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Bell. The Chair will recognize Mr. Kakfwi first.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you. We know that quality of life in the communities in the North is tied to education and ability of individuals to provide for themselves. That has been, I think, accepted by all of us. But what we require is a commitment to find ways to improve the lives of all our people. If there are people without jobs, we have to strive to give them jobs.

There are people who require higher education. We need to make a commitment to provide education. There are no quick answers, only a commitment. There was a forum set up by the Ministers Forum on Education. Many of us need to look at it again, especially the Caucus and the new Premier and Cabinet that meets in February. What does that forum say? What are some of the suggestions? We need to understand why our teachers are on strike. What are the issues they feel we need to know more about?

I do not have solutions; this is a commitment. We will work at it, talk about it and try to find some way in which we can provide better services to everyone. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The Chair recognizes Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The one thing I have learned, as a Member of the 13th Assembly, is that previous governments' idea of how programs and services are delivered in communities is not working. We have departments with policies and programs that are developed in their own area. Stovepipe mentality is what I would call it.

It shows that the system is not working. We can look at our statistics. Our graduation rates are not good in the Northwest Territories, especially amongst aboriginal people. How do we make the system develop or change into something that is more productive? That is where we get together again and look at our priorities. If we look at all that we spend today in the area of education, the area of health and social services, we find we have a lot of non-government organizations out there that are trying to do similar things. Whether it is life skills or adult education, we have a lot of areas dealing with the aftermath of how our kindergarten to grade 12 system has not performed as it was first developed.

I think we have to go back and ask ourselves as Members elected to represent the people, how are we going to change the system to make sure the dollars we are spending are spent on quality, not quantity?

If our people are going to be trained to take jobs, they have to have a quality education. There are a lot of good teachers who put in a lot of time to teach children, including my own.

We find ourselves in a system we have tried to patch up and band-aid for many years. We have to ask ourselves, what are our key priorities? How will we make sure the system is going to start to work? For example, are we going to take more steps in the preventive area? We know that a child's life is formed within the first five to six years. If we do not take advantage of those years, we are going to pay for it in the long run. That is where the dollars start to pour in.

Are we going to put priority on early prevention, and start early intervention from kindergarten up to grade three? Will we focus on those areas so we can ensure the next generation is adequately prepared? That is why I say we need to have an overall policy, one that fits the economic sector.

As I stated in my speech, we have done things piece-meal. We have had to run to catch up with the development that is happening, and often, we have lost out. In some cases, with the hard work of previous Ministers, we have pulled it off.

But trying to catch up from behind takes a lot of energy. Let us get ahead of the game, and that means looking at the preventative side. Those are the hard decisions we are going to have to make. That is where I will count on the wisdom of all my colleagues around the table. Everybody has to have input on the priorities of this government when it comes to health and social services. Sustainability is a key area. I believe we have one of the better systems when we compare ourselves to the rest of Canada, but it is stretched to the limit.

We saw signs of it this past summer, where health centres were closing down. We cannot continue the way we are. We have to look at our priorities. How can we sustain these areas?

I look forward to sitting down with colleagues and looking at these strategies and forums to take some of their

recommendations and implement them. The people have spoken at those forums. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Bell, do you have another question?

MR. BELL: No, that is it.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The Chair will now recognize the Member for Yellowknife Frame Lake, Mr. Charles Dent.

Resolving Civil Servant Morale Problems

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is for both candidates as well. This government depends on civil servants to deliver critical services to people in every community. With job cuts, restraint, and knowing the fiscal forecast, morale in civil service across the Northwest Territories is low. I was wondering if the candidates could tell us if they thought of plans or ways they would propose to improve morale among civil servants?

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The Chair will recognize Mr. Roland first.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is something we have often overlooked in previous governments. The people delivering the service in the communities are critical to the success or failure of the programs and services that are developed, whether it is developed through our own system or in partnership with other groups. We know through our experience in the 13th Assembly that we have lost a lot of confidence, and our civil servants are quite worried. As the fiscal forecast has been painted, there is a lot of nervousness out there. What steps are we going to take as a government?

In order to rebuild some confidence, we are going to have to look at doing a little bit of investment. Right now, there is a concern that government programs and departments are doing all their own work, and missing out on working together as a whole government. I think this is where the role of a public service commission could be important to our civil servants, and that should be at arm's length from the government. They could raise their concerns directly with that group, and the results could come back to us. We would have to seriously look at these concerns and it would not be piece-meal.

I think we have to seriously look at that, and again, that falls in with priorities we set as a government. I would like to put that idea out there. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The people who work for the government in the departments across the North are the people we expect to carry out the direction we set out.

It is true in some quarters that morale is not as high as it should be. The government has gone through some traumatic changes. The previous government went through a conflict of interest inquiry where there were allegations of wrongdoing because of issues like the Lahm Ridge Tower. These affect the people who work for us.

Anything that brings an aura that something is not right, or not above board, that there is hesitancy, that there is no consistency and decisiveness, creates morale problems.

I think it is important to keep a very strong line of communication open with our workers through the union negotiations, but also, as Premier and Ministers, we need to make a commitment that we will respect the senior managers who work for us, the deputy ministers. I have always told my staff I do not want them to agree with me because it is the easy way out. Every one of them is expected to present their views and to disagree with me when they think I am wrong, or when they think I am making decisions based on incomplete information.

That has been part of the secret of my success, if I have had any. My staff are always told to be strong, clear and independent in their thinking. At the end, we will come to a decision we all support.

It is important to have staff that can stand up to you, and are not afraid to say, "I disagree with you and here is why". It is important they have the confidence to do that without fear of losing their jobs. To have staff that can say, "Yes, I know this is your relative and you would like to do something for them, but it is wrong." Staff that can say that without feeling there will be some retribution later down the road.

That is what we need. Once we get that type of message out to all employees, once we say we need this job done, how much can you realistically accomplish? We need to have their input on things like that. I think that would greatly improve morale. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Mr. Dent, any further questions? What is the pleasure of the committee? We are approaching 12 o'clock. As we had agreed, this would be a good time to take a break for lunch. We can reconvene at 1:30 p.m. When we reconvene, we will hear Mr. Ootes, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Steen, Mr. Delorey, and Mr. Krutko.

We will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

--Break

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Welcome back. The item on the agenda is the question period for the Premier candidates. When we took our break I had on my list Mr. Ootes, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Steen, Mr. Delorey and Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ootes is going to delay his question. Next on the list will be Mr. Antoine, the Member for Nahendeh.

Community Consultation

MR. ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. First of all I would like to congratulate you for your victory here in being Speaker-designate. Congratulations.

Good afternoon everyone. I know these two gentlemen very well. We have spent a lot of hours together in the government over the years. I am not going to get into specific questions.

I just wanted to hear their views on how to approach the beginning of this term. Previous governments would, once Premier and Cabinet were selected, go away in isolation and go through the issues of the day and come up with a strategy

and plan. I know there are plans in the works to do that in February.

However, taking it one step further, I would like to know their views on going directly to the communities to hold town hall meetings and asking our constituents what they think. Since this is a new millennium and a new beginning, the first government after division, we could ask the citizens what they would like us to do. I just wanted to hear their views on this type of approach. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Antoine. The question is directed to both candidates. We will begin this round with Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are some immediate things that would need to be done. First of all, there is a transition to be made from the existing Cabinet to the newly elected Cabinet. A transition team would need to be put in place to establish a plan for transition.

It would require input from the Ministers. There will be staffing positions that need to be in place. There has been some thought given to those already. I am not at liberty to discuss them, because at this moment it is still a hypothetical situation.

I just want to assure Members that I have spent a lot of time thinking about it. In my mind there is a way to proceed from here on, if I am elected. I would be very happy to share that with the Ministers, and include as much of the Caucus as possible as we proceed.

Town hall meetings are a great idea. I think meeting with only certain individuals, certain leaders, is in many ways not fair. We need to give equal opportunity to everyone. Every community has people that no one listens to, people who never speak up, people who need to be heard. Sometimes it is the elders, sometimes it is the women, sometimes it is the youth. Town hall meetings will be one forum that will be required.

I think it is also important to have meetings on a regular basis with every MLA in this Legislature, so no one is favoured, no one is forgotten, and no one is ignored. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The Chair recognizes Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The way I see it, we definitely need to continue working as a group to set priorities, as I have stated a number of times earlier. There is a need for Caucus to get back together, the need for the formation of committees, as well as Ministers being set up with new portfolios, or taking on different roles.

That area is short term. In the long term, one of the things we need to do as a Legislative Assembly is to go out to the different areas and regions and get a taste of what it is like in the smaller communities. What I found in the 13th Assembly was the majority of meetings which took place took place in Yellowknife and the larger regional centres.

I think to get a proper picture and perspective of the impacts of our decision making we need to go to some of the smaller places and see how they get by day to day. That is an important issue that we need to look at. It might cost a little more but I think it will be valuable to our decision making process. Part of going to the smaller communities is the people

will actually get to see their government again. They would not just see it on the TV or hear it on the radio; they might be able to take part in the actual meetings. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Next on my list I have the Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Returning Health and Social Services Costs to Federal Government

MR STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is directed to both candidates. Mr. Chair, we as a government in the past have been working towards devolution. This included devolution of all services and programs from the federal government that were actually administered by the federal government in the past.

One of the shortfalls seems to be that we do not receive sufficient funding to carry forth responsibilities. The total administrative cost is far more than what we receive through our funding program from the federal government, in particular, our formula funding agreement. This includes our agreement with Health Canada as well.

Therefore, I wonder if the two candidates would consider the following options that this government would return the responsibilities of health and social services that are applicable to aboriginal people back to the federal government, in other words, the uninsured health benefits.

Also, the federal government, to a large degree, is responsible for education of aboriginal people. They have been asking and putting this responsibility on this government without the appropriate funds. Would it be an option that this government would consider turning educational responsibilities as they apply to aboriginal people back to the federal government?

My last question concerns forest fire suppression. Again, we are taking on responsibilities that we cannot afford. They are not forecastable, and unforeseeable, yet we must bear these costs. However, we do not have the option of benefiting from these forest products. A lot of these forests are now on aboriginal lands, yet we are responsible for carrying out the cost of fighting these forest fires.

Considering that the federal government has not looked favourably at transferring to us the benefits of non-renewable resources, would the candidate consider returning these responsibilities back to the federal government?

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you Mr. Steen, for your three questions. The first speaker to respond will be Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are all very important issues, as those are core programs for the Northwest Territories. In previous governments when the government was flush with money, there were a lot of programs that were created.

We have to sit down and review those priorities. What areas do we want to see as continuing priorities, and what areas do we feel as an Assembly and as residents of the Northwest Territories we will have to forego?

We know, for example, that with non-insured health benefits we are going to hit the cap that the federal government has set in place. What will our approach be? I think, as I have said a

number of times today, as we set priorities we are going to have to seriously consider the programs and services that we deliver on behalf of our residents, and ask ourselves what can we afford to deliver and still maintain the quality of life in the Northwest Territories?

Does it require turning back the education, culture and employment, or health and social services, or parts of the programs within that? If we are going to work in partnership with the aboriginal governments those are some of the issues we are going to have to deal with. We will have to come up with an arrangement. We know that aboriginal governments have been pushing for their own control of delivery of those programs in their communities, and the feds have started, for quite some time now, delivering programs in conjunction with the aboriginal governments in their communities. To a certain degree, it is already happening.

We know there were some groups after the health care dollars. The one thing we have to seriously look at is in communities where there is a large mixture of people, how does that impact the delivery of the system?

For example, I look at Inuvik where you have the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, the non-aboriginal, as being, even sectors of the population. How do you make it work?

We know that by further developing things we also increase the area of administration costs. Fourteen percent of every dollar spent is spent on administration. How far can we go with that? Those are some of the issues we have to deal with. That is why a partnership is going to have to merge out of this. If we continue down the path we are currently on where one group does one thing, another does another thing; the ever-shrinking dollars will continue to shrink. We have to look at just about every community and look at the non-government organizations all trying to deal with certain issues in the community. How do we fix that? Those are some of the difficult decisions we are going to be faced with as a 14th Assembly. All of us around here are going to take part in that discussion, in setting the priorities. What can we continue to do? What can we not do? It has been forced upon us, but we are going to have to deal with that issue.

We know that it is a forecast that 18 months out we are going to hit the ceiling. After that there are no more choices. It is just going to be very negative. So we have to take the opportunity to make some changes early on. That is going to require some partnership working with the aboriginal governments in communities because a lot of them are delivering some of the programs. Is it going to be the case where they actually take over delivery of health care in their community or region? That is a possibility. We are going to have to see the implication on the ability to maintain standards for all residents in the Northwest Territories. So that is not an easy one to deal with.

Maybe the aboriginal governments out there are ready to take over forest fire suppression on their own. How do we take that out of the base? That is something we have to work on because one year expenditures are less than \$9 million and another year it is \$29 million. There is no set transfer, so that is going to be a difficult process and it will involve the three governments. Again, that shows the importance of the intergovernmental process. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. You answered all three questions. Now the Chair recognizes Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in my speech earlier today, I said to the people of the North and to Members of the Legislature, that I want to work for a better life for everyone. It means I have to be optimistic that people want us to continue as a government to provide service to them while we are developing options for aboriginal governments to step in where people mandate them to. To take over programs and services. I have to be optimistic that this government will find a way to overcome the difficulties that we face.

It is my view the Premier is not alone in facing the problem of a deficit, the lack of revenue sharing, or the lack of funding to this government. It is this Assembly's problem. It is a problem for Cabinet. I believe together we can meet and plan on how to overcome these obstacles. There is no solution at the moment. There is no agreement on what the priorities are. There is no agreement on what the direction should be to deal with these issues and these problems but the commitment is to work at it and provide some leadership, some experience, some conviction and commitment to resolve these issues. That is really all that can be said. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Next on my list I have the Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Readdressing Definition of a Northerner

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again I would like to congratulate you on your successful bid for Speaker of the House. As a candidate for the riding of Hay River North, I sometimes had a hard time defending the belief that if I was elected, I would be part of a government that would represent all the people of the Northwest Territories, especially when it comes to obtaining benefits from social programs.

For example, how do you tell someone working for Kingland Ford or Igloo Building Supplies making in the neighbourhood of \$30,000 or less that they are not entitled to medical travel? Or someone that is aboriginal or that is working for a government department making \$60,000 or more is entitled to full expenses for medical travel, including taxis, meals, accommodations and even car rentals?

Or how do you tell a 16 year old student that has lived in the Northwest Territories all their life they are not entitled to the same educational benefits as their next door neighbour simply because of who they are or their ethnic background, or that they are not just part of the system? I would like to hear from both candidates how they would justify questions like that? I would also like to know if they would be prepared to readdress or revisit the definition of who is and who is not a Northerner when it comes to obtaining government benefits? Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The first response will come from Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Mr. Chair, I have never enjoyed the opportunity to serve as the Minister for Health and Social Services, but I am sure there are opportunities to make changes to the way in which we provide health and social services to our people, whether they are treaty, Metis or just citizens of Canada, citizens of the Northwest Territories.

As I said earlier, there is a report made to the Minister. There was a forum set up to look at health and social services. As new Members we have not had an opportunity to look at it. I think there was a lot of input from our communities, our front-line workers, to make suggestions on how we can make things better in health and social services. We have never had an opportunity to discuss that. I have had input from my constituency who organized the Sahtu communities to provide input into this forum. The report is there. We just need to take time as Members of the Legislature, new Cabinet and Premier to sit together to look at it and decide what can be done.

Historically, there has been a disparity about the way aboriginal people have been treated. Metis people are treated differently from treaty people. Inuit have been treated different. No one denies that. I do know the federal government has a policy on treaty people that they say was implemented not because of treaty or constitutional obligations but because they are benevolent because aboriginal people were dying from disease and poverty. So they, as a benevolent government, instituted health care coverage for treaty people in the south. That is the official federal position. The position of First Nations is we have given up lands and resources in this place that is now called Canada, for certain assurances and provisions. One of them is that our health will always be covered. That is the official position of First Nations people across this country.

People know that aboriginal people were not allowed to vote until very recently. Everybody else was allowed to. On the other hand, you have this health policy. We were not allowed to have jobs or to hold certain occupations until 1957. I raise this not to say whatever disparity there is, is justified, but to say we are trying to correct these things. People are not asking for handouts but people are saying we should be accorded recognition for our rights.

People are trying to correct that, but I do not think we are there yet. I agree, if it was possible we should provide the same health care to all treaty people as we do to everyone else. It is also true some companies and the government itself provides better health coverage than to ordinary citizens. If you are working you get better coverage. If you work for big companies you get really big coverage. So there are discrepancies. If there are ways to make sure that everybody is treated as equitably as possible, we have to look at it. I agree there should not be discrimination and the type of disparities that appear to exist. It is not right. It does not provide for good accord among citizens and it should be looked at. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakwi. Mr. Roland. The Chair recognizes Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Quality of programming is a difficult issue when we look at our makeup of the Northwest Territories. I can just look at my own family to see the impact. My children, growing up in the Northwest Territories, if they were to marry out of an aboriginal group, their children would probably not be covered based on the genealogy of ancestry. Yet they were born here and they have an aboriginal parent. So it is a tough question to deal with.

I think the question arises from the difference in the health care that is provided to Canadians. Here in the Northwest Territories we have the non-insured health benefits as well for Indian and Inuit according to the federal agreement. In that agreement, you see the extras that are available for dentures, eye glasses,

medical travel and some of the drugs. As I said earlier, we are going to hit that ceiling here and we are going to run into some other problems overall. It is something we are going to have to wrestle with when it comes to how do we deal with the federal government on these issues. They are important. They have been created, part of past agreements between the federal government and aboriginal governments and when we took over the programming it was attached.

Now again, I know there are a lot of aboriginal governments that are working at trying to take over that end of the programming. It is something that is part of the intergovernmental process. They are intertwined in the Northwest Territories. There are going to be some differences remaining. I think there are ways where we can bring things together.

How do we bring together programming that was set up through this government in conjunction with the federal government and the aboriginal groups? For example, with student financial assistance, the Dene are treated tax free in that situation. The Metis and the Inuvialuit are not. As well, the non-aboriginal portion of our population fall outside another degree. There was some ongoing work that was being done with the groups in the Northwest Territories to try to bring this to a little more of a setting where we can all look each other a little closer in the eye. That is not going to be without negotiation.

Some areas are still a way out of our hands when it comes to the federal government and the belief and constitutional rights of those that have come before and are considered First Nations in our land. They have made agreements with the federal government and we have accepted the transfers and we are implementing them on their behalf. As I said earlier, some of those groups are wanting to take over their own delivery because they feel this government has not done it properly. On both sides of the coin we are going to get bit. I think if we form the right partnerships and look at this in a new way where everybody has a say at the table, at the end of the day we can come out with a compromise that will lead to a better system overall for the Northwest Territories.

I know my long term goal, I do not want to see a school in Inuvik for the Gwich'in, another one for the Metis, yet another one for the Inuvialuit, and one for non-aboriginal people. We could never afford that. So all parties have to work together. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Delorey, do you have any other questions? Next on the list is Mr. Krutko, the Member for Mackenzie Delta.

Government Accountability

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question has to do with the whole area of accountability and the concept the public has of government and trust we put in ourselves when we come here to represent our constituents. I am seeing the controversy about patronage appointments, contracts being given to former Ministers and Members of our executive.

One of the areas that was considered during the different inquiries was the question about whistle blowing legislation that protects the bureaucrats and people within the government. It basically says they will not be axed if they came forth with

something they felt was not right or was not being dealt with above board.

I would like to ask both candidates what will you do to build trust between the people and government, to ensure this government is more accountable to the people we are here to serve and to not go back to the way of the old boys club?

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The first response will come from Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you are well aware, accountability is a big factor amongst our constituents in the Northwest Territories.

There are a number of forms of accountability that we can look at to try to make representation more effective of those constituents. One is how you set up this government and its day-to-day operations. How do you involve the Ordinary Members in the process?

The development of legislation is another. For myself, I have no doubt that whistle blower legislation can work. We have asked for employees in the past to give ideas of expenditure areas where they can see some improvement, but there is always been a fear that if they make a comment, a supervisor will reprimand them and so on.

We should not have to operate in that kind of system. We should not have to operate with fear of our job if we are going speak the truth. I would see that if that was a necessity and felt a necessity of this Assembly, then we should get on with it and develop it and make our government more accountable, from the Ministers to Ordinary Members and our senior staff. If we are committed to do the work of the residents in a fair and equitable manner, then we are just playing games. I know for myself I did not come here to play games.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you Mr. Roland. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Mr. Chair, unfortunately in the world that I have grown up in, it is a reality that some people are, you might say, more focused and determined to have things their way than others. And it very often creates a situation where people are intimidated into doing and saying things they may not necessarily do in a normal course of action.

People have to be protected. At the same time, people have to be accountable. I had no difficulty with that in 1987 when I was first elected. I said I would be very willing to stand up in front of the entire Assembly and tell every Member who I was going to vote for and why. I would be accountable to the public that way. Nobody agreed with me, so we still vote by secret ballot. I raised that because that is one way to be accountable.

In regard to running government, I agree that patronage is something we all have to avoid. We were joking yesterday that for those people that continue to insist that Stephen Kakfwi has no friends, that is a good thing because I have nobody to patronize.

Thank you.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: I think I see a smile.

MR. KAKFWI: So who would I give contracts to?

-- Laughter

This is a danger and a reality that we have to avoid. I think the entire Caucus and the Cabinet need to discuss it. There are ways in which we can agree to avoid these difficulties. If there is patronage, then we must put a stop to it. If there is favouritism in contracts and in the hiring of people, we have to stop that. If people in our civil service are being intimidated or coerced to recall information or to conduct themselves in ways that they feel compromised, they should have an opportunity and a way to disclose that. I support the establishment of the conflict of interest inquiry. It was against the Premier. I was a Member of Cabinet. But it was a legitimate process set up for those Members of the Legislature who felt they were not being treated in a way that would provide with ensuring there was accountability on the part of Members of the Executive.

It is important to point that out, because in some ways I carried baggage for that as well. But I do not make an apology for it, for I think it was the right thing to do. It was due process and the results are evident. Maybe not to all of us, but to most of us. I agree that accountability is something that we need to do. I think every Member of the Legislature, the new Members, Members of Cabinet, former Members of Cabinet and former Members of the Legislature should be invited to discuss this. There is a way to provide for this government to be accountable to conduct itself in the best interest of the public. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Chair continues to recognize Mr. Krutko. Third question.

Establishing Priorities of Government

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My next question has to do with the area of improving and bettering the lives of the people we serve. One of the areas I have a concern with is the quality of health care. A particular health concern is the quality of the water that is being provided in our communities. In the case of my communities, Fort McPherson and Aklavik, there is a major problem with various chemicals that are showing up in our water supplies.

In Fort McPherson, they were told just in the last couple of months that they were not allowed to drink their water, and also not to cook with it. They were told to use other alternative sources of water such as snow, ice or water from other creeks within the area. This matter was raised in the 13th Assembly by myself, through motions through Committee of the Whole with the support of my colleagues, in the hopes that this issue would be dealt with.

I would like to know from the candidates, what do you establish as being a priority of government? Building infrastructure, building roads or improving the quality of health in our communities, which would include having safe drinking water for all the residents of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. That was one question. The first response will come from Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Mr. Chair, with respect to one of my communities in the Sahtu, I have been raising the issue since I was first elected in 1987 that the infrastructure Tulita has will provide clean, consistent, good quality water to the community.

We have been working on it for 12 years. We have had engineers look at it and consultants study it. As Mr. Krutko knows, that does not always result in getting the job done.

I have no problem in making the commitment that we need to involve the MLA, the chief and some local contractors, and only one engineer. We will sit down and figure out how to get this job done. If it is left to normal government planning cycles we will still be talking about it 12 years from now. I think it is something we just need to sit down and fix.

We do that by making a commitment to find a solution and address it. That is how I would respond to that. We need to focus on it. It is one of the most basic things that people should be assured of and they are not. I know the situation in Fort McPherson needs a solution. We need to make a commitment to work on it.

In the area of health care, we know many of the costs we incur on an annual basis are because of problems we have with alcoholism, violence and abuse that goes on in our communities. Many of these things are self-inflicted. Many of these things happen because we do it to ourselves. Our people are suffering, they are traumatized and they are abused, and they need support. At the same time, we know we do not have to beat our wives. We do not have to neglect our children. There are many things we do to ourselves that I think we can set as targets and try to manage and diminish the cost of them.

We need to provide an economic strategy so there are jobs for our young people and there are jobs for the husbands and wives who want to work. Once the quality of life and the level of income go up, people will feel a sense of well being and they will turn to help themselves become stronger and more self-reliant.

That is the thing we all need to try and provide. With health care, we do not have the money to do an adequate job right now. Our resources are diminishing. We need to somehow try to help people become more self-reliant and more responsible for their actions. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakwi. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the area of improving the lives of our constituents, it is something we are going to have to continually wrestle with as Members of the 14th Assembly, as we had to in the 13th Assembly.

We need health care and health concerns to become priorities in our communities. For example, the situation Mr. Krutko raises concerning the quality of water. In this day and age in the Northwest Territories, we should not have to go to the river's edge to fetch a pail of water. This issue has been raised a number of times. Due to my previous experience and work as a public servant with Public Works, I know the issue has been raised.

Yes, one community had a lot of problems with its water intake in the Bear River. They have tried to fix it a number of times. Hopefully, this last time will mean it has been fixed. We cannot continually go back and repeat the same work that has been done before. The money that was spent to remedy it when it was not fixed the first time is used up and not able to be

transferred to other communities that need it. We have to improve in a number of areas.

One area for improvement is we have to recognize that when health factors come up because of our delivery system, they have to be remedied. They have to become a priority. We cannot allow our communities that were developed under the watchful eye, as they say, of government departments to end up in trouble because their sources of water are not up to operating standard. There are a number of situations there. We have to definitely sit down and see if they become a health priority that has been impacted by our own systems that were set up and delivered by ourselves as government. We have to repair those systems. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Chair will now recognize the Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Role of GNWT in Negotiations

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For some time now, the First Nation organization or First Nation governments have been publicly stating the Government of the Northwest Territories has no place at the negotiating table. My question is to both candidates, as to their views of how the Government of the Northwest Territories should be involved in the negotiating table between the First Nation governments and the federal government. Should it be as a full member, observer or not there at all, or do they have any other options they see working? Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The first response to this question will go to Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That area is definitely a sensitive area. As I said earlier to one of the questions, I think we had nine different tables undergoing negotiations in the 13th Assembly. There are continuing negotiations and we are going to be a part of them, and to what degree is important. The federal government, in a lot of cases, states that we have to be a part of the process. I believe they have stated this based on the facts that we deliver programs and services to all residents of the Northwest Territories.

One of the things we have done in the previous Assembly was to develop the geographic tracking costs of dollars spent in communities. I believe that is one of the areas where we can be involved, more in a sense of being almost like staff at the table where we can provide the numbers and show where expenditures have taken place.

I know it has been strongly put forward by a number of aboriginal governments that this government has no place at the negotiations. They feel the original agreements were signed between themselves and the federal government, and we have little role to play. I think that is where we have to build our partnerships. We have to show we are trying to work with one another in the Northwest Territories.

When I was a child, outside of school in the winter when they shoveled snow off the roof, there would be a huge mound of snow and we would play king of the hill. When recess was over, the last person standing was king of the hill. I use that scenario a number of times with people in my community. If we continue to go at one another in the Northwest Territories and not work in a true partnership, we are going to find at the end of

the day that the hill is gone, and we will only have remnants to deal with. We will all suffer for it.

Yes, I agree that in the Northwest Territories, we cannot use the same model in every location. But there needs to be a little consistency to make sure that somebody from the Deh Cho will receive the same level of service as somebody in the Sahtu or in Yellowknife.

We have to build that into some sort of approach or model. How do we do it? That is going to be the work of the 14th Assembly. We have a new mandate. I think we have to use this as an opportunity to create some innovative ways of dealing with the issues that are before us. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Mr. Chair, I do not have any strong views on this. I have said before that there are some communities and regions where there is no resolution yet to the land claims or treaty land entitlement processes as well as self-government negotiations. This is one of the items that needs to be addressed by the leaders in the Akaitcho Territory, as well as people in the Deh Cho. I have committed to sit down with them to discuss items such as this and try to come to some resolution on that. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Are there any other questions for the new candidates? I have no one else on the list. The Chair recognizes the Member from Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko, for his final question.

Ensuring Fairness in Government

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the things I had a real problem with as a Member of the 13th Assembly, is that once we start going through the business plans, we seem to see different dollars being allocated to different areas and, also, that monies are moved around from one particular project to another.

And yet, we say we are an open government. It seems like there is still the idea there is a buddy-buddy system, if you do something for me or you support me on any particular issue or you vote the way that I want you to vote, I will do something for you on Cabinet. I think that that concept has to change.

There is a planning process in place in all our communities, which is the five-year capital plan. And one thing I found awfully frustrating in the 13th Assembly is how they talk about an open government and allowing the Ordinary Members to be part of the planning process, but then when we find particular problems within the business plans, it is either too late, the decision has been already made or the contract has been signed.

I would like to ask the two candidates what will you do to ensure this is a fair government, that every community has just as much right to put in their business plans, and know that the five year capital planning process was done fairly and the dollars will be spread equally?

It does not matter if I am in Tsiigehtchic or Yellowknife or wherever, that there will be a fair open process compared to what we have had in the 13th Assembly and in the past. May I

hear the comments on that particular issue from the two candidates?

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The first response will go to Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a concern that has been raised for many years on many occasions. I think it is imperative we provide all Members with reasons why budget estimates, main estimates and dollar allocations change. There are legitimate reasons why they change. Sometimes commitments cannot be lived up to for whatever reason. Sometimes there are urgent requirements that compel the government or Ministers to reallocate resources.

But whatever the reasons are, I agree we should look for ways in which to provide that information to Members, so Members do not conjure up worse case scenarios about why it is being done. Members should know why it is being done. I think there are ways in which Ministers can also have that kind of picture because they do not always have it.

For instance, recently there was a decision not to provide cat train services to Colville Lake in my constituency. In a panic about it, someone wanted to know why. Was it because money was reallocated because there was urgent requirements somewhere else? I did not know, so I waited until the information was provided to me. And I was satisfied with the response I received, and I provided the information to my constituency. Sometimes there are legitimate reasons why that happens.

I think sometimes we do not know ourselves, but there is a requirement for Members to know. And I think there are ways in which it could be done. Again, this is something to discuss amongst ourselves, so we agree on how it should be done and so there is more accountability and transparency. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The Chair recognizes Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, was an Ordinary Member in the 13th Assembly. I was at times disappointed that we had gone through a process of making priorities, allocating the budget numbers and a short time later finding out that they had been changed. The priorities that were used for the discussion in committees were changed after the fact. I believe when you approve numbers for a certain project in any specific community that the departments bringing forward those plans must have done their research to know what was possible and what was the outcome, as close as possible, in relation to the estimate of the project.

There are circumstances and emergencies, if there is a fire that burnt down a school or a complex in a community, then there are reasons to justify movement of resources. But I believe that an established system was put in place and, as Mr. Krutko stated, the five year capital review in communities to prioritize their community's interests that would come through the system to the Legislative Assembly and, once again, they would be looked at for the resources that were available and what could be achieved. And they would be put on a capital plan.

Again, it goes towards the accountability of government overall, right from your senior managers to your Ministers to this

process in the House. We should fully implement what has been designed, and unless an emergency arises, when committees have gone through it and it has been approved and passed through the House, that is the way it stays. We can no longer afford to do things as they have been done in the past. We are beyond those days. At least, I hope we are. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Chair now recognizes the Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Doing Business in the New Western Territory

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to address a question to both candidates. This question is on the regulatory regime and the perception of many, and I believe, the reality of the uncertainty and insecurity of the investment climate in the Northwest Territories due to the vast range of approvals and regulatory and monitoring boards that we have.

Unscientifically, Mr. Chair, someone suggested there is probably in the neighborhood of 60 different levels or layers of approval that a given project could go through, and that was just in terms of federal boards and agencies.

One thought I had during my campaign was that it would make a very interesting platform to say we should have zero tolerance for any new regulatory board to be created in the Northwest Territories. And then I thought, well, no, I better not get too aggressive about that because I might have to do one.

Then I thought if somebody wants to make a new board, they should be able to take one off the list. Perhaps that is zero tolerance. Perhaps that is something we could look at.

But, to get down to my question, I would like to hear from both candidates concerning the uncertainty and insecurity of investment. What signal will your government send to the investment and the development community about the security of doing business in the new Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Braden. The first response will come from Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree we have so much red tape in the Northwest Territories that we could probably wrap this Legislative Assembly a number of times over and not find our way out. It has been a concern, especially when we talk to small business, the amount of hoops you have to go through to get some assistance to try and develop a small business. It is even more so a concern for the larger groups and developments.

Now we know there has to be some regulatory process in place that would ensure the land and water that keeps the North as it is protected. But we also have to find a way of reducing the amount. There are numerous organizations that take care of our land and water for us. I believe that is why we have to pressure the federal government to continue devolving responsibilities to the Northwest Territories, so that we can deal with our issues at home. We have a better feel for how it is going, and we have communities who have a better feel of how they want to see development happen.

But right now it is out of our hands and it becomes adversarial. We have to find a way of bringing that to the North so we have

control over it, and we can implement or get rid of some of the regulation out there.

The Government of the Northwest Territories itself tried, in the 13th Assembly, to bring back an "ominous bull", as they called it, to get rid of some of this red tape. Sadly, though, as it came forward, it was nothing like what was discussed initially. It touched on a lot of housekeeping issues, but never really got to the crux of the issue of how do we clean it up, make it accountable, and make things flow so that when new opportunities develop in the North, businesses are clear on the processes they have to use. That is where we are going to have to go.

We are going to have to work with the feds and, again, develop partnerships with the aboriginal governments. What process is the best process for all of us? It is the Northwest Territories - it is time that we move past the baby feeding of Ottawa. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have been advocating the federal government should transfer responsibility for oil and gas, minerals, inland waters, all northern lands to the people of the North for some time now. Along with that would come the responsibility for a regulatory regime. The present regime, in large part, is not ours. We did not design it and we do not regulate it. All I can say is that I believe it should be ours. We should do it in partnership with aboriginal governments, and it should be simple and it should be efficient. It should regulate developers so the land, the environment, the wildlife, and the air are protected and proper safeguards are in place and monitored.

But it is true - it is cumbersome. It keeps investors and developers away. I know oil companies and mining companies very much want for a regime that is simple to understand and cost efficient and clear, and we would like to provide that. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The floor is still open for questions for the two candidates. Are there any more questions? The Chair recognizes the Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Utilizing Departments to Resolve Fiscal Problems

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This question is for both candidates. Knowing the fiscal problems facing this government and to a large extent what the remedy to that problem is, what or how will you utilize the different government departments, mainly the Aboriginal Affairs Department, towards finding a solution to this problem? Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The first response will be from Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Mr. Chair, any of the major issues facing the government are always addressed by the deputy ministers. They have mechanisms in place for coordinating and sharing information. Where issues impact a number of departments, interdepartmental committees set up information and advice; perspectives from each department are shared through that process on issues like the deficit and the looming cost of

running government. It is a government-wide concern and it will be addressed on a government-wide basis. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The fiscal situation we find ourselves in is very difficult, and I think that is where we once again get down to setting priorities as an Assembly. All Members, Cabinet, Ordinary Members, will sit down and discuss what are the issues we want to focus on. From the questions today, we know that education and health are priorities, as well as how do we get the new revenues. That ties directly into the self-government processes. If this government sets priorities such as clearing the slate and getting on with the development of the Northwest Territories, then I believe the Premier should be taking a lead role in one or more of the departments that would be directly responsible for dealing with bringing closure to some of these discussions around the table, or bringing a partnership arrangement around.

As well, we must realize we are going to have to take a serious look at government structures as they exist today, even from within our own environment in this Assembly and the number of Ministers and the number of departments. Can we really afford to continue on the status quo without taking a serious look at our priorities and how we deliver our programs and services to individuals? I do not believe we can. I believe this is the time, the 14th Assembly, the 21st century. It is time to get a move on and make the changes necessary to ensure programs and services are available to our residents and our children. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Chair will now recognize the Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Commitment for Bridge at Fort Providence

MR. MCLEOD: Given that I am the Member representing the Deh Cho, I feel I have to ask this question. It seems to be the opportune time. I also recognize that it is a federal responsibility, and I know the Members from North Slave and Yellowknife will be quite interested in the subject.

Over the last while, or more specifically over this fall, we have encountered a number of problems with the ferry service, and more recently, the ice bridge where the tanker truck went through the ice. Over the last couple of years, there has been increased traffic flow as the mining projects developed, and it is anticipated there will be more. I am very curious as to the positions that both candidates have and how committed they would be to talk to the federal government regarding a bridge at the Fort Providence/Mackenzie River crossing. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. A very specific question and the first response will go to Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was fortunate enough to hold the portfolio of Transportation for a number of months when I was first elected as Cabinet Minister. At that time, we met with the other provincial Ministers in relation to the federal government and tried to stimulate discussion about highway infrastructure and what we can do. There is a national highway program out there, and the jurisdictions, as I am last aware, are still trying to ensure the federal government brings money to the table that we can focus on the national highway system.

The national highway system is based around highways that lead to the capital cities in each jurisdiction. The highway that leads from the Alberta border up to Yellowknife would be considered a priority highway. If the federal government were to put money into it, the crossing would have to be looked at.

So, yes, I think it is time again we pursue the federal government to realize that if it helps us develop, it will help itself by lowering the cost for keeping us going. I think we have to look at it long term. As well, it goes for the other highway strategies in the Northwest Territories. As I said in Caucus, I believe that if we can find some dollars towards a highway project and go to the federal government for matching dollars, that would put people to work in our communities. And that is vital. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The Chair recognizes Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The upgrade of the highway in recent years has been largely driven by the fact that the volume has been increasing, and it becomes more cost effective to pave than to provide a gravel highway after you hit a critical point.

I am certain that as we get more volume of business and visitor traffic that we will need to plan with the federal government for the day when perhaps a ferry needs to be replaced by a bridge. It needs to be done in the overall context of the national highway strategy. We know that on our own, we are unable to lever our money from the federal government to complete the highway system.

In recent years, though, we have worked with Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C., and the Yukon to develop what we call a Western Canada Economic Outlook. That is, we recognize that the more development that occurs in the Territories, the more benefits flow to Alberta, to Saskatchewan, and B.C. Sometimes they make substantially more money than we do from our own developments, such as BHP.

If there is economic interest by other provinces in the neighbourhood to ensure there is some infrastructure developed in the North, we have their support. They are aware that it is in their interest to support us.

We have been doing that in order to make sure we can find some way to be part of a national capital budget allocations. We have a Member of Parliament. I think we can work on a strategy to complete and upgrade the Mackenzie Highway system, and the ferries are certainly going to be one that we should look at. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The floor is still open for questions to candidates. Are there any more questions? The Chair recognizes the Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Symbols and Heraldry of the Northwest Territories

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chair, the question I would like to pose to both candidates relates to the question of symbols and heraldry and those things that represent and reflect all of the people of the Northwest Territories. I think I speak for everyone here, Mr. Chair, when I say the new Mace is a stunning piece of work that captures so much of what the new Northwest Territories is about.

There are other symbols, and other tasks associated with this representation. There will be a flag, a coat of arms, and a name. All options that we have already considered in the life of the previous government, and that I strongly and firmly believe should be considered again.

My question to the candidates is; what approach would your government take towards putting those new symbols in place for the new Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Braden. The first response will be from Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was a part of the special committee that looked at issues like this. A number of years ago, I had given a speech here in the Legislature addressing the need for a new name. I still believe the Northwest Territories is not a name; it is a direction. It is a label, but not a name.

Attention is required on this issue. We cannot keep the Northwest Territories forever. It has to change. There will be a day when there will be aboriginal governments set up. There will be a day when an autonomous government with quasi-provincial status is here. It will need a name.

What process do we have for it? There is no particular process, but I know this intergovernmental forum we are setting up should be part of the agenda. Aboriginal people should have some input into the way we address these issues as a public government, as the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We set up a special committee to look at things like a new Mace, a flag and all of the different symbols that we need to look at. I was a part of that committee. I think it is very important to focus on the things we surround ourselves with. It is like decorating your own home. If it is your home, then you should decide how to decorate, what to hang on the walls, what kind of pictures should be in your halls and in your bedrooms. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. The Chair will now recognize Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe it is important to be recognized in our own country for our uniqueness. The Mace is a very good example. It is a symbol of our Territory from north to south, and from east to west. All of our communities have some part to play in it.

I would have to caution ourselves that yes, it is important, that we need to be recognized. It would have to be a priority that we set. In light of our fiscal situation, we have to look at what we can achieve for our people.

I believe the flag should be the next item we take a serious look at changing. I know it was discussed in the special committee. I am well aware that several businesses are quite concerned. They have developed a lot of their literature based on symbols of the previous government. They are concerned that in tight economic times they would be in a situation where they would have to revamp their look as a company. That is one of the costs of doing business in an ever-changing environment.

I do believe it is important we are recognized for our uniqueness. If that means we have to do more work in our symbols such as the flag, then that is important. But it will have

to be measured in the context of what we have available to provide our residents. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The floor is still open for questions. Are there any further questions? If there are no further questions, do I have the Committee's agreement that question period is over?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Before we proceed on to the next item, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize in the gallery a former Member. The former Government Leader and now the Senator of the Northwest Territories, Nick Sibbeston.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): At this time, I would like to take the opportunity on behalf of the Committee to thank all of the people who have taken the time to come to the Legislative Assembly and witness this very important process underway.

Voting For Premier

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The next step for Members is to vote for the two candidates. I now ask the Members of the Committee to proceed to the Clerk's table where they will receive a ballot. From there, proceed to the voting booths to mark your ballot, then place the ballots in the box located in the front.

-- Voting commences

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): I declare the voting process is now closed. The ballot box will be sealed and taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots are to be counted. The bell will ring for five minutes to bring the Members back once the results are determined. We will now take a break.

-- Break

--Ringing of the bells

Results of the Election of Premier

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Welcome back, Members. I declare that you have elected the honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi, to be your Premier-elect.

-- Applause

The Chair would like to recognize Mr. Kakfwi to say a few words, if he chooses. Mr. Kakfwi.

Statement of the Premier-Elect

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, first of all, to my mother if she is listening. I hope she is not so worried anymore. She does not involve herself in politics. She always wonders why we do the things we do, why we put ourselves through so much stress and pressure, subjecting ourselves to the public. She wished everyday that I would not be a part of this life. I always tell her that I want to serve, that is the life I choose, and I want her to know that.

So Marie, if she is listening, let her know I am okay. To my children, thank you very much for your support. Members, regardless of whether you supported me or not I will be working

with you and working for your constituents. It is a fantastic future that we have. We have enormous difficulties, but we will work together as a team. With a strong commitment we can enjoy our work and see some results. We can really develop a better future and better lives for our people and ourselves. Thank you. Mahsi.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Congratulations. Before we proceed to item 9, we will take a short recess and return at the sound of the bell.

-- Break

ITEM 9: ELECTION OF MINISTERS

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Welcome back. Item 9 on our agenda will be the election of Ministers. I just want to remind you that the information you will need to consider is in the pink copies for your reference.

Before I call the next item, I would like to take a moment to recognize in our gallery Chief Peter Liske from the Dettah Band and Clem Paul, North Slave Metis Alliance and Chief Rick Edjericon from the Ndilo Band.

-- Applause

I would also like to recognize, on behalf of Mr. Krutko, Ms. Pat Thomas.

-- Laughter

Nominations for Ministers

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Item 9, the election of Ministers. Are there any nominations for the Cabinet positions? The Chair recognizes the Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I wish to nominate Mr. Jim Antoine, the Member for Nahendeh, for a position on Cabinet.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Antoine, do you accept the nomination?

MR. ANTOINE: Yes, I accept the nomination. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Any further nominations? The Chair recognizes the Member for Thebacha.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wish to nominate Mr. Vince Steen, the Member for Nunakput, for a position on Cabinet.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Steen, do you accept the nomination?

MR. STEEN: Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Are there any further nominations? The Chair recognizes the Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

MR. ANTOINE: Mr. Chair, I wish to nominate Mr. Joe Handley, the Member from Weledeh, for a position on Cabinet.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Mr. Handley, do you accept the nomination?

MR. HANDLEY: I accept the nomination.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you. Are there any further nominations? The Chair recognizes the Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wish to nominate Jake Ootes, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, for a position on Cabinet.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ootes, do you accept the nomination?

MR. OOTES: I accept, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The Chair recognizes the Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wish to nominate Mr. Dent, Member for Frame Lake, for a position on Cabinet.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Dent, do you accept the nomination?

MR. DENT: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The Chair recognizes the Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wish to nominate David Krutko, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, for a position on Cabinet.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Krutko, do you accept the nomination?

MR. KRUTKO: Yes, Mr. Chair, I accept.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The Chair recognizes the Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

MR. KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to nominate the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Roger Allen.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Mr. Allen, do you accept the nomination?

MR. ALLEN: Yes, I do.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The Chair recognizes the Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, I wish to nominate Mr. Michael Miltenberger, the Member for Thebacha, for position of Cabinet.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Miltenberger, do you accept the nomination?

MR. MILTENBERGER: Yes, I do.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Do we have any further nominations? The Chair recognizes the Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mr. Chair, I wish to nominate Mr. Floyd Roland, Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, for a Cabinet position.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Roland, do you accept the nomination?

MR. ROLAND: Yes.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The Chair now recognizes the Member for Yellowknife Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wish to nominate Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, the Member for Hay River North, for the position in Cabinet.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mrs. Groenewegen, do you accept the nomination?

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Are there any further nominations for Ministerial positions? Since there are no further nominations, I declare the nominating process closed.

The nominees for Cabinet positions are as follows: for the North, Mr. Roger Allen, Mr. David Krutko, Mr. Floyd Roland, and Mr. Vince Steen. The nominees for the Yellowknife positions are Mr. Charles Dent, Mr. Joe Handley, and Mr. Jake Ootes. For the south: Mr. Jim Antoine, Mrs. Jane Groenewegen, and Mr. Michael Miltenberger.

Each candidate is now permitted to make a 10-minute speech. The speeches will be made in alphabetical order, regardless of the region you represent. So I now call upon Roger Allen to begin.

Candidates' Speeches

Mr. Allen's Candidacy Speech

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all I would like to congratulate the Premier-elect, Mr. Stephen Kakfwi, and the fine effort performed by Mr. Floyd Roland, a counterpart of mine from Inuvik Boot Lake.

I would like to say I have been asked to seek a Cabinet post by some fellow Members which I gracefully agreed to do. I think it is important we all have an interest in how our government is going to be run. I am not new to the scene. I have been involved from a regional and municipal perspective over the last 24 or 25 years.

I have also represented the Northwest Territories. I am not sure that many of you have. I represented the North in worldwide athletic competition. In that capacity, I basically acted as an ambassador for the North. So my background goes quite a way back, although I try to modestly hide it. I think today you should know I worked very hard for the good of the people in the Northwest Territories. I see that I can serve in the same capacity if elected to Cabinet.

There are a number of pressing issues before us, as we discussed in the last few days. I think those who are aware from a global perspective of the Territory-wide fiscal bugs we have. I often teach my young offenders, whom I have worked with for the last 14 years, that if you learn to listen, you can learn to learn. I bring the same philosophy to you. I will listen to you. I will bend your ear for advice from those who have been in there previously, when in a position to do so.

The important things I feel drive our economy are the large businesses across the Territories. We can create jobs and create training opportunities that have helped communities develop.

As I spoke in Caucus, I believe in order to succeed in reducing the deficit, succeed in advocating good health in communities, you have to have some formal changes in economic and business development. Those two basic drives are important; the social conditions of the community and also the cultural.

I found out from my experience over the last 25 years, that in a good, strong economic community, you have very strong healthy people simply because they can afford to do many things.

I understand from other regions there is a big push to resolve land claim agreements. We in the north end of the Territory resolved ours back in 1982, and I believe in the early '90s so we are accustomed to some of the cost benefits of having a land claims agreement. I will certainly support it to come to an early resolution. It is important.

I believe many people have spoken about having self-government and how they can most effectively deliver programs at the community level. I give you that certainty through my confidence in dealing with various interests groups throughout my tenure, working as mayor of Aklavik in the early '90s. When I started as mayor, the community had a deficit of \$200,000. Two years after my tenure, I left them with a \$275,000 surplus. So if you pro rate that over the cost of what the deficit is today, I feel we can achieve that very easily. It takes teamwork. I led seven councilors into believing we can do it.

I feel if I was a Minister, I could lead a department and overcome many of the obstacles. It is not an easy task. It is a tough job here convincing them. It is also a tough job convincing you to work for me. I can assure you that through my knowledge, my fortitude and perseverance, I can deliver good quality programs at the community level, because I will share in advice you give me.

Through that I would listen, pay close attention to detail, pay close attention to what is needed in all regions, not only mine. I find that standing here, I am competing with three other Members of our region, so you can tell how aggressive we are as a people to lead and help push for systematic change in the way we do business.

I talked a bit about it yesterday, how we see we have to revise a cycle, bring back some prosperity to the community and how we do it. That is the mandate our constituents have put upon us to perform. There are several big issues. I am going to say to you now I do not have all the perfect answers. I believe I can work over the next four years with a team concept, driving for change, driving for parity amongst regions and seeing that we can all prosper.

I would like to put a few puns in and put a little bit of humour into my presentation. I would like to tell my colleague from Deh Cho I want to build a bridge over there, so we can settle some troubled waters. So that is in the context as well as an appeal. I think we do have some very good possibilities to grow, but I think growth is driven by industry and business development.

I am not going to talk too much about the social envelope because that is a common theme that we will be dealing with. I believe we sometimes overkill it. Nonetheless, I acknowledge the fact we do have severe social problems. I have been involved in the social area of rehabilitation for the last 14 years, working with young offenders and community groups that have needed some unique approaches and care.

I share the concern that Mr. Krutko has raised in the last several days. We need to look strongly at our health services in the community level. I think we can come up with some equitable solutions. Again, that takes the effort of all of us.

In conclusion, I would just like to say thank you to those Members who have supported me and encouraged me to run. I think I am a quality candidate. I do not see myself as any better than anybody else here. In terms of leadership, I believe I have developed my leadership skills over the last 24 years. I think if I was called upon to lead a certain department, I can and will share the workload with all of us in terms of how we can achieve better results to make our Northwest Territories a better place to live.

With that, I thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank you, Members.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Allen. The Chair now recognizes the Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Jim Antoine.

Mr. Antoine's Candidacy Speech

MR. ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair and fellow colleagues, ladies and gentlemen in the gallery and people of the Northwest Territories. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the House for the 14th Legislative Assembly. Congratulations. I know the Members of this House have chosen the right person for the job.

I would also like to congratulate the honourable Member for Sahtu on his election as the Premier. Having worked with Mr. Kakfwi for many years, I know he is the right person to lead the Northwest Territories as we enter into the 21st century. Finally, I would like to thank the honourable Member from Deh Cho, the honourable Michael McLeod, for nominating me today. Mahsi.

On a personal note, Mr. Chair, I would like to give special thanks today to my wife Celine and my children, Denezeh, Melaw, Sachey and Tumbah. Often, Mr. Chair, political life can take a tremendous toll on your family. I have been blessed to have the understanding and support of my family during my political career. I am exceedingly grateful for them today.

I would like to speak in my language for awhile, Mr. Chair.

(Translation starts): We have elected Stephen Kakfwi to be our Premier. Right now we are going to be selecting people to sit on Cabinet. I have put my name forward for Cabinet.

I have been a part of the Legislative Assembly for the past four years. The past year and a half I have also been Premier. I am very familiar with a lot of things and a lot of issues that pertain to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

If I am elected to sit on Cabinet, I would try my best to do what I can for the people of the Northwest Territories and for the people in my constituency.

We are here on behalf of all of the people who have voted for us, so I would like to raise their concerns and speak on their behalf. This is the reason I put my name forward today. I would like to thank people and my constituents that have voted me back in as their MLA. I would like to thank them again. If I am elected to be a Minister, I would promise that I would continue to work for the betterment of the people. Thank you. (Translation ends)

I have had a number of roles during my political career. I began my political career as a chief of the (inaudible) the First Nations. I have had the pleasure of serving as the MLA for Nahendeh for the past two terms and am now entering my third.

As MLA, I have had the pleasure of serving as the Standing Committee of Finance chairman, and as co-chair of the Constitutional Working Group, as the Minister of Transportation, Aboriginal Affairs, and Public Works and Services. Finally, Mr. Chair, I have had the honour of serving for the past 13 months as the Premier of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chair, although we only have a short time available for the remarks today, I want to provide Members with a summary of my views with respect to the future of the Northwest Territories. These views are the ones I will bring to the Cabinet table, should the Members place me there with their trust.

Mr. Chair, many of the principles and philosophies that I hold as important can be found in the document Agenda for the New North. Mr. Chair, in my view, there are five key elements that need to be effectively dealt with over the next four years. The first of these elements is to deal effectively with land claims and aboriginal rights negotiations throughout the North. The northern half of the Northwest Territories is covered by settled land claims. Over time the entire Territory will be composed of land claim settlements.

We must recognize the combined outcome of aboriginal rights negotiations and constitutional development, which results in a complete change to the current system of governance in the Northwest Territories. For this reason, we must work together in partnership with aboriginal governments to create a system of government in the Northwest Territories that is fair, representative and responsive to the needs and concerns of all residents.

The second one, Mr. Chair, we have had a great deal of discussion about this issue lately, and we must ensure that all the northern resources are controlled by us, the northern people.

As we all know, the management and control of resources rests with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. This means that key decisions that affect our people, our businesses, our economy, continue to be made by federal civil servants in Ottawa and in Hull. We do, however, have responsibility for health care, education, housing, and other expensive programs. These deal with very complex issues, and we have demonstrated that we are more than able

to handle these programs, yet we have made little progress with Ottawa in terms of controlling our natural resources.

In the past year, I have spent a great deal of time discussing issues with various groups across the Northwest Territories. It seems that everyone that I speak with across the Northwest Territories agrees that control of northern resources should be in the hands of northern people. The difficulty seems to be agreeing on how these resources should be controlled north of 60. Agreement on this issue can only be accomplished if we sit together as northern governments to discuss how this can best be accomplished. It is for this reason that I strongly support the establishment of the intergovernmental forum that would bring together the federal, territorial, and aboriginal governments to discuss this issue and others.

Mr. Chair, Northerners must live with the issues raised by development, both environmental and social. We bear a large portion of the cost required to respond to development. Yet by far the largest share of benefits from development goes to the federal government. It is for this reason that it is critical we negotiate a new fiscal arrangement with Ottawa that ensures more benefits of northern development are accrued to northern governments.

We need to find ways to stimulate sustainable economic development in the Northwest Territories. A strong economy provides jobs, opportunities and is good for business. We must build partnerships between all levels of government, both public and aboriginal, industry and the business communities to ensure that coordinated action is required to improve the northern economy.

This process has already begun by the economic strategy panel, and must continue. We must remind the federal government that we have an obligation to fund regional economic development initiatives similar to federal programs in other regions of this country.

Mr. Chair, next, and certainly not last in my comments, is the need to deal in a comprehensive manner with the social issues facing our Territories. We hear much of it today, and through the discussions in the last while. Only when we create an environment of healthy communities can our residents fully realize the opportunities that exist, and we must act on them to guarantee the communities remain strong.

There are many other issues, Mr. Chair, that if the Members see fit to select me to serve on the Cabinet, I would continue to do the best I can. I have done that over the years in the office that I hold in Cabinet, and as one year as the Premier. I have proven that I can do the work. I am not afraid of the hard and time-consuming work this position offers. I am willing to do that work. So I pledge to serve in the spirit of teamwork, fairness, and to serve the best interests of the people of the North.

I have always believed in working together. Mr. Chair, the Northwest Territories faces many challenges; however, I really believe that for every challenge there are larger opportunities if we work together. We will never fully realize our vast potential until we find a way to work together to meet our challenges. So with that, I would like to thank the Members for their consideration here as we go through the selection. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Before we proceed to the next presenter, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize in the gallery a former Member of the Legislative Assembly and former Speaker of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, Mr. Bob MacQuarrie.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The next presenter will be from the riding of Yellowknife Frame Lake, Mr. Charles Dent.

Mr. Dent's Candidacy Speech

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to extend my congratulations to you on your selection as Speaker-elect, and to the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi on his selection as Premier. I would like to say I have worked with Mr. Kakfwi over the last four years and I am prepared to work closely with him in the future, if I am selected to be on Cabinet.

I would also like to thank the honourable Vince Steen for nominating me. And I would like to take a moment to thank the people of my constituency for their trust and support. I would like to thank those who helped on my campaign, my family and friends for their support and for the confidence they have shown in sending me back to this House. It is truly an honour to serve in this Legislative Assembly.

As newly elected Members of the 14th Assembly, we have our work cut out for us as we start a new page in the North's history. Over the past week or so as we have started to meet, I have listened to Members. We have told each other about our communities, and the goals and aspirations of our constituents. As a group, I think we bring a lot of talent to the table and I sense a willingness to work together to make the North a better place for all.

The key reason I am running for Cabinet is this: I want to help move the Northwest Territories towards greater self-sufficiency. As it says under the vision in the Agenda for the New North, I believe passionately that the Northwest Territories should be a strong, unified Territory, taking its place in the federation and contributing to the prosperity of Canada. I am prepared to take a leadership position in moving things along. I want to ensure that our government works with aboriginal organizations to make significant progress on governance issues. We need to settle claims and take meaningful steps forward on self-government implementation. I am not tied to one set of ideas or to one set of advisors. I am ready to look for the compromises that make the best sense for all. And I listen. You have to really hear the arguments to know where the compromise might lie.

I like the consensus style of government because it allows us to make good choices without being bound to one school of thought. I want to continue the work that I was part of in the last government, to work with the familiar faces around the table as well as the new, to achieve the goal of a prosperous North, a goal that is within our reach.

We are sitting on huge deposits of minerals, oil and gas, the means to a more prosperous and self-sufficient North lying in the ground in our own backyard. But, as you all know, Northerners benefit very little from development of those resources under the current formula financing agreement with the federal government. We get no royalties. Of any new taxes that we receive from corporate taxes or personal income tax,

we only get to keep 20 cents on the dollar. That is not much encouragement for development. We must restructure our fiscal relationship with Canada.

In December, I told federal Finance Minister Paul Martin that I thought we could show him a plan where we would put more money into the hands of Northerners, and very shortly into the pockets of Canada as well. He said he was prepared to listen. With my colleagues in the previous government, Mr. Antoine and Mr. Kakfwi, I met and talked with aboriginal organizations, community leaders, chambers of commerce, and anyone else who would listen about our fiscal outlook and the need to discuss sharing control of resources and revenues. For us to get the federal government to the table, Northerners have to build a consensus first.

I believe many stakeholders are willing to come together to start discussions to try and build that consensus. I think I have helped stimulate the discussion about revenue sharing over the past nine months. I know the players, they know me. My experience can be an important asset to help continue this process.

As I said, we need new revenues to invest in programs and services that will improve the quality of life for Northerners. To me, education is the best form of economic development. Educated people have more opportunities, they are healthier and they are more productive. We need to invest in education and training now so Northerners are ready to take on the jobs that will be created in the resource sector, in secondary industry, tourism and the service sector. The number of workers we import from the south when we have such high levels of unemployment has always been a big frustration to me. The pace of economic development must be tied to when we have jobs and trained people to take those jobs.

We need more money in health care, not only to care for the sick and injured, but also to invest in programs and services that will help prevent those conditions in the first place. An investment now will save millions, not just in dollars but it will save an awful lot of suffering.

We need more money to help small business get up and running. Our small business sector helps create much-needed jobs and keeps local economies going. We need more money to provide economic opportunities and jobs across the North. We need money to invest in infrastructure. For example, why should Northerners not be part owners of a gas pipeline and reap the benefits for years to come?

We talked about the need to improve roads that we have and the need to build new ones. We need new revenues to make these dreams come true. These are just a few examples of where I see priorities for investing new revenues.

As a Minister in the last government I spent a lot of time working on the Agenda for a New North, and then discussing it in conjunction with our fiscal outlook. I think it gives us a good starting point to develop our own vision, but the key parts are right. There are strong linkages between new revenues, for instance, and getting governance right. It must be a priority for the Government of the Northwest Territories to work diligently with aboriginal organizations and the federal government to settle land claims, and to conclude self-government negotiations. This government must examine its evolving role in northern governments. How can we best serve the needs of

the Territory? How can we best continue to develop and mature? There are important economic reasons to find ways to work together. For instance, bank and investor confidence and willingness to invest in northern business depends to a large degree on the stability of government.

I helped develop a vision that was brought forward by the 13th Assembly, and I am ready to get to work with the Members here building and developing a vision for the 14th Assembly. I believe that stability in the Assembly and the government is a must if we are to get on with the work that lies ahead.

We cannot forget that no matter what we are working on as Minister or as Members, we must go out of our way to give the public every reason to believe we will make the right choices. I know the importance of working together in the Assembly to achieve consensus. I know the importance of sharing information and listening to my colleagues. I have had an open-door policy during the previous two terms that I served as a Member, and you have my commitment that will continue. I have always been available to meet with Members. You have my commitment that will not change.

There have been more than a few times in the past eight years when there have been as many different ideas about where we should go on any particular issue as there have been MLAs. I often took a strong position and fought for it. However, I also worked hard to find the compromise that made the most sense. I remain committed to the ideal that a member of the Executive Council must be a team player. You fight for your point of view, but when consensus is reached you fight just as hard to achieve that consensus decision.

Cabinet Members have to represent all people of the Northwest Territories. I travel a lot throughout the North. While traveling, I spend time listening to and talking with people. I know first hand that we have a broad range of cultures and lifestyles in our Territory.

Life in smaller communities is different from life in the regional centres or the capital city. But we have many common interests, such as education for our young people, decent housing for our families, and a good quality of life for us all. We also take great pride in those things where we differ, those things that make us unique. And I respect that.

I hope that you will take a look at the job I did as a Minister, when deciding whether to support me. I have held a number of portfolios. I have worked hard and I am proud of what I have accomplished. I have put a lot of effort into getting new jobs and more training for Northerners. I worked hard for benefits for families. But most importantly I worked hard for a strong future for all residents.

I work hard to know my departments. I commit to you here that I will make it a practice to ensure that I do my very best to answer your questions when asked. I have done very well in the last Assembly in answering questions in this House. And I pledge to make sure I know my stuff well enough to continue that over the next four years.

Mr. Chair and Members, in spite of the challenges, I look forward to the next four years. I think we have tremendous potential. I say let us move forward. I would like to ask all the Members for their support for Cabinet. Thank you very much.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Before we move on to the next presenter I would like to take this opportunity to recognize in our gallery the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Member of Parliament.

-- Applause

At this time I would like to call upon the Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Jane Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen's Candidacy Speech

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Congratulations on your election as the Speaker of this House. I know you will do a wonderful job. Congratulations to the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi who is the new Premier-elect for the Northwest Territories.

I would like to thank my colleague from Range Lake, Ms. Sandy Lee, for nominating me here today. I would also like to thank my brother John, and my sister, Janet, for being here in the gallery.

It is indeed an honour and a privilege to be around this table this afternoon with the newly elected Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly of the new Northwest Territories. I would like to thank the constituents of Hay River South for the confidence and support they demonstrated in acclaiming me as their MLA.

I am filled with optimism and anticipation of the days and years that lie ahead. Although we have some ominous challenges, I see them as opportunities. Opportunities to shape the future of our Territory for the benefit of all our people. I am encouraged by the caliber of the Members that were elected from the various communities and regions. This is a new mandate, a new term and a new North.

Today, I am asking my colleagues to consider what we want the Cabinet of this new Legislature to look like. As our Territory is diverse, I believe we should have diverse representation in our Executive Council. I strongly support the aspect of regional representation, which will be guaranteed in the new convention of two-two-two, as it has become known.

I have chosen to devote my remarks today primarily to my vision of what leadership in this government should encompass and how what I might bring to the role of Cabinet Minister could contribute to achieving that vision.

I have 25 years of tenure in the North. During that 25 years, I have been involved in a broad array of activities, from participation in municipal government and chambers of commerce to constitutional forums. I have served on boards ranging from the Youth Justice Committee to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. My involvement in business has ranged from day care services to real estate development. I can say that I have had the good fortune of enjoying every new challenge I have embarked on, and I have realized a good measure of success in whatever I have put my mind and energies to.

I have a strong work ethic and sense of purpose. But I have always found the most satisfying and rewarding part of any job is the people factor. I have traveled from one end of our

Territory to the other, and I never cease to be intrigued by the people of the North. They are the people we represent in this government. I submit the future well-being, security, aspirations, health and welfare of these people should always be foremost in our minds and on our agendas.

I believe I have proven my commitment to keeping this the people's government through my efforts in the previous Assembly, to bring accountability and openness to the government. That is a principle I will continue to uphold.

I have been an Ordinary Member for four years, so I have experienced first hand how Ordinary Members should and should not be treated. I would treat all Ordinary Members and the issues they would bring to me with respect and concern.

I am approachable and open-minded. When it comes to setting and achieving goals, I think some people could attest to the fact that I am painfully persistent and determined.

I have accomplished many things in the past, undaunted by great odds. And these are some of the attributes and skills that I can put to work for you in achieving your goals and results.

I am project, task and action-oriented, so whether that task is wrestling federal infrastructure funds from the federal government for capital projects, such as a bridge over the Mackenzie River, or whether it is finding funding to train and compensate our foster parents adequately, I am up to the task.

Over the past four years, unfortunately, I have also observed the results of Cabinet Ministers undermining each other's efforts with personal agendas. It is to the detriment of progress and stability and ultimately negatively impacts our constituents. Realistically not every attribute can be found in one person and that is why it is important the Cabinet you select works together as a team, capitalizing on the strength and experience of each Member.

I am excited about the prospect of harnessing the potential of a cohesive team under the leadership of a seasoned, strong and highly principled government leader. And I believe that is what we have elected here today. And Steve is seasoned, which is just a polite way of saying old.

-- Laughter

No, he is only 49, I am just kidding.

I would support the collective initiatives of this Assembly and support the individuals who are tasked with providing leadership in each of the departments or areas. I would be looking to the more experienced Members and the new Members alike, for guidance and feedback on my performance and the specific areas in which I could provide leadership.

I aspire to an open government based on inclusion, which fosters harmony and unity where no one would need feel disenfranchised. When I talk about inclusion I am talking about inclusion of people from all walks of life. Young and old, male and female, urban and rural, aboriginal and non-aboriginal. Inclusion of the elected leaders in this House as well as leaders elected to aboriginal community governments. I would uphold the principle of balance and fairness to all Northerners and all regions of our Territory.

I want to be part of a government in which the people can have confidence and pride. A government where aboriginal governments can expect and will receive support for their claims and agreements they have in place.

I know some of you have reserved your support until you have had a chance to hear our presentations today. There is a secret ballot process and there is a reason for that. These are such important choices we are making here. The question is what are you prepared to do to make sure this is as capable and representative a Cabinet as possible?

In a phrase coined by our Speaker-elect, when faced with all the choices each of us has to make this week, I would like to leave you with his words of encouragement when he was speaking to us earlier this week. He said, "Just do whatever you believe is the right thing". I ask you to do that today. I ask you for your support. Thank you.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The next presenter on my list will be the Member for Weledeh, Mr. Joe Handley.

Mr. Handley's Candidacy Speech

MR. HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I too would like to offer my congratulations to you on your selection as Speaker and to Mr. Kafwi, our new Premier-elect. I would like to also thank Mr. Jim Antoine, the Member for Nahendeh, for nominating me.

I would like to say first that I have thought very long and hard before making the decision to seek a Cabinet position. I also consulted extensively with my constituents in Weledeh. I am pleased to tell you I have strong support from my constituency and from all areas including Yellowknife, Dettah, N'Dilo and the Ingraham Trail.

I first would like to tell you a little about myself. My professional background is as an educator. I have both graduate and undergraduate degrees from the University of Saskatchewan. In fact, I was the first aboriginal graduate from the Indian and Northern Education Program at that university. Thankfully, a lot of our northern aboriginal students have continued to go to that university and to others, and now form a strong core of teachers here in the North.

I have worked as an educator both in Canada and overseas. Before becoming a deputy minister with our government I was a superintendent of schools. I have been a deputy minister in the Northwest Territories for the past 14 years. I have had responsibility for a number of departments including Education, Renewable Resources, Housing, Transportation and Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. And I can tell you as a deputy minister, it is different on this side.

We are still dealing with the same issues. I am proud of my work record and achievements in each of the portfolios I was in and I am eager to contribute my experience and my ability to get things done in my new role as MLA for Weledeh and hopefully, as a member of the next Cabinet.

I believe in the Northwest Territories. My family lives here, my grandchildren live here. I think we have a very exciting and potentially prosperous future ahead of us. But we have to manage it right for the people today and for generations to

come. We have the potential here to ensure that everybody has a decent lifestyle. But first we have to get our own house in order. We can only achieve this by working together.

We need to make progress in getting our system of government right. Our relationship with the federal government and with aboriginal governments is crucial. I believe as a critical first step this government must do everything it can where appropriate to facilitate the settlement of land claims, treaty entitlements and self-government provisions.

Until we achieve this, discussions on constitution, economic development priorities, resource revenue sharing and even rights of priority for training and employment will be difficult to resolve. Overcoming our social health and education challenges will be practically impossible without a new formula for resource revenue sharing. I think a renegotiated financing agreement with the federal government goes in that same package.

At the same time, as we are resolving outstanding land claims and aboriginal rights in facilitating the implementation of the existing claims, we need to continue on with negotiations with the federal government. We need to be creative in how we do this, of how we can open the doors for more input, then from just the 19 of us in this Chamber. We need more private sector input. We need more aboriginal input in that process.

While mining, gas and oil development will be the greatest contribution to our GDP, it is likely that most of our people in the Northwest Territories will be employed directly or indirectly in the renewable resources sectors.

I believe in non-renewable resource development because it can create much wealth and jobs. But at some point it runs out. I believe our long-term future is in the renewable resource sector. I am a strong advocate of the tourism industry. I do not believe our traditional economies are dead, as some people might have us believe. But we need to be more creative on how to modernize them to make them viable.

I will work hard to ensure we have a balance between the various sectors making up a good, healthy diversified economy, which will hopefully alleviate the situation we have now, where we have many boom and bust cycles. But I want to do this while ensuring jobs and benefits for all Northerners.

As was noted in the various briefings we had over the past few days, we have a population in the Northwest Territories that faces challenges on all fronts, especially in terms of education, health and social needs. Unless we can help overcome these challenges, economic development of jobs will not be a reality for a lot of people.

Preventable health and social problems are creating environments to dedicate too large a share of our available financial and human resources to managing this need. I believe in zero tolerance for violence and the need for legislation to enforce this principle. I believe in the necessity of investing more resources in prevention initiatives as the most practical way to cut down the costs resulting from abuse of alcohol and drugs and resulting human tragedies.

Politically, we have a unique form of consensus government. I will do everything to make it work effectively. Some of my views on Cabinet are: we need Cabinet Members to hear what we

say in the Legislative Assembly, and are able to include MLAs in planning and in the implementation of these priorities. We also need a Cabinet which can report back with good, tangible results. Cabinet Members need experience and expertise, but most of all a capacity to communicate openly with all Members and with the various committees we establish. We are not selected to Cabinet simply to push on with government in our own way, but we are expected to show leadership and be decisive when it is necessary. We need a Cabinet that is above challenge on ethical issues and on accusations of wrongdoing and favoritism. Cabinet has to be open and consultative if consensus government is really going to work. While it may be necessary at times to change spending plans, this should be communicated to the MLAs immediately.

I want to make our government work for the benefit of the people we represent. I have a lot of experience; I have a good record of getting the right things done on a timely basis. I have always lived by a responsible code of ethics. I am a team player, I listen and respect views, and I am honest with people. What you see is what you get.

I assure you I will not forget the people we represent. People in all of our constituencies have concerns, problems, challenges, aspirations, hopes and needs. We cannot let a day or even an hour go by without remembering they are the reason we are here. I believe government can make a difference, and government can, as people expect, get things done. We have unprecedented challenges in front of us, and on all fronts: financial, constitutional, economic and social. We cannot delay any of them. I am prepared to roll up my sleeves and put in the hours and commitment to getting on with the task. I look forward to your support in my quest for a position on Cabinet. Thank you.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Handley. I will call now to the Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. David Krutko.

Mr. Krutko's Candidacy Speech

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this time, Mr. Chair, I would like to congratulate you on your role as Speaker, and also I would like to congratulate the newly elected Premier, Mr. Kakfwi. And to all the other Members of the House, I look forward to serving with you and working with you for the next four years. I have had the privilege of serving in the capacity of regional politics, territorial politics and now here in the House, for some 15-odd years.

But I will have to say the toughest time I have served in any capacity for the public was the last four years during the 13th Assembly. We had to make some crucial decisions on some very demanding choices with limited funds. I have learned that it is now time to turn the wagon around and head to more prosperous grounds.

We now have an opportunity to go from having to make the tough decisions with division, with bringing down a \$150 million deficit to where we are now having an opportunity to see the potential we have in the Western Territory.

In saying that, Mr. Chair, I would like to assure every Member here that I am open, honest, and willing to speak for the people of the North, the people I represent in the Mackenzie Delta. I

grew up in a small community, and I have seen the problems and the concerns those people have.

Most people consider family as immediate family, those people around you. But in the aboriginal community, a family is a community of people. I think when you come to issues and problems that you hear from the community, it affects everyone within that community; whether it is a death in the family, a problem with alcohol and drugs, or the effects that we have seen of boom-bust scenarios.

In the Mackenzie Delta, it has been over 20 years since we had the prospect of having a major industry sitting on our doorstep go bust. And I think it is now time to change that philosophy with the energy of this new Legislature and the people in this House, to work along with the aboriginal groups, the oil and gas companies, the mining companies, and most importantly improving the lives of the people we serve.

I have had the opportunity in the last four years to be known as a person that speaks for the little people, because in my heart I feel the pain, the suffering and injustices of those people out there who cannot speak for themselves.

I have the experience and privilege of serving in several capacities in the Northwest Territories for the last 15 years, from working with the people within the communities to being a member of the band council. From being a member of settlement council to the hamlet council. I was also elected to the Mackenzie Delta Regional Council with leaders such as Johnny Charlie and Freddie Greenland.

I think it is those types of experiences that made me who I am today, and I will continue to serve those people that have given me that privilege.

I have faced many challenges. I have served with the Dene/Metis claims process for seven or eight years as a regional land claims negotiator. I served on the executive of the Metis Nation of the Northwest Territories as the vice-president. Yes, we have gone through some troubled times through the negotiations of the agreement in principle for the Dene/Metis, and then to see negotiations lapse at the final stage of conclusion of the Dene/Metis claim. But I believe what has happened has happened for a reason. I believe it has made the people of the North more dependent and more resilient as individuals, and a group of individuals, to be able to do the things we are now doing in the North.

I went on to serve as a senior negotiator with the Gwich'in to settle that land claim. And after concluding those negotiations and having that agreement finalized, I had the privilege of serving as a senior negotiator of the Sahtu claim. That claim is now concluded and the process of self-government has started.

It is awfully difficult to put yourself in the shoes of people in the communities. For those people who do not understand aboriginal politics, the biggest shoe we have to fill in any community is a leader, a chief. They are the ones that face the issues day in and day out. They are the ones who receive the phone calls, they are the ones that have to call the RCMP, and they are the ones that have to call the nursing station when people feel they want to be heard.

I think that it is time we took the energy in this room and put the people in Cabinet that will serve for the benefit of all people in the North. We have the opportunity to move forth and ensure we do the best job we can. I, for one, would like to see the process change from the dependency of government to independence of people.

We have a chance to move forth with the economic opportunities that are on the horizon. I am privileged to have served in the capacity at the community level, the regional level and the territorial level, and now in this Legislature, to serve the people of the Mackenzie Delta and the Northwest Territories. But I feel everyone here in this room all have special interests and special commitments we have made to serve people. I for one will continue to do that regardless, of the capacity where I find myself.

In closing, I would ensure all Members here that I will continue to be up front, honest, and state vocally or otherwise the issues that I feel critical, important, and where direction has to be taken. I am a team player; I have always been a team player. When I feel that one person's opinion may have some merit, I will listen to that opinion. And when I feel strong enough that initiative has to be taken, I will go with initiative where I see the most positive results at the end.

So with that, I would like to state I wish for the support of the Members here to nominate and select me to Cabinet. I believe I have done a duty to the North, and I will continue to perform that duty by serving the people of the North in all aspects and in all the relationships that we have here by building a government that is strong and vocal. I will stand up for all people in the North. Thank you.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. We are 60 percent through the presentations. Is it the pleasure of the Committee to continue with the remaining four, or take a short pause?

--Interjection

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Continue on? Thank you. Before we go to our next presenter, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize in the gallery a former Member of the Legislative Assembly, a Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Roy Erasmus.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Our next speaker will be the Member for Thebacha, Mr. Michael Miltenberger.

Mr. Miltenberger's Candidacy Speech

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would first like to start, as well, by congratulating you on your selection to the high office of Speaker. I would also like to extend my congratulations to my colleague, Mr. Kakfwi, on his election as Premier. I know he will do the job that is necessary.

As we start a new century and new Territory, we are in a time of transition politically, socially and economically. It is critical and important for us as a new Assembly to try to do everything in our power to maintain programs and services at the community level, while at the same time deal with the finances and identify new revenues. We also have to ensure that we

foster from the start a very strong, co-operative, working relationship with the aboriginal governments, as we have to work together on issues of resource sharing, settlement of claims and self-government. What we do now is going to set the foundation for the Legislatures to come and the public government that is going to evolve in the new century.

We are the first MLAs in the new Northwest Territories. We have all just come through an arduous, long election process. We have all received a strong mandate from our people to represent everyone in our ridings: the elders and youth, men and women, aboriginal and non-aboriginal. We bring that mandate here with us to the Assembly.

We now have to pick the best possible people for the job to help us at this critical juncture in our history. It is on that basis that I stand here today as a candidate for the office of Cabinet. As a candidate and someone who will also be selecting the Ministers, I believe there are certain qualities that are important in the people being selected, which I believe I share.

We need those that will demonstrate leadership. Whether we can achieve a vision of a strong and healthy Northwest Territories will depend on the leadership we show. As individual MLAs, as a collective Assembly, through the Premier and Cabinet, we are in a process selecting as well, how we work as an Assembly with the other territorial leaders. I believe the public is looking for strong, cooperative leadership. Leadership that is willing to make tough decisions, but at the same time, take the extra steps necessary to protect those programs that are critical to our communities.

I believe I have demonstrated those qualities of leadership, both as an ordinary MLA and as a Member of Cabinet. In the nine months I have been on Cabinet, I have taken steps to try to address the problems dealing with education. I have traveled to the communities to talk to the DEAs, DECs, community leaders, the people, and the students. We have put out a strategic plan that very clearly identifies the priorities we have to deal with in the next five years with education, pupil-to-teacher ratio and special needs. I have also made sure that I keep all the Members fully aware of what is happening in this process.

We need those with a clear vision of what has to be done. I for one have six key areas I think are very critical to us. The first one, as we have all talked about in the last few days, is the need to start the process to renegotiate our tax window so that we no longer have to spend or pay back 80 cents of every dollar to the federal government at a time when we do not have money for the programs that are so essential to all of us.

In the mid-term, we have to actively and aggressively pursue the resource sharing arrangement with the aboriginal governments and the federal government working together cooperatively. The door is open. Minister Nault has said so.

We also have to fully support land claims settlements and self-government talks at the same time supporting the role for a strong, central public government. Settlement of claims will provide tremendous certainty and economic potential for all Northerners.

As a government and Legislature, we have to push for better integration and improved coordination of programs and services so that we can maintain the service levels in the

communities. It is clear that much more can be done, both at the headquarters level and at the community level. We have to make the best possible use of existing resources.

A critical area often overlooked in the broad political discussion is the fundamental role of family and strong communities. The family, Mr. Chair, is the foundation of our Territory and of our society. It is where children learn who they are, where they are from, their values, their culture and their heritage. We have to make efforts to, in fact, enhance and support the family so we can give birth to healthy children who are brought up in a strong family environment and are able to go to school and learn. If we do not, we will never have enough money for special needs. There are many self-inflicted problems, FAS, FAE, tobacco, as we have heard. Those are all preventable and we have to focus on working with families and communities so that we can, in fact, move forward as a strong Territory. We very clearly need an economic strategy to go hand in hand with the other strategies we have, with education, with health. As was indicated earlier, the best form of economic development is a strong education, but we also have to fit that into the tremendous development that now faces us.

We need someone who is approachable, open and accountable. I have an open door policy. I have made a practice of it since I have been here. I have pushed throughout the last Assembly for greater public access to committee meetings. I believe we have to step out as MLAs and Cabinet Members and committee members to the communities to let the people see once again what this government can do.

We need someone who understands the need for balance in addressing the needs of all Northerners. We have diverse needs in our communities - small, remote communities, medium-sized communities, and Yellowknife. In my time as Minister, I have traveled to 25 of the communities to visit with the schools and the DECs and DEAs. I am much more aware now of those critical needs.

We need someone who is a team player. Cabinet Members have to work together. They have to be open to positive feedback from each other.

As a Cabinet, we have to strengthen our ability to do broad, strategic planning. Equally critical is going to be the very strong need for an open, pro-active relationship with the committees and Cabinet, to work together to resolve the many critical issues that face us.

We also have to take this approach into the Assembly and beyond with the leaders and communities as we deal with the many issues before us. We also have to have an active functioning strategic relationship with our Member of Parliament and our new Senator. They can be tremendous assets and we should make better use of the skills and abilities they bring to the table.

We need somebody with the background and experience. I spent the last four years in the Assembly, the last year on Cabinet. I have been chair of Caucus, chair of Western Caucus, vice-chair of the Social Programs and also the Government Operations Committee. I have been mayor. I have been town councilor. I have been on the NWTAM, as well as chair of the South Slave Regional Council. Plus, I have extensive government experience at the superintendent and management level. And I bring those skills with me.

We need someone who is open to new ideas and is flexible on how we achieve our collective vision. I do not believe in a "one size fits all" for this Assembly, or that the current system is perfect. We have to be open to new ideas from Members and the communities. We have to be prepared to be creative in how we achieve the solutions, because we have to work together to do this.

We need someone with a sound work ethic who is prepared to put in the time. I believe I have demonstrated that work ethic in the last four years.

We need someone who is prepared to make the tough decisions necessary in a careful, measured, consultative way, in order for us to move on as an Assembly and as a government.

In closing, Mr. Chair, I would just like to reiterate the very critical nature of this Assembly, the tremendous responsibility and stewardship we are expected to provide to the people of the Northwest Territories, and the need to practice the politics of cooperation, a fundamental principle that I have brought to the office of MLA when I first was elected to the 13th Assembly, in which I bring to this, the 14th Assembly. I believe I have the qualities, the personal experience and the demonstrated abilities. I look forward to the outcome of this particular election. I ask if you would consider supporting me for Cabinet for the 14th Assembly. Thank you.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Our next presenter will be the Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Jake Ootes.

Mr. Ootes' Candidacy Speech

MR. OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to pass on my congratulations to you and Mr. Kakfwi for the election to these very important positions.

I would also like to thank Mr. Krutko for nominating me and for having the confidence that I can serve this government as a Cabinet Minister. I am, of course, very grateful to my constituents for voting me back into office and also, of course, to my family and friends for being so supportive.

I see a very exciting time for us here in this Territory in the future. Yes, we have some problems to overcome, some very big challenges that will face us in the next couple of years, but I believe that if we set those challenges in the right direction, four years from now we will have moved this government into a position that can make this Territory a wonderful place for our residents to live and a very, very good place for them to be.

All of us, Mr. Chair, have assets, skills and experiences to bring to the table. Over the years, I have had some wonderful experiences myself. In my younger life, I was a public servant for this very government. I spent 10 years working partially for the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and later for the Government of the Northwest Territories when it was in its formative years. During this time, I gained valuable insight into our land and people, and have a great appreciation for the background from which we all come.

Following my career as a civil servant, I was a businessman for almost 20 years in the publishing business. I published

newspapers and magazines and most recently, I was the owner of Above and Beyond magazine. My businesses taught me how to manage money, how to direct people and how to work with the public. Four years ago, I was fortunate enough to be elected to this Legislative Assembly. During my time here, I gained a good understanding in the process of our government.

I served as a member of the Standing Committee on Resource Management and later as a member of the Management Services Board. And, of course, for a three-year period, I was chair of the Ordinary Members' Caucus. Having been an Ordinary Member has given me a great deal of appreciation for what Members go through and what needs to be done. I also appreciate the objectives that they have to serve their constituents. I believe the combination of having been a public servant, a businessman, and some experience now as a politician are assets that can contribute positively and productively to this government.

For me, being a Cabinet Minister is all about leadership. What are the skills of a leader, you might ask, that I consider are important? Integrity, honesty and openness, the ability to work diligently and effectively, an ability to be flexible, to listen to other people's viewpoints.

Cabinet Ministers must be able to relate to a wide spectrum of people across the North but also relate with leaders on other stages in the south and elsewhere. Cabinet Ministers must be respected by their peers and perceptive enough to be approachable by all people. Ministers' roles should never be such that his or her service to the Ordinary Members is lost. I believe I can fulfill those ideals.

We are facing many challenges here in the Northwest Territories at this time. The demand on social programs is increasing and our economy is struggling to keep up. It is our job to find ways to do things better with fewer resources while at the same time continue to provide the good, quality service that we have always provided. It is my view that we must be very specific with what we need to achieve over the next four years. To me, the issues are related to economic development, governance and the social net. And the issues of these areas must be tackled in concert with each other. They are all interrelated.

It is vitally important that we recognize the need for creating jobs for our people here in the Territories. The mining, oil and gas sector are the one industry that can kick start that employment possibility for a large number of jobs immediately. But, as we all know, we have our challenges there. Tremendous challenges. And these challenges centre around the need for our people to have their land claims settled to their satisfaction and improving the regulatory hurdles that companies face in order to set up shop here. We must make our Territory a friendlier environment to attract industries.

The Government of the Northwest Territories must support the communities in their desires for economic development of their regions. We must provide the support to those people that have development taking place there. We can also improve job creation for our people through the value added industries. We have made good inroads in the diamond industry. We need to do that in other sections - the oil and gas and the forestry. Wherever we can, we must capitalize on that. We need to continue to lobby the federal government and work with our

aboriginal groups and governments to gain control over resources.

We also need to concentrate on improving the other industries here in the Territories: the tourism, forestry, arts and crafts, manufacturing, and the fisheries industries. Economic development must happen in a climate of good governments. We need trustworthy political leadership. We need to improve civil service morale and restore their security of position, because our employees need confidence in themselves once again.

Our political leaders need to lead by example. The values we adhere to send a powerful message to our people and to our communities. These values are important, such as honesty, integrity, and dedication of service.

Tackling of economic and governance problems must happen in conjunction with addressing the social challenges that are before us; and they are many.

For example, alcohol-related crimes and social problems cost this government tens of millions of dollars, perhaps more, each year. The human suffering for those people is even greater. Our youth must be equipped with knowledge and skills, and the opportunity receive a good, basic education, to go to relevant colleges and apprenticeship programs. As a Territory, we need to work together on all of these challenges.

We also need to improve the relationship amongst all our western communities. We need the unity and harmony that is so important for us to develop as a Territory.

In closing, Mr. Chair, let me state that I do not shy away from a challenge. I do not shy away from the issues when tough decisions need to be made. I may not necessarily agree with my Cabinet colleagues or my other colleagues if I am in Cabinet, but I certainly will put my viewpoints forward. I believe a different viewpoint is quite healthy.

I offer you my skills and my commitment to making a positive contribution to you and the people of the Northwest Territories, and I am asking you for your support for a Cabinet position. Thank you.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Our next presenter will be the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Floyd Roland.

Mr. Roland's Candidacy Speech

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I too would like to congratulate you on being chosen as Speaker-elect, and congratulate Mr. Kakfwi for a job well done.

Many of you have heard me for quite some time this morning and this afternoon responding to questions and so on. I think I will say just a little bit more in the area of what I stand for and who I am. I came here at the 13th Assembly with an open mind. As I said, I had my back to the wall, eyes and ears open. I was told I would get an education of a lifetime. And I must say, the 13th Assembly has brought me more wisdom over the years: how to deal with people, issues, and how to take on challenges. And I hope to be able to bring that forward in the 14th Assembly in whatever role I will be given.

I think we have an opportunity here to make a difference for the people of the Northwest Territories by working together. I will be committed to the cause of making life better for our residents in the communities.

If we are going to make a difference, as I said many times this morning and this afternoon, it will be as a team. We heard earlier that we will have our disagreements, but at the end of the day we have to get on with business. That is what I am here to do, to get on with business in order to make a difference in the lives of all the people whether they are employed, children, elders, and unemployed. We have to represent them all fairly and equally.

I believe I have shown that ability in the last Assembly, and I hope to be able to continue that in whatever role I will be serving in this 14th Assembly. I look forward with apprehension, but knowing there is opportunity. If we take advantage of the opportunity, the changes that will come about will be more productive than just reacting as past governments and we have. We have to take the challenges and the calculated risk of making a difference. I think we can do that. We have good people around the table, and the challenges out there are huge. As my friend from Thebacha would say, they are absolutely huge. But I think we can make that difference.

We can improve the lives of the residents of the Northwest Territories. We can improve our communication with all the other groups in the Northwest Territories, and I think we can make better inroads with Ottawa. If we take the challenge and look at the changes that need to happen, we can all make a difference. That is what I came to do in the 13th Assembly. And as I spoke to people during the campaign of this election, we are going to face some difficult times. If we are willing to accept that tough decisions have to be made, at the end of the day we can will have positive outcomes.

So I look forward to working with you all in the 14th Assembly. I hope that I have your support as a Member of Cabinet for the 14th Assembly. And I think as a team we have started out on a good foot and we need to continue to build. Thank you.

-- Applause

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Our final presenter will be the Member for Nunakput, Mr. Vince Steen.

Mr. Steen's Candidacy Speech

MR. STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I congratulate you on your election, and Mr. Kakfwi. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger, for his nomination. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the voters back home for giving me this opportunity to represent them again, and to possibly serve on Cabinet again.

Mr. Chair, along with everyone else, I too agree that we have very large challenges facing us, such as trying to improve our health and social services, our education, and our general economic situations across the Northwest Territories. We have our priorities that we have to work together to identify in the next days or the next few weeks.

However, I believe of all the priorities we have to face, the most serious one is to try to vest control of resources from the federal government so that can assist us to address our fiscal situation. If we can do this, we then have the capabilities to

improve our health and social services programs and education programs as well. We would also have the capability to improve our transportation infrastructure, community infrastructures, and provide jobs and opportunities for our residents.

Mr. Chair, I think the aboriginal groups have indicated they are willing to share the resources with this government and with the federal government. But more importantly, they have also indicated they are willing to share. In some cases, they have indicated they want to take over the programs and services that we are currently delivering to them on behalf of the federal government.

I believe we should not be a roadblock to them obtaining this opportunity from the federal government. We should support them. This can be done either through partnership groups, partnership governments, or it can be done simply by passing the responsibilities back to the federal government so they in turn could pass it on to the aboriginal groups through their self-government agreements. Mr. Chair, I believe these people are capable of doing this, and it would help to relieve some of the strain we have on our fiscal situation.

This is one of the prime reasons I have chosen to again run for territorial council and put myself available to Cabinet. I believe I could support this type of movement on behalf of this government, and it would go a long way to working out a better working relationship with the aboriginal groups.

Mr. Chair, I am letting my name stand for a position on the Executive Council because I believe I have proven that I have the potential and capability to serve the 14th Assembly over the next four years. During the last 10 months, I have gained valuable leadership experience as a Minister. While serving as Minister of Transportation, MACA and DPW, I have followed through on the mandate of the three departments to ensure the business plans as approved by the 13th Assembly were implemented to the extent possible with available resources. This included keeping capital projects on schedule by working with affected client departments, or with other stakeholders in the communities. In my capacity as Minister, I have met with and lobbied federal, provincial and territorial politicians and officials to encourage the future development of our transportation and community infrastructure, including the national and territorial highway systems. I have made myself and my department officials accessible to other Ministers and to the Members. When there was a requirement to address issues and concerns, I insured my department was available either directly to the public or through MLAs.

As I have done in the past, I am committed to work towards achieving the goals and objectives we set as Members of the 14th Legislative Assembly, and I am prepared to work with other Members of Cabinet and with the new Premier-elect, Mr. Kakfwi.

I have a personal style of management that includes an open-door policy for Ordinary Members and Cabinet Ministers, a strong integrity with commitment for accountability to both the Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Premier and the public, and the making of practical and fair decisions using logic and common sense.

I believe I have carried out my share of the Executive Council's workload in an efficient manner over the last seven months. I also believe that I am a strong team player who obtained the

respect and cooperation of other Ministers, the Ordinary Members, and my department officials and staff. I hope to be given the opportunity and mandate by you to continue my role as a Cabinet Minister of the 14th Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

-- Applause

Voting For Ministers

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): I would like to thank all of the candidates for adhering to the time limits for their presentations. In a moment, we will be ready for voting. Members are now asked to vote. You will proceed to the Clerk's table to receive three ballots: one for the northern candidate, one for the Yellowknife candidates, and one for the southern candidates. You will please proceed to the voting booth to mark your ballots, and then place them in the ballot box located in the front of the Clerk's table.

--Voting commences

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Now that all of the Members have voted, I will now proceed to vote myself.

-- Voting commences

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): I declare the voting process is closed. The ballot box will be taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots will be counted. The bell will ring for five minutes to bring the Members back in once the results are determined. Now we shall take a break until the call of the bell.

-- Break

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): The Committee will reconvene. Colleagues, it is my duty to announce that you have elected two individuals to represent each of the Yellowknife and southern constituencies. However, as per the procedures, the names of those individuals will not be announced until all representatives have been determined.

Therefore, it is my duty to announce that there is a need for a second ballot in the northern region. The nominees for the second ballot are Mr. Roger Allen, Mr. Floyd Roland, and Mr. Vince Steen.

Before we proceed to vote, are there any nominees from this ballot wishing to withdraw their names at this time?

There having been no withdrawals, the ballots are available as before. Please proceed to come forward to pick up your ballots, mark your choices and drop them in the ballot box in front of the Clerk's desk.

-- Voting commences

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): There are no other Members to vote. I will now proceed to cast my vote.

-- Voting commences

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): I declare the voting process is now closed. The ballot box will be taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots will be counted. The bell will be rung for five minutes to bring the Members back in once the results are determined.

-- Break

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): It is my duty to announce that two nominees have received the fewest amount of votes on the ballot. According to the agreed upon procedures, all names will remain on that ballot for the next round of voting.

We will now return to the voting procedure, unless there is a candidate who wishes to withdraw their name from the ballot.

There have been no withdrawals. We shall now proceed to vote again using the same procedure.

-- Voting commences

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): There are no other Members to vote. I will now proceed to cast my vote.

-- Voting commences

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): I declare the voting process is now closed. The ballot box will be taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots will be counted. The bell will be rung for five minutes to bring the Members back in once the results are determined.

-- Break

-- Ringing of the bells

Results of Election of Ministers

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): Welcome back. I declare that you have elected, in alphabetical order, as your choice for the new Cabinet: Roger Allen, Jim Antoine, Jane Groenewegen, Joe Handley, Jake Ootes, and Vince Steen.

This concludes the selection for Cabinet.

-- Applause

ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): If there is no other business, and it is the wish of the Territorial Leadership Committee to conclude the matters today, we will do so and adjourn. What is the wish of the Committee?

-- Interjection

CHAIR (Mr. Whitford): I would like to thank all of the Members for their patience and their efforts, and I would like to congratulate all of the successful candidates. This meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee is now adjourned.

-- ADJOURNMENT