



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Friday, February 22, 2002

Members Present

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Good morning, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 7-14(5): Adoption Act and Family Law Act**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today I will be giving notice of motion for first reading of a bill to amend the Adoption Act and the Family Law Act. These amendments reflect the requirements for equality under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Human rights legislation across Canada, including our own proposed NWT Human Rights Act, list sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination. As well, various courts across the country, including the Supreme Court of Canada, have ruled that legislation that discriminates on the basis of sexual orientation violates the Charter and has been found to be unconstitutional.

As a result, courts and Legislatures have been granting many of the same rights and responsibilities under the law to same-sex couples that are enjoyed by opposite sex common-law couples. This includes such areas as the right to spousal support, the right to equal division of property and the right to adopt.

Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, individuals involved in same-sex common-law relationships do not, in most cases, currently have the same legislated rights and responsibilities as do individuals in opposite sex common-law relationships. In order to ensure that our legislation complies with equality provisions under the Charter, and to avoid any costly legal challenges, we will be addressing this concern in two phases.

In phase one we will be introducing a bill to amend the Adoption Act and the Family Law Act. These amendments will change the definition of spouse to include, in addition to married couples, those who have lived in a conjugal relationship for two years. The definition will be gender neutral. As a consequence of these amendments, nine other acts that use the definition of spouse found in the Family Law Act would also be affected.

These amendments will ensure that those individuals living in a same-sex relationship will have the same rights and obligations under this legislation that are currently provided to those living in a common-law relationship. Specifically under the Family

Law Act and the Adoption Act, they would be able to seek spousal support, division of property, restraining orders and be allowed to adopt.

Phase two of this project involves a review and amendment of all the remaining 35 pieces of legislation that use spouse or an equivalent.

Mr. Speaker, developments in Canadian law over the past ten years have resulted in the extension to unmarried couples many of the same rights and obligations that have been enjoyed by married couples. In addition, the courts have ruled that discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation is unconstitutional. These two developments have meant that laws that treat unmarried couples differently based on their sexual orientation have been found unconstitutional. By amending our NWT legislation to provide equal treatment under the law for individuals involved in same-sex relationships as for individuals in common-law relationships, we are simply bringing our legislation in line with the development of the law across the rest of Canada. This process will in no way impact on the institution of marriage in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Minister's Statement 8-14(5): Increased Funding for Day Care Programs

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As outlined by the Minister of Finance two days ago in the Budget Address, this government plans on investing an additional \$1 million in the area of day care during the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT's economy is vibrant and generating new jobs. This activity translates into increased opportunities for northern residents. While part of this government's role is to create an environment for investment and growth, we must also take steps that allow our residents every opportunity to benefit from this prosperity. The goal, aptly articulated in Towards A Better Tomorrow, is one of the principles behind the decision to invest additional funds in this area.

Our plan, Mr. Speaker, is to invest new money in two critical areas. First we plan to increase the daily contribution we make to licensed day care programs. As an example, if the base rate for an infant space is \$9.00 per child, we plan to increase it to \$14.40 per child. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, this is a full 60 percent increase.

The second area, Mr. Speaker, where we will make a substantial increase is in the area of day care subsidies for low-income parents. Our present system does not cover parents who need day care services during the summer months, or

parents who work shift work. If we are going to assist these Northerners in taking advantage of the opportunities before them, we must improve their access to day care services. It is our hope that this increased investment will do just that.

Early childhood is a priority for this government, Mr. Speaker. Investments in early childhood will help to realize our goal of a healthy, self-reliant territory as envisioned in *Towards A Better Tomorrow*. This investment will give NWT families greater access to affordable quality childcare and a greater opportunity to realize their own career dreams while making a productive contribution to society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Somba Ke Healing Lodge

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the course of this Assembly and in the past, all Members have spoken at one time or another about the cost and devastation to the people of the North who have suffered through alcohol and drug addictions. The evidence is in our homes and schools and jails from fetal alcohol effect. We see the trauma from sexual abuse and molestation in residential schools. Spousal assault and victims of family violence are ever-present. It is not a pretty picture. In this respect, Mr. Speaker, we do not have a healthy society.

To capitalize on and benefit from the economic opportunities facing us, we have to make some significant process in dealing with the effects of these situations in our society.

Yesterday my colleague, Mr. Lafferty, the Member for North Slave, spoke passionately about the need for treatment and prevention facilities here in the North. Members of the Beaufort-Delta communities have on numerous occasions spoken about the lack of support in this area as evidenced by the closure of the Tl'oondih Healing Facility.

Mr. Speaker, just off the Detah road sits a substantive 28-bed facility built in 1991 with financing from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. It is an ideal place for healing and self-reflection.

In 2000, Mr. Speaker, the Somba Ke Healing Lodge was founded as a non-profit organization. The ironic situation seems that while the facility has survived, it has survived just barely with help from a number of organizations, but the GNWT Department of Health and Social Services and others should be there as well.

Corrections Services Canada, the federal agency, sends inmates from southern Canada. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation has provided substantial support. When I was there last week, I even encountered a group of Japanese tourists who were using the facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the current status of Somba Ke may be described as uncertain and troubled. Some of its healing programs are delivered to inmates from Corrections Canada and those

programs are well regarded. There is a need for additional program definition and development.

Yesterday the Minister of Health and Social Services tabled his action plan for health and social services. Mr. Speaker, the Somba Ke healing centre can be part of the solution for improving quality services. I urge the Minister to positively consider what role the Somba Ke healing centre can play in his action plan in this region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on GNWT Position on the Kyoto Protocol

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we all know, climates are changing and nowhere more than the Northwest Territories and the Arctic. Mr. Speaker, we have to have a position to deal with global warming. Our Minister will be attending a conference next week in British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think we really understand what this government's position is on the Kyoto agreement, global warming and what we are doing to take on the challenge of the effects of global warming in the Northwest Territories.

We have seen the effects in the weather, the effect it has had on our transportation system, our winter roads and also the environment of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I think as a government, we have to know what our position is. For the Members on this side, we would like to know -- do we actually have a position from the Government of the Northwest Territories regarding the Kyoto agreement and global warming?

We, the people in the North, are going to be greatly affected to a point that whatever happens in other parts of the world will have a major effect on the North, the people of the North, the animals and the environment. Mr. Speaker, it has been some time since we as a government have stood up to the rest of the world to say enough is enough. We have seen the effects. We are the ones being affected most greatly, yet we continue to hear the countries of the world, such as the United States, one of the highest producers and users of energy and they have the greatest effect on global warming.

As a government and as Canadians we have to set the examples. At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development to really see, do we have a position on this matter and what stand is he going to take when he attends this conference next week in British Columbia.

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

Member's Statement on Inland Lake Fisheries

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement this morning is dealing with fisheries, specifically inland lakes. Our elders are starting to recognize efficiencies in fisheries that come from smaller, inland lakes.

In the past, Mr. Speaker, when we had a trapping society before the arrival of the snowmobiles, dog teams were utilized to a great extent. Families would have anywhere between 14 and 20 dogs that needed to be fed. People used the inland lakes for fish products quite a bit.

Now that we do not have the dogs to be fed, we are starting to see fish that are overpopulating these lakes and reducing the food limit. Through global warming, the level of ice and snow is affecting the water tables and naturally occurring mercury may be a factor here as well.

I want to know what the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is doing to monitor fish in the inland lakes near our communities. If they are monitoring, what have they discovered and what will they do about what they discovered? I will have questions for the appropriate Minister during question period. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Attendance at the Scott Tournament of Hearts

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I would like to take a couple of minutes to talk about a topic that is very near and dear to my heart and that is sports. Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues and myself have been anxious to get to the TV sets these days to watch the Olympics and the goings on there. We have been entertained by some very exciting games in different sports.

I know that I want to congratulate the ladies team last night for coming out on top of the U.S. team in ladies hockey.

-- Applause

After going into that game, having lost eight consecutive times to the U.S., I am sure there was a lot of pressure on these girls. I guess we have been witness to quite a number of negative happenings when you mix politics and sports. We have seen that in a number of sports in the Olympics in the last couple of weeks.

I think that far too often, Mr. Speaker, we put too much importance on medals and the colour of medals being presented. I know that a number of athletes have been to the Olympics and different sporting events and have put in personal bests and have not come away with medals.

I think that we should be putting more emphasis on our athletes who do personal bests when they are in competition against other athletes and not worry about what colour medals they are getting.

I want to congratulate all Canadians who have taken part in the Olympics and who have represented Canada to the very best of their abilities. I also want to congratulate all the athletes across the North who have qualified to compete in the Arctic Winter Games. I know it is very important, having been involved in the games before, that the athletes receive support from families, from friends and also from government representatives.

I will not be personally going to the games this year, but I do hope that some of my colleagues will have the opportunity to attend and give our athletes some support and encouragement.

Mr. Speaker, next week, starting on Saturday, there is a team from the Northwest Territories that is going to be representing the Northwest Territories and the Yukon at the Scott Tournament of Hearts in Brandon, Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, this team consists of Monique Gagnier of Hay River, Kelly Kaylo of Yellowknife, Cheryl Burlington of Yellowknife, Sharon Cormier of Yellowknife...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, the time for your Member's statement is over. Mr. Delorey.

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

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Also, Kerri Cooley makes up the fifth player on this team. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to inform the House that I as well am going to be part of this team. I have been coaching this team off and on this winter. I have also been coaching my daughter, Monique Gagnier, for probably the last 18 years or so.

-- Applause

It gives me great pleasure to be able to go to Manitoba and represent the NWT and Yukon as part of this team. I also want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to advise my constituents back in Hay River that I will be absent from the House from Monday, February 25th to March 1st so that I can coach this team in Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Our good wishes go along with the team. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on Submissions to the Commission on Health Care in Canada

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last April, the Government of Canada created the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada. Roy Romanow was appointed to head up the commission. The end goal, Mr. Speaker, is to examine the state of public health care in this country and recommend ways to be made sustainable well into the next century.

The commission recognizes that providing practical and realistic recommendations will be an enormous task. To achieve this, the commission is analyzing submissions from health care providers, stakeholder groups and concerned Canadians who offer their views on challenges and opportunities facing public health care in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this spring the commission will be visiting the Northwest Territories to hear from Northerners. I have every

expectation that our government will be making a formal presentation highlighting our challenges. I also hope that the Standing Committee on Social Programs will be invited to contribute its views to the submission.

Mr. Speaker, we should urge all citizens of the Northwest Territories concerned with protecting our health care system to get involved and be heard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Equitable Distribution of Transportation Infrastructure Funding

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is on the Budget Address, in the area of transportation, Mr. Speaker. I have a concern on how the funds will be allocated in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, too many times we have seen roads to campgrounds, like the Ingraham Trail, getting priority over the highways that have a safety need.

I see in the Budget Address an initiative for roads and infrastructure, a \$33 million highway investment is proposed in this budget for 2002-2003. That includes \$2.5 million for access roads. As I understand it, this money is to be spread evenly for all the regions. However, the needs of my region are more pressing.

I have driven every highway in the Northwest Territories as my committee travelled in the last year-and-a-half. Mr. Speaker, Highway No. 3 is in the worst condition compared to other highways. Add to that bad weather conditions, which can make the road difficult to drive.

I believe we need a new highway strategy. The way the funding is to be distributed, some will have it for a comfortable ride to cook their wieners and marshmallows while others are not getting it for safety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Transportation and Storage of Ammonium Nitrate

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to the transportation and storage of ammonium nitrate in and through the community of Enterprise.

Mr. Speaker, this issue has been raised in the House before by Keelen Simpson, who was representing Hay River South during the Youth Parliament. She certainly demonstrated the importance that this issue has to all ages to the people in the North.

Ammonium nitrate is normally used as a chemical blasting agent, but it is also used as fertilizer. By itself, it is not dangerous but it can be detonated under high heat, confinement or severe shock. For example, if ammonium

nitrate is mixed with diesel fuel and ignited, this can result in an explosion.

Mr. Speaker, any time there are dangerous goods being transported or stored within a community, the community council should be notified well in advance -- no exceptions. At the very least, the local fire department should be notified.

How dangerous is ammonium nitrate? It was a key part in a bomb used to destroy the federal government building in Oklahoma City in 1995, killing 168 people and wounding hundreds of others. How much ammonium nitrate was used? Less than two-and-a-half tons. Many times this amount is being transported on just one truck. These trucks, Mr. Speaker, frequently travel through or stop in the communities in my riding.

I have discussed this issue with the government on many occasions. However, they always explain that under our Dangerous Goods Act, it is not required to consult with the community, as the government does not consider ammonium nitrate to be a dangerous good.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the highway patrol officers are charged to monitor dangerous goods that are being transported on the highway system. However, we have to ask ourselves who is monitoring the storage and the handling of these chemicals when they are in our communities without our knowledge and without our permission?

Mr. Speaker, given the potential dangers of ammonium nitrate, I find the government's position on this matter very distressing. Clearly when proper procedures are not established to adequately notify communities, we have a disaster in the making. We must take action now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Inuvik Recipients of the Governor General's Medal of Bravery

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the issue of bravery. Mr. Speaker, I have been informed that 29 recipients will be receiving the medal of bravery this year and in fact, two of those individuals come from my constituency of Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, the late Mr. Ernest Gordon, or as we have known him in our community as Ernie Gordon, and Mr. Brian McDonald, who still lives in Inuvik, will be receiving the medal of bravery. Mr. Speaker, this centres around the actions that took place on August 6, 2000. Mr. Brian McDonald attempted to rescue Mr. Ernest Gordon, who lost his life trying to save a ten-year old girl from drowning in Campbell Creek near Inuvik, Northwest Territories.

Mr. Gordon was picnicking with his family when his daughter's friend was caught in a strong current. Although he could not swim, Mr. Gordon managed to reach the child and grab hold of her, but he too was carried away by the rushing waters. He was struggling to keep himself and the little girl afloat when Mr. McDonald arrived at the scene. Alerted by the cries for help and realizing the gravity of the situation, Mr. McDonald battled

the current until he reached the victims some 12 metres out. Unable to haul them both in, he took the child from Mr. Gordon and encouraged him to continue treading water until arrival of another swimmer, who was on his way with a flotation device. Although exhausted, Mr. McDonald was able to return to shore with the little girl, but sadly, Mr. Gordon lost his struggle and drowned moments before help arrived. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Need for a Federal-NWT Economic Development Agreement

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the winter edition of the oil and gas review, the Premier summarized what we have known all along about the role of the federal government in the economic development of the North. He indicated that the federal government does not seem to take an active interest in developing the resources that they have up here, and if they have, he indicates that he has missed it.

There are many ways for Northerners to benefit from economic development. These include requirements for agreements for training, employment and the use of northern supplier services and manufacturers.

The most recent evaluation made by this government of that agreement was completed in May, 1990. A lot of things have changed since then, Mr. Speaker. We now have increased oil and gas development, the closure of the gold and zinc mines and the establishment of a growing diamond industry. The former federal Industry Minister, Mr. Tobin, on his last trip here to Yellowknife was boasting that the NWT has the fastest growing economy in the country. This growth is in areas that will require services in fields that are either emerging or changing, and Northerners need access to financial resources if they are truly going to derive the benefit from northern development.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, one of the big beneficiaries of our economic activity, the federal government themselves, do not seem to want to come to the table. I know we have attempted, through our Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy, to engage the federal government in our desire to benefit from our resources. Other jurisdictions in Canada have enjoyed the success of the benefits of economic development agreements with the federal government. Why is the North being ignored on this front? I believe this is completely unacceptable.

Later today, I will be asking the government what the status is of an NWT-Canada economic development agreement. I want to know what the government has done lately in this matter and I want to see some tangible action on this front. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Mackenzie Delta Good Time Dance

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning all. I would like to take this opportunity to invite all the

Members of this Legislative Assembly and family members to the third Mackenzie Delta Good Time Dance to be held tonight between 7:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m., and also another one tomorrow night at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, it is customary for the people of the Mackenzie Delta to celebrate through dancing on special occasions. In this instance, the reason for celebrating is the gathering of all our Members here in the Assembly, where we continue to work in the best interests of all the people of the Northwest Territories. Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Delta Good Time Band will be providing fiddle music. We invite all members of Yellowknife and those citizens who are visiting the city to come and join us at the Con Mine rec hall for two nights of square dancing, jigging, reels and a number of waltzes. Hopefully we will see you there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Recognition of Legislative Assembly Pages

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like today to acknowledge the support and assistance that has been provided to us over the past week by our pages. In particular, I want to recognize two young people from my constituency who have been working with us this week. These are Eric Crapeau and Curtis Beaulieu, both from Detah. They are grade seven students, very active in sports and very strong academic students. I think they are good examples of the quality of many of our small community schools. I encourage all of these young people to continue on with their education. They may go on to professions. Who knows, maybe some day they will have a different role in this Chamber. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the Gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 44-14(5): Promoting Northern Manufacturing

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of RWED. In going through the budget the other day, notable in its absence was any mention of manufacturing. Mr. Speaker, we all know that diversity in our economy is critical, so I am wondering if the Minister can tell me what he is doing to promote the manufacturing industry. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 44-14(5): Promoting Northern Manufacturing

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this department and the ministry has been doing some work,

and the Northwest Territories Business Advisory Panel has recommended some mechanisms for expanding the Northwest Territories value-added processing and manufacturing. They are preparing some recommendations to me as Minister and the department is putting together these recommendations for us to consider. There is work being done to assess how manufacturing has been going on in the North, and an analysis has been done of what we should do through the NWT Business Advisory Panel. We will be coming forward with some recommendations to look at how we can improve the manufacturing aspect in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 44-14(5): Promoting Northern Manufacturing

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that that work is going on. I was getting concerned. It seemed like a review and overhaul of the BIP has been underway for some time. That may not speak specifically to manufacturing, but it is nice to hear that work is underway. Can the Minister indicate when he will have this report back from the Business Advisory Panel? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 44-14(5): Promoting Northern Manufacturing

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in talking to the department and trying to assess the timing on this, we need to try to get this done as soon as possible. The work has been going on for some time now. I would like to advise the Member that we would like to have a strategy document submitted to us by the advisory panel prior to the end of this fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Bell. No further supplementary? Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 45-14(5): Transport and Storage of Ammonium Nitrate

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask some questions regarding the issue of ammonium nitrate transportation and storage in the communities. It is difficult to identify the appropriate Minister. When this product is on the highway system, it is an issue affecting the Department of Transportation under their regulations. When it is stored in the community, it falls under MACA. When there is a spill, then it falls under the jurisdiction of RWED. I will ask my question to the Deputy Premier, who is also the Minister of RWED.

Under the Dangerous Goods Act, the government is not required to notify communities prior to storage or transportation of ammonium nitrate in our communities. I would like to ask the Minister when the government will establish a procedure to adequately notify communities when dangerous goods, including ammonium nitrate, are being transported or stored in our communities? I would like to ask him when can we expect to see some policy regarding that?

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

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to refer the question to the Minister of Transportation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Minister is using his Deputy Premier's authority to transfer that question to the Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 45-14(5): Transport and Storage of Ammonium Nitrate

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly answer on the transportation of dangerous goods. The storage, as you know, is one that does not fall particularly within Transportation's jurisdiction, but more with RWED.

On the transportation of dangerous goods, there are different categories. Ammonium nitrate is classed as a dangerous good. All the trucks that are carrying it are properly flagged so they can be identified as carrying a dangerous good. Ammonium nitrate is not as dangerous as some people think it is when it is stored, or even when it comes in contact with some diesel fuel.

However, in order to assure residents who have concerns, I will take it upon my department to ensure that we let communities know when we are transporting it and also when we are moving it on the rail or trucks. We will, as a courtesy to those people and in recognition of their concerns, let the community leaders know when we are moving these products. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 45-14(5): Transport and Storage of Ammonium Nitrate

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. I am not sure if my supplementary questions can be directed to the Minister of Transportation. However, I will ask him anyway. When these chemicals are being transported and stored in our communities, when they are unloaded into our parking lots and empty storage grounds, I want to know, who are the officials out there monitoring and ensuring that they are properly stored, that they are fenced in, locked up and all of these other procedures that have to be followed?

I realize on the highway system there are highway toll officers. Who is out there in our communities monitoring this? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 45-14(5): Transport and Storage of Ammonium Nitrate

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. When they are transported or stored on a truck, on a flatbed, then they are the responsibility of Transportation. When they are stored in a yard, then the responsibility of ensuring that they are properly stored and secured rests with the Department

of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, which is responsible for environmental protection.

Now because of the concern with these goods, our department is working very closely with the other departments involved to ensure that any concerns the communities have will be alleviated in the future and ensure that these things are properly transported and properly stored. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 45-14(5): Transport and Storage of Ammonium Nitrate

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. Given that answer, I would like to ask for some clarity on whether the Minister plans to meet with the communities and go through the response procedures and emergency measures?

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

Further Return to Question 45-14(5): Transport and Storage of Ammonium Nitrate

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to meet with the representatives of the communities along the route where these goods travel to explain to them how the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act works. I certainly want to talk to my colleague, the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, to either have him or his officials come along as well to deal with storage and transportation at the same time. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 45-14(5): Transport and Storage of Ammonium Nitrate

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue is difficult, as indicated earlier, because it affects several different departments that have different degrees of responsibility when it comes to dangerous goods. I would like to know if this government could look at streamlining this whole handling of dangerous goods and storage in the communities. I do not believe this is the best way to handle this whole issue by having different responsibilities in different areas.

Would this government look at a one-stop shop kind of process, so that communities can go and have their questions answered, know the regulations and know who is policing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 45-14(5): Transport and Storage of Ammonium Nitrate

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, we will look at that. It may be difficult to try to amalgamate the transportation of dangerous goods legislation and the storage of dangerous goods legislation and provisions. I am sure that between the

two departments, we will be able to come up with a good common language explanation on how this works and have that in place for the next trucking season. Thank you.

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

Question 46-14(5): Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. It is regarding this government's position on the Kyoto agreement and what has happened with global warming.

There is a meeting that is going to take place next week with the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers on the environment. The issue they will be discussing is the area of global warming.

I would like to ask the Minister, does this government have a position regarding the Kyoto agreement and global warming?

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

Return to Question 46-14(5): Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this climate change is a big issue for us in the North. Our elders are telling us that they are seeing a lot of changes, and certainly to the whole development of the climate change issue throughout the world, we have been following it and have been very supportive of the Kyoto Protocol.

Our position as a government is that we support global and local action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. That is the position of this government. Global action includes the Kyoto Protocol as well. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 46-14(5): Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the ways that industrial nations are trying to get around the Kyoto agreement is using things which are known as carbon sinks, and they say, "Well, we can generate pollution but we also have carbon sinks. We have this much forest, this much vegetation, and because of that it generates oxygen." That is what the argument is. Does this government have a position on carbon sinks?

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

Further Return to Question 46-14(5): Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you. We have natural forests in the Northwest Territories, so we do not have that kind of a

problem with the whole debate on carbon sinks, meaning that there are problems in the south, in southern Canada, in the States, where there are no trees. It is just agricultural land. What the concern there is and what they want to do is they want to plant forests. We do not need to do that. We already have forests, so we do not have that problem up here. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 46-14(5): Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the whole idea of carbon sinks is for those nations to continue doing what they are doing right now, which is to continue to pollute the atmosphere and do nothing to react to global warming. I think this government should have a position about carbon sinks because that is the cause of global warming. We cannot find loopholes in the environment. The environment in the North is sensitive as it is, and for them to come up with the idea of carbon sinks is probably going to have a greater effect, or there will be less action taken on global warming.

Does the Minister have a position on those jurisdictions who want to use that as the basis for their argument, such as Alberta?

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

Further Return to Question 46-14(5): Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we agree that the countries that do not have forests and want to deal with the global warming issue by creating forests to deal with the carbon dioxide emissions, that is the purpose of carbon sinks, to do that.

There are also problems in the agricultural area where they are depleting the carbon in the soil through agricultural use. That is a very complicated area for us. We up here in the North, we are a very small player in this whole issue. However, we are very concerned about it because whatever happens globally regarding the warming of the atmosphere has a big effect on us up here in the Northwest Territories.

Our position is that we would be supporting and encouraging our federal government to go ahead and work towards the ratification of the Kyoto Accord. I understand that in developing our positions, the federal government will be listening to views of people in Canada, including the northern stakeholders and residents. The federal government will do a consultation process up here. From that, the federal government will be developing a position.

At this point in time we are encouraging and supporting the initiative of the federal government to go ahead and move ahead with the commitment they have made to sign the Kyoto Protocol eventually. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 46-14(5): Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, can this government table our position on the Kyoto agreement and the position on global warming in this House?

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

Further Return to Question 46-14(5): Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we could do that. I would like to go to this meeting in B.C. this weekend and listen to the joint Ministers of energy and the environment. This Kyoto Accord would be the topic of discussions. I understand that our federal counterparts are having a lot of concern about the cost of implementing protocol in their jurisdictions because of industry costs and so forth. It would be interesting to find out what is going on at that level. Certainly we have come out with a position. We have the NWT Greenhouse Strategy that we are developing. That deals with support for issues and global warming initiatives such as the Kyoto Protocol. Thank you.

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

Question 47-14(5): Meeting Access Road Needs

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Joe Handley, the Minister for Transportation. My question is how is the Minister going to distribute funds for upgrades to access roads when there is only \$2.5 million and there are needs greater than that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 47-14(5): Meeting Access Road Needs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, clearly the \$2.5 million that is in the budget for the 2002-2003 year was not enough money to improve all of the public highway access roads to a standard that everybody would want. We have a number of these roads. The allocation has not been finalized in terms of how we would allocate the \$2.5 million this year. I intend to meet with each of the representatives here who have public highway access roads in need of repair to work with them on the allocation of that money. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 47-14(5): Meeting Access Road Needs

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next question would be to ask the Minister if he is willing to take some money from the highway investment and put it into some of the access roads, if the needs are there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 47-14(5): Meeting Access Road Needs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, in principle, yes, I would be willing to move money from one project to another, if the need is greater. I have made a commitment to the Members that before we do that, we would consult with all of the Members who would be impacted by any kind of movement of money like that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 47-14(5): Meeting Access Road Needs

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad for that answer. I would like to ask the Minister, does this mean the highway strategy that was being followed previously would not be used for future infrastructure? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 47-14(5): Meeting Access Road Needs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, at this point, I intend to continue to use the highway strategy that has been developed earlier. Even within that strategy, there has been occasion where it is needed to move money from one project to another.

We have changed our fiscal projections in terms of money for highways considerably when we decided not to proceed at this point with the trip permit fee. So how we implement that strategy will certainly be different than was contemplated a couple of months ago. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 47-14(5): Meeting Access Road Needs

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the highway strategy, 50 percent of the budget of Transportation was going towards the Ingraham Trail. I would like to ask the Minister if that is still going to be the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 47-14(5): Meeting Access Road Needs

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that 50 percent -- maybe the Member said 15 percent, I am not sure which. Fifteen is probably closer, but in terms of dollar amounts toward improving Highway No. 4 or Ingraham Trail, as it is commonly called, the amount that is going on that road is a fairly small portion of the total allocation for roads this year. In comparison, on Highway No. 3, for example, we are spending

over \$10 million this coming year on improvements to Highway No. 3. We intend to continue with Highway No. 3 as being a priority. That is a highway with heavy traffic and it continues to be our priority now as it was in the highway strategy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 48-14(5): Non-Renewable Resource Development Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I talked about the importance of an economic development agreement for the Northwest Territories. Not so long ago, this government expended a tremendous amount of time, energy and resources into developing a Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy that covered quite a range of different initiatives and issues, and I believe was actually encouraged to do so by the federal government.

Out of the \$200 million plus that we indicated to the federal government that we needed in order to access opportunities for our people, I would like to know how much we have received to date. Thank you.

I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, who has the lead on the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy right now. Thank you.

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

Return to Question 48-14(5): Non-Renewable Resource Development Funding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the question was on the economic development agreement that we have not had since 1996. This government had developed a Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy that asked for about \$250 million from the feds. Yes, we have that strategy. We have been promoting it and raising it with the federal government. To date, I guess it is safe to say that we have received some money for winter road bridges, about \$3.8 million. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 48-14(5): Non-Renewable Resource Development Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is not a very large amount of money. I know that in some of the areas, our government has stepped into that gap, Maximizing Northern Employment, looking for training opportunities, transportation infrastructure. What additionally would this government be prepared to do to address the void created by not having an economic development agreement where people could access financial resources to develop businesses to service the non-renewable resource sector? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 48-14(5): Non-Renewable Resource Development Funding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance indicated in his budget speech a couple of days ago, there is a need to enhance funding and financial resources to businesses in the Northwest Territories, so we have put new monies into different areas within our budget this year to try to help the businesses. That is our way of doing it. We put money into the business development area. We put money into an NWT Development Corporation. That is our way of doing it. As you all know, we have limited resources to do that. When we have surpluses available, we put into those areas to help for this coming year.

In the meantime, we have not given up on the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy. As Ministers, whenever we have the opportunities to meet with our federal counterparts, we raise this issue. As you know, our Premier is travelling on Team Canada at this point and he has access to the Prime Minister. Part of the opportunities that arise during this trip, the Premier is going to raise a lot of issues, one of them being continuing to push this Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy that we have as the strategy for this government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 48-14(5): Non-Renewable Resource Development Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister indicates, this government does not have the adequate resources to meet this need in a way that a Northwest Territories-federal economic development agreement could.

He has referred to the Premier's attendance on a trade mission where he may have the ear of the Prime Minister, but we need to be kept apprised of the tangible actions of this government to address this void.

I agree we do not have adequate resources within this government to do that and that is why we have to keep this on the radar screen of the federal government. What are their plans? What has been done? What other future plans are in the works to secure this agreement for the Northwest Territories again? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 48-14(5): Non-Renewable Resource Development Funding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of concern out there by private businesses and aboriginal organizations. There is a northern coalition of business and aboriginal leaders that has been formed. They are planning to go to Ottawa and lobby on their own behalf and for the people of the North as well.

We are supporting them. We are going to be going up there March 11th, 12th and 13th. That is one lobbying effort from people in the North to try to continue to tell our federal counterparts that we need resources up here to help us develop our infrastructure, to help us get ready for the impending development that is about to happen up here. Our lobbying effort is very good. We have a lot of good information that we want to share with our southern counterparts.

I just want to mention that in December, I had the opportunity to travel to Ottawa and I made a presentation to the Liberal Western Caucus of the Members of Parliament and Senators. In the presentation, I raised the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy, that we need the funds. The advice I received is that there is no pot of dollars, no \$250 million sitting there. We have to try to change our strategy and try to go for smaller chunks of dollars from different departments.

Perhaps that strategy will work. We are doing that and hopefully, if we keep putting the effort on there, we will be able to convince the people in Ottawa to see what we are trying to do here and perhaps give us the necessary resources we need to develop the North. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary to Question 48-14(5): Non-Renewable Resource Development Funding

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of the coalition of leaders and business people who are going to Ottawa. I am very pleased to hear that the Minister is going to take the time and go down there and support them in those efforts. That is what he said.

I would just ask the Minister if he would commit to keep us apprised of those results on a regular basis, so that this very important area does not fall between the cracks or get out of our range of vision.

It is extremely important, I know there are many initiatives the government is undertaking and it is easy for things to go by the wayside, but this is extremely important. Will the Minister commit to keeping this House apprised of the progress?

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

Further Return to Question 48-14(5): Non-Renewable Resource Development Funding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for clarification, the Honourable Joe Handley is the lead on the Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy. He has committed to go down to Ottawa with this coalition. We as Cabinet Members support the efforts and will commit to follow up on this, keep at it and keep you informed in this House. Thank you.

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

Question 49-14(5): Consultation on Adoption Act Amendments

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question at this time will be directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services in response to his Minister's statement today on the Adoption and Family Law Act.

Mr. Speaker, in the previous Assembly, this issue had arisen as well and created some controversy. Mr. Speaker, I want to go at this from an issue I raised yesterday in the area of traditional knowledge and healing, and how some of it is appropriate and how some of it probably is not appropriate.

This is an area where I see there might be some appropriateness in developing legislation that this government would go forward and seek some input from those in the Northwest Territories to see if legislation of this type would indeed be accepted.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health and Social Services is, has he consulted the aboriginal groups of the Northwest Territories with this matter? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 49-14(5): Consultation on Adoption Act Amendments

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in all the newspapers of the Northwest Territories over the last two weeks, there has been a notice from the government that we intend to move on this particular legislation. That has been done, as I indicated, for the last two weeks in all of the newspapers. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 49-14(5): Consultation on Adoption Act Amendments

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unless the aboriginal groups have direct subscriptions and have a letter of invite to comment before this government develops this proposal, that is a rather empty suggestion out there. Has he in fact consulted any groups in the Northwest Territories with this proposed legislation?

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

Further Return to Question 49-14(5): Consultation on Adoption Act Amendments

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the intent of the ad in the paper was to solicit and allow people, give them notice and give them a number and a way where they could contact the department for information and provide us with input. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 49-14(5): Consultation on Adoption Act Amendments

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When those ads went out to residents through the newspapers, was this legislative proposal in fact already developed?

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

Further Return to Question 49-14(5): Consultation on Adoption Act Amendments

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this proposal is ready to be brought forward. I will be giving notice of motion today for the first reading of these particular amendments on Monday. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 49-14(5): Consultation on Adoption Act Amendments

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see the Member has learned some new tactics in moving around the actual question. Was this proposal developed already and put forward when this ad went out to the people? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 49-14(5): Consultation on Adoption Act Amendments

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have had the benefit of watching my friend and colleague Mr. Roland on the ice, in terms of stick-handling, being very quick on his feet. I have tried to make use of that in this House.

Mr. Speaker, very clearly this proposal has been under development for some time and yes, it was done when the ads were put in the paper. Thank you.

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

Question 50-14(5): Commitment to Affordable Housing

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I read with interest an article in the February 6th edition of the Yellowknifer, which indicated that the federal government has committed \$7.5 million this year, which translates to \$45 million over five years towards affordable housing in the Northwest Territories.

This commitment by the federal government was part of their commitment to affordable housing across Canada. Would the Minister please confirm how much of this \$45 million in funding will be spent on providing barrier-free affordable housing to our disabled residents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 50-14(5): Commitment to Affordable Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do not have any specific amounts dedicated to barrier-free units. They will be considered under the existing home ownership and future housing developments. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 50-14(5): Commitment to Affordable Housing

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are currently income thresholds in place for disabled residents who applied to have renovations done to their existing homes. This is very prohibitive.

Would the Minister please inform this House if the income thresholds that are an obstacle to the disabled will be removed as a result of the substantial increase in federal funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 50-14(5): Commitment to Affordable Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at each situation on an individual basis and in the context of the question, we will have to certainly look at that, as that sometimes impacts upon an individual. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 50-14(5): Commitment to Affordable Housing

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will funding be made readily available to help disabled persons adapt their existing homes when they find themselves faced with a sudden and ongoing disability? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 50-14(5): Commitment to Affordable Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we certainly will do that under the seniors and disabled preventative maintenance initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 50-14(5): Commitment to Affordable Housing

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister please indicate what steps his department will be taking to assist disabled persons who want to be able to access an affordable home of their own, given the increase in federal funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 50-14(5): Commitment to Affordable Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I can use an example, we have in the past established barrier free units in several communities, so it varies from community to community, of course. In the context of the question, we will certainly meet with the individuals to see how we can ably assist them. Thank you.

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

Question 51-14(5): Somba Ke Healing Facility

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my statement regarding the status of the Somba Ke healing facility just outside of Detah. Mr. Speaker, in 1991 when CMHC invested about \$3 million in this facility and our government got on board with commitments to use the facility and provide operational funding, it seemed like a good idea.

Mr. Speaker, the question I would like to ask to the Minister for Health and Social Services is what happened between 1991, when this very substantial facility was built, and today, when it is basically struggling for survival? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 51-14(5): Somba Ke Healing Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the decision was made by the Somba Ke board about 1999, the day they were going to change the program they delivered. They basically put their program eggs, if I may use that term, in the basket of federal corrections and moved to become a program that housed and dealt with inmates. Since that time, they have found that the number of inmates they thought were going to be present or available have not met their projections, causing them significant problems in terms of their cash flow.

What that decision also did was that it completely excluded the involvement of any Health and Social Services programs in the facility because it was geared at that point for the use of inmates in a correctional setting, which would make it inappropriate for the Department of Health and Social Services to have an involvement. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 51-14(5): Somba Ke Healing Facility

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the information. In some of my discussions with people involved with the facility, the basis of governance for it and the involvement of the community in the facility really seems to need some help. I wanted to ask whether this government would be prepared to look into participating in efforts to renew the region and the community involvement and interest in the facility. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 51-14(5): Somba Ke Healing Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that from a building point of view, a facility and mortgage point of view, the Housing Corporation is fully engaged and actively involved. In terms of the program side, which the Member mentioned, as a department, we of course are interested to see what is possible. This is a resource that is clearly mortgaged. The mortgage is held by the NWT Housing Corporation. I have been out there. It is a very well set up facility. What we need is, of course, the inclusion of this particular facility back into the planning process. We have to come up with a way to identify whatever possible need may be there, either as a community resource or as a regional resource.

We had discussions yesterday, for example, with my colleague, Mr. Lafferty, about the need for alcohol and drug facilities, what other potentials are there. The message being, Mr. Speaker, that we are interested in working with the board, the community and interested parties to see what is possible and how we would fit that into the budgeting and planning process, given our limited budget. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 51-14(5): Somba Ke Healing Facility

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, the approach that the Minister has outlined is one that I would very much like to get behind. The exposure of our government through the Housing Corporation and the mortgage is substantial, and we should be pursuing avenues to make sure we are not going to be left out on the hook for a facility that just has no further use. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he would commit to going out and having a visit with the people who are running the facility and look for ways to accelerate the long-term planning and stability of this facility. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 51-14(5): Somba Ke Healing Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact, I have already had the opportunity to meet

with Mr. Handley and Mr. Dowdall, the executive director. As the Minister of Health and Social Services, I am and will be receptive to whatever kind of feedback and input I get from the people in Yellowknife, the stakeholders, the user groups, in terms of alternate possible uses for this facility. Of course, I will be working with my colleague, Mr. Allen. I am receptive to that. I already had the opportunity to meet, as I have indicated, with the executive director. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 51-14(5): Somba Ke Healing Facility

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The advantages that the facility has for the whole region is something that could also be looked at. I know Mr. Lafferty, the Member for North Slave, has talked about the need for such a facility. Will the Minister look at a regional basis of support for the Somba Ke facility? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 51-14(5): Somba Ke Healing Facility

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated in this House, we have a number of strategies that are nearing completion, like the Continuing Care Strategy and the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Strategy. We definitely will look at what we have available. We have some bricks and mortar out here that are well set up and that are mortgaged by the government, so it only makes good sense to try to see what particular good use we could put this building to as a government. That will be one of the items we will be looking at. Thank you.

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

Question 52-14(5): Highway Trip Permit Fee

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the Minister of Finance's budget speech. I have to congratulate him on what was a fairly well-balanced budget. I do have some questions arising from his speech that I would like some more clarification on. I note, for instance, that he talked in his budget speech about delaying plans for a highway trip permit fee. I heard him just today, in an answer to Mr. Lafferty, talk about not instituting the highway trip permit fee at this time. Will the Minister tell the House when he plans to bring forward a trip permit fee if it has only been delayed?

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

Return to Question 52-14(5): Highway Trip Permit Fee

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, the Member is correct. In the budget speech, I said we were not bringing forward the trip permit fee at this time. I have made a commitment to the private sector that I would first give them an opportunity to lobby with the federal government for more

return of the money the federal government earns in the North back to be invested in the North.

I am working very closely with the private business and aboriginal leaders coalition to support them in going to Ottawa and getting money. Hopefully if they are successful, we will not ever have to bring back the thought of a trip permit fee or other form of a toll. When would I bring it back? Certainly not before I have exhausted all of the other options and even then, we would have to sit down and talk with the many stakeholders. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 52-14(5): Highway Trip Permit Fee

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister started out by saying that it would depend on the visit planned to Ottawa by the business and aboriginal leaders on March 11th, 12th and 13th. Then he said that there would be other factors that would come into play. Let me be clear. If the answer in Ottawa is no on March 13th, will the Minister be bringing back the legislation?

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

Further Return to Question 52-14(5): Highway Trip Permit Fee

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, no, I do not think it will be quite that easy. If we find that we are just getting no response at all from Ottawa, then of course we have to look at whether we want to continue to tolerate our less than desirable highway and transportation system, and continue to do as much as we can, realizing that it might take us six, seven or eight years to finish it off. Or do we want to bear some pain through some form of a toll, and would it be the same one we had before or would it be something different?

I think there are a lot of options that we have to look at, but first of all, immediately, I said to the coalition that we will support them and certainly give them a fair opportunity to be heard in Ottawa. Hopefully they can be successful. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 52-14(5): Highway Trip Permit Fee

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the questions that Mrs. Groenewegen was posing earlier on the NRRDS strategy and the approach to Ottawa, and how much success we have had that with that approach. What makes the Minister feel more optimism that we are going to see some positive results on the highway strategy approach here on March 12th and 13th?

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

Further Return to Question 52-14(5): Highway Trip Permit Fee

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the business people and aboriginal leaders who are going to Ottawa March 11th-13th are looking at infrastructure generally. They are not zeroing in just on transportation. I think they have a good case to be made. For example, the mining companies have worked out numbers to show the amount of revenue the federal government has earned already, just from the two diamond mines. Diavik in particular has worked out that the federal government already will have earned \$500 million before that mine ever mines one diamond.

I think that the private sector has some good information to take to Ottawa, so I am optimistic that on top of the message we have already sent, and being consistent with our message, that they can influence some of the federal Ministers to at least consider the North. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 52-14(5): Highway Trip Permit Fee

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not think any of us would be politicians if we were not optimistic, and I too am hopeful that we will eventually get the eye of the federal government. I do not know that I am as optimistic as the Minister. Given the large public outcry against the bill when it was last presented, will the Minister commit to making sure that he does not come forward with a similar bill within the next 12 months?

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

Further Return to Question 52-14(5): Highway Trip Permit Fee

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as well as being optimistic to be a politician, you also have to be sensitive to what people are saying, and I will tell you that I am very sensitive to the message that people have sent us with regard to the trip permit fee. I am not going to just bring it back and try to shove it through, if that is what the Member is suggesting might happen. I am not going to do that. I think we have to sit down with all the stakeholders and look at what the options are. Thank you.

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

Question 53-14(5): Monitoring Inland Fisheries

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of RWED. Mr. Speaker, my riding is called Tu Nedhe, and Tu means water or lake. Nedhe means great or very important. As you know, Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, we have a great number of very important lakes. I want to know from the Minister whether his department regularly, or even, monitors the fisheries and habitat of inland lakes in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 53-14(5): Monitoring Inland Fisheries

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has the responsibility to our constituents to monitor our environment, including the water. We have to be aware of what is happening to our rivers and to our lakes. There is a responsibility there, yes. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 53-14(5): Monitoring Inland Fisheries

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us the extent of that responsibility? Is there a policy within the department? Are there guidelines or directions given to the staff to go out and regularly monitor lakes and the fish habitat? Are the water tables going up and down? What is the population of the fish? That kind of information is very sensitive to the management of fisheries and water quality in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 53-14(5): Monitoring Inland Fisheries

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in our department, through the environmental protection services, we have a responsibility there to monitor the environment, including the waters. However, there is a shared jurisdiction with the federal government. The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans have an office here in the North and they have responsibility for the fish. They have the federal legislation to monitor fisheries. It is their responsibility, but we share our concerns with them and we try to work as closely with them as possible in all these areas of concern. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 53-14(5): Monitoring Inland Fisheries

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do understand the joint responsibility between the territorial and federal governments in the area of fisheries and oceans. We all know and have seen many times in the paper how Fisheries and Oceans react when there is development happening on our lands, but given the vast nature of our environment and lands in the Northwest Territories, with thousands and thousands of lakes and the many areas where there is no development -- in those areas, what is the department doing to monitor fish habitat, not just the environment, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return to Question 53-14(5): Monitoring Inland Fisheries

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once you get into fish and their habitat, it is a federal jurisdiction. As the Government of the Northwest Territories, we do not have that jurisdiction. In specific cases, we do work with the federal jurisdiction. We do not have a policy as a government because we do not have that jurisdiction yet. It is a federal responsibility. If the honourable Member has concerns, I would like to know what they are specifically, and see how we could work with the honourable Member and the federal counterparts to deal with these issues. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 53-14(5): Monitoring Inland Fisheries

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My concern here, Mr. Speaker, is the use of snowmobiles versus dog teams. The dog teams require a lot of food and people used to go to the inland lakes to collect this food. My elders and elders across the Territories are starting to say that the population of the fish in these inland lakes is starting to become so high that the food they depend on within their eco-system is not sufficient. As a result, the fish are suffering and we do not know anything about it.

What is the department going to do to know a little bit more of what is going to happen in our inland lakes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 53-14(5): Monitoring Inland Fisheries

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a specific concern that is raised here and we will follow that up and work with the honourable Member, and work with our federal counterparts to pursue this issue. Thank you.

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

Question 54-14(5): Fort McPherson Fire Truck

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen. We talk about the protection of people, property and how basically we have been setting these standards that we are using to determine capital to our communities. My concern, Mr. Speaker, is with the fire truck in Fort McPherson, which was purchased in 1983 and is almost 20 years old.

Mr. Speaker, I have written letters to the Minister, to his department. I have talked to the Minister himself and people within his department on ensuring that this is part of the capital planning process.

I have just received correspondence that an individual was flown up from Winnipeg to do an inspection of the vehicle, in

which the vehicle was not even able to be removed from the fire hall because of the condition that it is in. Again, they sent individuals in this last week and again it has problems in regard to oil pressure. The pump froze up and now they are talking about it is going to cost another \$1,000 to \$7,000 for parts.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Krutko, could you please ask a question?

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, what is the government doing in ensuring that communities infrastructure and assets in those communities are in working order to protect the people and the property in our communities?

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

Return to Question 54-14(5): Fort McPherson Fire Truck

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware and the department is aware of the issue of the fire truck and the condition of the fire truck in Fort McPherson. The department has made it clear to the hamlet, and I believe that we passed this on to the Member, that we would have someone come in and inspect the fire truck and give an estimate on the life left in the fire truck. Originally, the life of the truck was 20 years. However, if the condition was such that it had to be replaced earlier, the department indicated that we would do this.

I am at the present time waiting for a report on the condition of the fire truck and I am prepared to replace the truck if necessary. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 54-14(5): Fort McPherson Fire Truck

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly my point. The individual flew up from Winnipeg to test the vehicle a month ago. They were told that the vehicle should be parked because it is not in working condition. Again, last week, a group of individuals from Public Works and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs in Inuvik went to Fort McPherson and tried to do additional tests, in which the pump froze on the vehicle. They are having problems which identified it needed a whole bunch of parts. Does that tell you that there is something wrong with the vehicle? When will the Minister replace this vehicle?

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

Further Return to Question 54-14(5): Fort McPherson Fire Truck

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my earlier response, if I get a report that the truck is no longer serviceable and cannot be fixed, we will replace the vehicle immediately.

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

Supplementary to Question 54-14(5): Fort McPherson Fire Truck

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people's lives are at risk here with having a vehicle that does not even run. I would like to ask the Minister, do you have a list or inventory of the life span of these vehicles? What is the condition of all fire trucks in the Northwest Territories? Do we have other vehicles in the Northwest Territories that are exceeding 20 years?

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

Further Return to Question 54-14(5): Fort McPherson Fire Truck

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I believe that the department does have a list of all the vehicles, fire vehicles in the communities and a record of how old these vehicles are and when they plan to replace them.

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

Supplementary to Question 54-14(5): Fort McPherson Fire Truck

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister get back to the community of Fort McPherson and myself with a response as soon as possible? I believe this is urgent and people's lives are at risk. Can the Minister make a commitment to get back as soon as possible on this issue?

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

Further Return to Question 54-14(5): Fort McPherson Fire Truck

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have the department immediately look into this because I am concerned about it. If the vehicle is not serviceable, what is the community using for a standby fire truck? I will immediately look into this. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period has ended. Item 7, written questions.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question 1-14(5): Personnel Policies for Excluded Employees (Ruled Out of Order)

I want to inform the House that during the routine proceedings yesterday, the Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell, presented a written question, which is contained on page 160 of the unedited Hansard.

I have reviewed the content and found that there is no question contained in the wording presented by Mr. Bell. Therefore, I rule Written Question 1-14(5) out of order as not being presented in its proper form. The Member is free, however, to submit a question at the appropriate time.

Thank you. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address. Item 10, replies to the budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 2-14(5): Letter to Premier Regarding Personnel Policies for Excluded Employees

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a copy of the letter I sent to Premier Kakfwi regarding personnel policies for excluded employees. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 2-14(5): Setting of Sitting Hours by Speaker

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 25, 2002, I will move the following motion; I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting hours that the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Minister for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 16: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR THE FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and Family Law Act

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I give notice that on Monday, February 25, 2002, I will move that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and Family Law Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Mr. Miltenberger. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 18: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 4: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 4 has had first reading.

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Allen.

ITEM 19: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 1: Human Rights Act

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 1, Human Rights Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill would replace the Fair Practices Act and reform human rights legislation in the Northwest Territories.

The bill would expand the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination, establish an independent Human Rights Commission and put in place modern investigative and adjudicative processes for dealing with complaints. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 1 has had second reading. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee.

Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

Bill 3: An Act to Amend the Public Service Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends Schedule A of the Public Service Act to add Commission scolaire francophone du division as a portion of the public service, and to delete the reference to the president of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 3 has had second reading. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee.

Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters; Bill 2, Committee Reports 1-14(5), 2-14(5) and 3-14(5), with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

ITEM 20: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will call committee of the whole to order to review Bill 2 and Committee Reports 1-14(5), 2-14(5) and 3-14(5). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to recommend the committee continue our consideration of Bill 2 and Committee Reports 1-14(5), 2-14(5) and 3-14(5) concurrently. Specifically, deal with the consideration of the Department of Health and Social Services budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. I call for a short break and then we will come back and carry on. Thank you.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I call the committee back to order. Would the Minister please introduce his witnesses?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mark Cleveland, deputy minister of Health and Social Services; Warren St. Germaine, manager of financial management services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments on the budget? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the action plan, at some point, there was consideration given to the concept of the efficiency of centralizing some functions within the Department of Health and Social Services. The commitment to that is that when thinking about where services could be centralized, where functions could be centralized or where there could be areas of specialty within the system, that other communities could be looked at and considered in that light and that those kinds of consolidations or coordination would not necessarily have to take place at a headquarters type setting.

I was wondering if the Minister has had a chance to give any further thought to that concept and might highlight any areas that would be areas of consideration for such a consolidation or centralization? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is a concept that we are still interested in and we are specifically looking at that through collaborative service networks. We have three implementation process people working on trying to identify how that could be done and where. I share the Member's interests in anything that could be viably located outside Yellowknife and we would be looking at trying to do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That particular exercise of looking at those sorts of options, where in terms of the overall implementation of the action plan, might that fall in terms of being a priority, or might make sense to begin to look at that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Before I go to Mr. Miltenberger, Canada has scored and is leading one to zero. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the current emphasis has been placed on developing the implementation plans for all the actions outlined in the action plan. Some have due dates that are sooner than others, but we are looking at trying to conclude and get the implementation plans finalized so that we can start moving. The issue of collaborative service networks ties into a number of other issues like the service delivery model and such. It is there on the table with the rest, and we want to start moving on

that with our various tasked teams as soon as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the higher -- not priority, but things that can be accomplished more quickly in terms of implementation, I hope the Minister will keep a watchful eye so that any of those types of decisions or activities would not pre-empt or preclude future consideration. Sometimes when a plan gets put in place, it eliminates options that might flow out of that. I want to make sure that the Minister keeps his eye on that concept of ensuring that in the process of wanting to achieve system-wide integration and a collaborative approach, we do not make decisions that will hinder those opportunities in the future.

When we talk about centres of excellence, some of the areas that have come up are areas such as mental health, palliative care, seniors care, rehabilitation, areas like this. Has there been any preliminary brainstorming within the department or within the task teams as to where a more focused approach to those types of things might appropriately be placed? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member raises some good points. We are looking at those kinds of issues through the Continuing Care Strategy as well as the Alcohol and Drug and Mental Health and Family Violence Strategy. We want to look at where our services are best located. We have what was called a reprofiling exercise of existing facilities to make sure they are used to their best capacity. We have, as I have indicated in the House, a number of requests across the Northwest Territories for enhanced program delivery in the area of alcohol and drugs, in your riding, Mr. Chairman, up the valley, there are three. There is Yellowknife with the Dene Nation motion, so we are looking at a whole number of areas in addition to whatever may come out of the work of the task committee in terms of more specific program areas and not just facilities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In conjunction with that work, in terms of looking at various centres of excellence for services in the Northwest Territories, I hope that we are also considering the repatriation of programs and services from southern institutions. I still think there is an opportunity when you look at the quantity of referrals for certain things, such as rehab work for injured workers, things like that, there still is opportunity in the North for those. That is something else that I do not want to see lose sight of because it is -- first and foremost, it provides a more effective service for the client and then there are a whole lot of other issues around economy, such as employment and access to the patient's family and issues like that.

I think in terms of opening comments, that is all I have for right now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the issue of repatriation is one that both the

Member and I have had involvement in our constituencies, in terms of patients and clients down south. There is clearly an agreement that is something that we should look at, but we have to look at those on, as the Member knows, an individual basis, given the specific needs of the client or patient involved. We have had some successes but we have had some situations that have not been quite as effective as we had planned, but it is something given, as the Member indicated, the number of -- the use of southern placements. That is a concern.

In addition, the concept of rehabilitative services, especially as they pertain to the WCB and organizations such as that, makes very good sense. I know I have at different times raised it unsuccessfully in this Assembly with the government. It is something I think we have to press for. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments? Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to make comments on a couple of different areas. First, regarding the issue of our seniors. In the communities in my riding, especially the larger one, Fort Providence, we have a seniors home. It is a level one and has been for many years. I think it was constructed in 1980. It is run by the local housing authority. We have been looking for many years now and discussing with the Department of Health, for I think upwards of ten years, of how to work with this department. It has never really come to a formal level of discussion but it has come up in many community meetings. We have a concern regarding having to send our seniors to a different community when they reach a point where they need care. If they do not have family that can really take care of them, they have to be sent to Hay River or Fort Simpson. It is usually Hay River. Has Mr. Miltenberger looked at ways to incorporate and bring into the system new -- I should not say new, but to upgrade facilities so that we can look at keeping our seniors at home? Look at going to a level two facility? Up until now, it has been really an uphill battle. It seems like it has been falling on deaf ears, that we would like our facility to go to a higher level so we can keep our seniors in our communities longer. That would be my first question, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are in fact working on that particular initiative as we speak, in terms of bringing it to conclusion. I am referring to the Continuing Care Strategy, which looks at home care services and support services in the community, as well as what kind of facility services may be required. They are doing assessments, I understand, in the communities. We are aware of the concern raised by the Member, in Fort Providence specifically. When we put the strategy on the table, we want to be able to identify very clearly how we intend to respond to those particular kinds of initiatives and how we are going to move ahead in a very specific way.

His communities are there as well. My community, all the larger communities that have facilities, are they adequately located in terms of the service delivery spectrum? If we are going to look at the demographics and the demands, how do we anticipate where we should go? So yes, we are looking at that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I would also ask the Minister another question regarding seniors. The Minister kind of touched on this issue the other day when I asked him in oral questions about seniors and reviewing the policy regarding seniors. My concern was that a lot of these policies have been in place since 1989. The caps on different spending are outdated. For example, the seniors' dental health plan is capped at \$1,000 a year. That seems to be fairly low. Just looking from that aspect, I thought it would be in order that this policy be reviewed. The Minister has indicated that he has been looking at it. If he can give us a little more detail as to when this review is going to start, how long it is going to take, when can we expect to see the completion of the review and the recommendations?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, initially the intent was we put out our request for proposals to do the review of supplementary health programs that the Member has referenced. There were no takers on the RFP. So what we have done now is we are moving to do it internally. We have developed the terms of reference and we are pulling together the people to start work on the review. We will be coming to committee here sometime in the next couple of weeks to do a full briefing, for sure the terms of reference. We want to look at the whole area of supplementary health benefits, and for some of the reasons the Member indicated, there have been a lot of issues and concerns raised over the years in terms of the adequacy of the funding that is there, the policies that are there. Are they up to date and are they still relevant? So we are going to move ahead on that.

The fact that we have no takers on the RFP has put us back a few weeks, but we want to come at the earliest opportunity. I just talked to the chairman of Social Programs this morning about setting up a meeting sometime in early March so we can go over that whole process with the committee. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One final question regarding seniors, and it is a concern that has been voiced to me in the community a number of times. I know that the Minister is not directly involved, but as it is going to have a direct bearing on seniors in our facilities, I wanted to ask him if he has done any type of work regarding looking at the harmonization program. Many of the seniors have indicated that there are people out there that have social problems with alcohol who would probably not be in a position or would not be willing to pay the costs out of their pension cheques.

Given that we have just seen a number of people on the eviction list in Fort Providence in the last while, we may be seeing the same thing for seniors. I think the Minister of Health should be looking at how and if maybe there should be an exemption for people that are in the level one and level two care facilities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to reassure my colleague that discussions and concerns raised about the harmonization program do not only happen within the purview of this House. I as well have had the issue raised from my constituency, and there has been discussion between myself and Ministers Allen

and Ootes, and within Cabinet in general, about the issues and concerns. I think it is really clear from the position being put forward by Minister Allen that we want to make sure that how this program rolls out and how it is implemented, that it does the job required and that we do the proper consultation and make sure the pieces are in place so we minimize or get rid of any kind of negative impact because we have not done the process effectively. Yes, I am keeping a very close eye and involvement on that initiative. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: I also wanted to ask a question regarding medical travel. I believe that the policy currently states that an escort be provided for different reasons to people that are travelling south or travelling to the larger centres for medical treatment or evaluation. There is only provision for one person to travel with the person that is going for the health visit. What has happened on a number of occasions is that the person goes with an escort outside the immediate family for varying reasons and end up in a southern institution to find out that they have a terminal illness and may not have long to live.

Given that our communities are very low-income communities, usually there is no way for any of the family members to go and make their last visits or spend time with the person that is very sick. I am wondering if the Minister would consider looking at one-time assistance for people that are really in a dire situation on compassionate grounds. From my standpoint as a mayor and a resident of a small community, it is very difficult when people are in a situation where their mother, father, daughter or somebody is in hospital in Edmonton and they find out that they are dying and they cannot visit them because they do not have the resources, and the family cannot put together the funding. Sometimes people pass away without having visits. I would like to know if the Minister would consider some kind of assistance, be it one-time or partial?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the way the medical travel policy is currently structured, there is no compassionate travel allowance in there. However, as we just discussed a few minutes ago, we are doing a review for a number of reasons, and the medical travel policy is covered under that particular program area. It would be covered under the review. I am prepared to make sure that is considered as well, and I would anticipate that when we brief the committee and when we get feedback from the MLAs, we will get a very clear sense of what are some of the key priority areas that need revisiting in this particular very important program area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would echo very strongly the sentiments and requests proposed by my honourable colleague, Mr. McLeod, on compassionate travel. I too am always approached by members of families who are terminally ill in the south and unfortunately, much too often our medical system in the Northwest Territories does not detect the severity of illnesses until they are seen in the south by southern physicians.

An example is Dorothy Mandeville, who had to move to Edmonton to address her medical needs. In that specific case, the doctors gave the patient two days to a week to live, shortly after Christmas when the families had expended their financial resources on Christmas presents and so on. It is imperative that as a government, we should be able to help families in that situation. Again, I echo Mr. McLeod's sentiments very strongly as the representative for Tu Nedhe.

I want to ask the Minister if he could give me details on the health boards in my riding, both Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution. I would like to know what has happened with them. Will the boards still be in the communities and if so, under what authority? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the communities of Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution are working with the department and the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board as we speak. There are working groups that have been struck after agreement of the political leadership in both communities to look at the issue of having both those community boards come in under the Yellowknife board as an interim service arrangement until the longer term arrangement with the Akaitcho leadership in terms of the motion and interest expressed in an Akaitcho territory health board or health and education board gets a chance to be examined.

In fact, there are people in the communities right now meeting today, I believe. I understand the meetings are going quite well. There is a lot of good work being done in terms of service levels and agreements in terms of how things will work. The plan is that both Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution, if the community governments agree or direct, will continue to have a health board at the community level, or a committee, however it is structured. They will oversee services at the community level, but the funding will flow through the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board on an interim basis.

Both communities will each have a seat on the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board and representation on the JLC will be through the chair of the Health and Social Services Board for Yellowknife.

We will ensure that arrangements are made to start with a clean slate in terms of outstanding issues that are there in both communities in terms of funding issues, deficits and other liabilities that we are trying to put to rest before we make these changes. We are also looking at some enhancements that can be provided by the benefit of being tied in with a larger board that has resources that are not currently available to Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution in terms of respite services and training and relief pools of skilled professionals.

There is a lot of work being done. We are still working for the date of conclusion signed off by the end of March, first of April. The information that I have from the people doing the work is that they are confident that the community and the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board and the department will reach a satisfactory arrangement in that time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Further to that line of questioning, the Minister is not too set on if it is a board or committee. I guess that is going to be determined by the work done today. What is the Minister and his department envisioning when it comes to the responsibility of the community body, whether it is a board or committee? If I remember correctly, discussing this issue with the community leadership in a public environment, they did not want a committee. They wanted a board with a lot of say in how programs and services are to be delivered to the community, specifically, giving special consideration to alternative medicines, alternative social services delivery. What is the position of those concerns and the desire of the community from the Minister and the department? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, those issues are very important and were clearly identified in the terms of reference that were jointly drafted by the working groups in both communities.

If I may give a quick example of one of the issues being dealt with in Fort Resolution, the current board was set up under the Societies Act, which has a number of shortcomings to it. I understand the working group is looking at a different arrangement flowing out of the tri-council. It may give it greater flexibility to do the work that is necessary.

We are going through the same process in Lutselk'e. The understanding is that the working group is going to pull together a package to provide the maximum amount of community involvement possible. That work that is done will be initialled off by the working group, then it will be going to the political leadership at the community level as well as myself and Mr. Nitah to review and hopefully sign off, if there is consensus that it meets the needs and it is agreeable to the parties involved. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to seeing the finished product for a thorough review. I would be interested in seeing what kind of financial control and decision-making they have at the community level because far too often, when these agreements are made, the financial control is clipped at the territorial level or the regional level and most of the responsibilities get handed over without the ability to make financial decisions accordingly. I look forward to seeing the final product and reviewing it.

I would like to ask the Minister, why was income support taken out of the social services envelope and put in with Education, Culture and Employment?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that decision goes back to, I believe, almost 1995. My recollection is that there was a general sense that if we wanted to get away from the concept of welfare and move towards encouraging and supporting people to look for productive choices in terms of either school or work, that it would be better placed in a department that has the appropriate mandate and name -- Education, Culture and Employment. A piece was left behind to deal with special needs and some other very special, specific areas. The move

was towards income support in Education, Culture and Employment, where the focus was on what was termed productive choices, to deal with the large segment of users of that program to help and assist them with the services, the money and the career counselling to get an education and possibly go back to work, to support them when they were between jobs and to look to making those kinds of improvements in their lives. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, unfortunately, that does not seem to be working. Our graduation levels are still low. If they are graduating, I am not sure they are graduating with a grade 12 education as they are told they are. We see far too often when students leave the smaller communities and move to regional centres, or even out of province to attend schools, they have to be demoted, sometimes up to four grades, to realize their education level.

Our unemployment rate at the community level in some places is as high as 75 percent. By taking the income support out of social services and saying that it is not a social services program, I think the government is not looking at the reality of the situation. Maybe it is time for a review of where that responsibility should lie. It is a social issue. Let us deal with it as a social issue and maybe we will get some results and not try to mask it under employment and income support.

If there is no income, how can you have support? I will ask the Minister, will he consider or look into the matter of putting the Income Support Program where it should be, in the appropriate place? It is definitely not working within the Education, Culture and Employment portfolio. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is a program within the departmental mandate of Education, Culture and Employment. It does have an impact and a tie with Health and Social Services in dealing with areas like the disabled and such.

I do agree with the Member that as we look at accountability frameworks as a government, programs that entail a shift of this magnitude that have run for six years would probably benefit from being looked at to see if the program, the way it was structured and instituted, if it met all the needs.

For example, in Health and Social Services, I know there are concerns from the disabled that there is a revision required. Are there concerns and revisions in other areas? That is very possible. I am sure when you have your discussions with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment you can make your case with him.

I know that as the Minister for the Disabled, I am making a case with him in the area of the disabled for sure. We should be taking a look to see if there are other areas, I know the Minister is reasonable and always looking to improve his programs. He would be very accepting to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Canada is now leading two to one. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question to the Minister is regarding the public inquiry that was

held in Inuvik June 12th to the 14th, 2001, on the death of Effie Blake. This individual died of tuberculosis. She went to the hospital over a period of weeks with no diagnosis or no way of pinpointing her contracting tuberculosis until she came here to Yellowknife. She passed away a week later.

Mr. Chairman, there was a public inquiry that was held in Inuvik. Out of that inquiry, they recommended some 26 recommendations. Besides that, there was also a report issued by the chief coroner, which made some 13 recommendations. Every one of those recommendations was directed to the Department of Health and Social Services and also the Inuvik Regional Health Board.

I would like to ask the Minister, have they implemented those recommendations? What has happened since this public inquiry took place?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in addition to the public inquiry and the coroner's report, there was also an internal review done by the department. Based on that, there have been significant changes in terms of how we deal with the issue of tuberculosis. I believe there is about \$320,000 in the budget this year to enhance the control and to help fill in the gaps in terms of policy and training in terms of dealing with tuberculosis, that all the communities and nurses and medical staff have been brought up to speed in terms of how to deal with this issue, in terms of diagnosis and response. I know, just in my own community, for example, there were a couple of cases identified and there was a very aggressive response. I understand that every time it does happen, Health and Social Services staff respond according to the protocols in a very aggressive way with medication and tracking down people who may have been influenced and infected. We have learned a hard lesson and we are making sure and taking the steps to make sure that we deliver and provide the service in a much more effective way. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is good to see that you are moving on this, but for the family, it is too little, too late. What have you done to assist the family in any way for the loss of their mother, a sister and also a grandmother? Has the department done anything to assist the family, knowing that this should have been prevented? Do you take the responsibility for the loss of this life?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has been and was a tragic event, out of which the one good thing is that some good things have come. I recognize that there is an irreplaceable loss to the family, and for that, like all of our colleagues here, I am very regretful that happened. If the Member is asking me a question of legal liability, I am not in a position to answer that, the way his question was framed. I would not be able to give a definitive response. I know we are taking steps to ensure that this thing does not happen again. It is a system. In terms of the Member's question, that is about the best I can give him at this point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell me and the House, is there any legal action being taken at this time against the department by the family?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not aware of any legal action, if there is any underway. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the recommendations given to the department and the coordination and management of the responsibilities and authority between Health and Social Services and the regional health boards, you talk about coordination and evaluation of information. It seems like there is a very poor line of communication there. What are you doing to improve the communication between your department and the regional health boards?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of things that we are doing. I will start at the very top. By bringing the board chairs to the table with myself and the deputy to provide oversight and shared leadership through the Joint Leadership Council, we are bringing what was at one time a somewhat disconnected piece of the organization together, the critical decision-making piece, to provide that function. We have also set up the joint senior management committee, which is comprised of all of the board CEOs and the senior management ADMs and DMs, and some of the key directors of the department to look at dealing with issues flowing from the action plan, but also issues involved with just the day-to-day running of the system.

We are working very closely and collaboratively on a number of issues across the board, like recruitment and retention. We want to better rationalize how we deal with things like TB. You will notice as we get through the budget, we are investing a significant amount of money in information systems, so we have the same systems and we are talking the same information language, with PeopleSoft, with financial systems.

This whole action plan and all of the work we are doing is geared towards improving that relationship and communication; above all, the program delivery to the people in the communities we serve, and make those changes that are necessary to do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Also, one of the recommendations talks about community education and the whole area of the TB program planning, and also ensuring there is a buy-in by the regional health boards to ensure that it is being carried out. I would like to know exactly what has the department done to ensure they are carrying out that responsibility?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of things that have been done, in addition to ensuring there is a standard set of protocols and that staff, new and seasoned staff, are aware of what to do. There is staff

orientation that has been built in. There have been visits to communities to in fact do that. Communicable disease consultants have met with staff at boards, and community TB profiles have been completed on 17 of 28 communities in the NWT.

As I indicated earlier, there is a very aggressive protocol in place once a person has been identified with tuberculosis to determine the extent and the degree and the contacts, and to make sure that we very quickly bring all the people possibly affected in and give them appropriate remediation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the problems that I see is the lack of having doctors and medical professionals in our communities. They come into our communities once a month. They are in for a day or so and they are gone again. Has the department looked at increasing the number of visits by doctors and medical professionals to our communities, say twice a month instead of just coming in once a month?

One of the concerns was that they should maybe have the ability for the clinics to be open later into the evening, or having the doctors there so people who are employed in the community have an opportunity to see these doctors and do not have to be put on a waiting list.

Is there a possibility of increasing the number of doctor visits to our communities, so we do not have a situation such as Ms. Blake, where she went to the health centre in February and was not medevaced to Inuvik until April, almost two months later?

What are you doing to increase the medical services to our communities regarding this type of situation, so that we can get better services in our communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, once again we are doing a number of things, in addition to the changes I just talked about, that will hopefully improve the overall effectiveness of the system. Recruitment and retention of professionals, doctors and nurses, has been identified as the number one priority. We are once again aggressively trying to make sure that we staff all of the vacant positions, the nurses and doctors. We are, through negotiations with the federal government, with NIHB, for example, looking at trying to get some of the benefits that they provide revisited, since there has not been an increase in dental rates for some time.

We are also initiating this process that I discussed with Mr. McLeod, the supplementary health program review, to take a look at those areas that have policies and procedures in place that are, as Mr. McLeod indicated, old and possibly no longer relevant, or as relevant as they could be or out of date or have not kept up in terms of cost.

We are aware that there are areas where we have to try to improve things and we know that in some cases, we have to try to improve services to the communities with doctors. Those are some of the things we are doing to try to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. General comments? Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make a couple of comments again. The first one being along the lines of compassionate travel. I think a possible area that the Minister could look at during his review is providing translators. Too many times we see an elderly couple or elderly person who wants his wife to come with him because he knows it may be his last trip. However, his wife cannot travel with him because she cannot speak English.

It may be a solution to have an additional position or additional funding arrangement for translators on top of an escort. However, I am glad to see that there will be a review.

I also think that, and this was raised to me yesterday, that the per kilometre compensation for persons using their vehicles should be reviewed. It is not up to par, as I understand, to what government travel is and certainly not comparable when they use taxis or charter aircraft. That is another area I am hoping we will see as part of the review.

A couple of other things on a different note. Over the holidays, I was very concerned when some members of my communities who were foster parents brought to my attention that a lot of the children who were in foster care were being returned home to their families, be it their parents or their grandparents, and that there was a possibility that social workers would be going on Christmas holidays. I think during the Christmas holidays is really a high risk. Certainly by all standards it is a troubled time for social programs, and to have children returned home and have no one in the community monitoring the program is a great concern.

We managed to get the situation rectified and there were workers in the community, but is there a policy or any kind of mechanism that we could ensure that the social workers are available during the holidays?

I do not want to go as far as to say that we should declare them an essential service, but I feel that because they are dealing with a lot of children and children who are in a foster care situation, that we have to have some kind of supervision, especially when there are community events or holidays.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is an issue that I was not aware of. Very clearly, the intent is not to deny the community service during any time of the year, recognizing that staff have to go on holidays and those kinds of things. We will make a note. I am going to check on this.

Very clearly, the intent would be to make sure there is adequate fallback, that if staff are not there, there are systems in place so that supervision can be provided. If there are issues or problems of concern, that there are processes in place that people are aware of so that they can be dealt with.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. It is good to hear. Another issue I wish to bring attention to is an issue that I have raised before and I believe that Mrs. Groenewegen has raised it, the situation

with the alcohol and drug workers. Training for them, certification for them is an issue. I have raised it a number of times in this House regarding their compensation and wages. I have talked to a number of people over the last couple of years who are alcohol and drug workers and have indicated to me that they have not seen a change in their funding or their wages in over ten years.

We are very fortunate, I believe, on the Hay River Reserve and in Fort Smith and other communities, that we have people who are dedicated enough to stay in those positions, more so to try to make change than for the money. I do not think that it is fair that we leave them out there and do not compensate them adequately.

A lot of these people have upgraded themselves to a point where they are very well trained and very experienced, yet we do not recognize that. I would like to ask the Minister if he would take the time to review the situation regarding the alcohol and drug workers in the communities. We have to realize also that we only have one facility, so these people have additional responsibility placed on them. Many times they are the only ones in the community dealing with the problems resulting from alcohol and drugs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first I would like to acknowledge to the Member that community alcohol and drug workers do provide an important service and the amount of pay they get is definitely not commensurate with other government positions. The ones that I know in my community are extremely dedicated and have been there for a long time.

Since becoming Minister, I have developed an extensive to-do list. One of the items on that list is the issue of NGOs and the funding that they are paid and how staff are remunerated. I just acknowledge to the Member that this is something that I intend to look at. We are doing a number of action items that relate to this. There is going to be a significant dollar figure attached to this as we go to full parity. In the very least, we would like to recognize that it has been some time since there have been any increases and we have to make sure that we recognize the value of the work that these folks provide. Yes, it is on my list.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one final area that I wanted to talk about and that is regarding the doctor visits and the concern arising from that, the limited amount of visits. I know for a fact, it was raised to me a number of times over the summer, in the community of Fort Providence, we had not seen a doctor in over three months, as a result of the lack of doctors being available in other regional centres, mainly Hay River.

The concerns that were brought up to me and some of the recommendations that they suggested I bring up here, should that happen, given the long periods when we do not have anyone coming into the community, especially with the seniors, if there was any way we could look at providing them with medical travel to go to other institutions. It was pointed out that possibly southern institutions. It is not a good situation to be ill with any kind of disease or health problem and then have to sit there and wait and wait and not really know when the problem

or the situation will be rectified and we will see a doctor in our communities.

I think that it was a fairly good comment that was made and I wish to bring it to the Minister's attention. I brought it up in the House and he has indicated that he is willing to talk about it, but I would like to hear if there is a solution, if there is another way we can deal with the people in the communities who are not well, while there is no doctor who lives in the community on a regular basis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is a difficult situation and a difficult issue. I, as a Member, indicated that it is tied to the inability to get, in many cases, permanent doctors in the communities. I know there is an arrangement between Hay River and Providence. There is the capacity now for nurses to send people out of the community. If the Member is suggesting other than a medical emergency but just for check-ups or to do follow-ups because there is no doctor, I am not sure what the process would be for that. I am interested to try to come up with a way to make sure that there are no big holes in our safety net, and that people do not go without adequate medical attention. We are looking at all of these areas. I have met with the Deh Cho board and I have met with the Hay River board, as I met with all of the other boards as we look at how do we get the doctors in there. How do we make sure we are staffed up?

As far as I am aware, if there was adequate staffing in Hay River, they would be able to honour their commitments. They have been working at it. I think they have had some success.

What the fallback should be is not clear to me, but it is something that I am prepared to have the folks doing this review look at to see what is an acceptable and affordable fallback, so there is no gap and people do not go untreated. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. The latest hockey newsflash, the score is four to one for Canada. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to echo a few of my colleagues with the doctor's visits, but on the same issue here, I would like to ask the Minister what criteria or what standards do they use to station doctors in the communities? When they do their recruitment, do they ask the doctors if they would like to be in a smaller community or a larger centre? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Recruitment and retention is one area that we are actively working together to better coordinate and collaborate, so that we have a common approach to the recruiting. Right now, what has happened in many cases is that health boards have recruited, or attempted to recruit on their own, often with mixed success, sometimes with no success.

We are attempting and we are bringing all the players to the table, the department, the health boards, and we are coming up with a review of that process, so we do have a standard approach, standard criteria that we are not competing down

south with each other. We are going to work out the arrangement so that the doctors get to where they are needed. Some doctors are specialists and practice in places like Yellowknife where specialists reside. Trying to find general practitioners or doctors who will practice in the other communities is part of that process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The general practice right now is the nurses diagnose the patients and then, only if they run out of Tylenol or Halls, they send the patient to Yellowknife to get a second opinion. In my communities, and a lot of the smaller communities, there is a trend there. If you are diagnosed with cancer, it is too late. You might as well get ready for death and that is the way it is in the smaller communities.

Just for information, there are a few constituents of mine out there who have been diagnosed with cancer. However, they took it on their own to come to Yellowknife and get diagnosed over here and have gone through the treatments and are having a healthy life.

I am just wondering if we are failing in areas where nurses are doing the diagnosis and are scared to refer patients to Yellowknife, or is it maybe just their budget? Are they scared that they do not have enough money to send people to Yellowknife? Can the Minister just clarify some of those? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not think either of the scenarios would be the ones that I would be inclined to agree with. If there is a requirement to medevac somebody, it is done. It is not an issue where once you finish spending a certain amount of your budget, you cannot medevac anymore.

The issue of diagnosis is always one that requires skill and has to be done in a timely way. If it is not done and there are problems, then there are mechanisms to deal with that.

As a matter of course, I would say that the nurses in the communities provide a high level of service. Without that service, we would, as communities, be in very dire straits. We are going to work through nurse practitioner legislation to try to improve those skills and give added technology and equipment through telehealth to give better diagnostic capabilities to the small communities and nursing stations, so that they can connect into professionals, either in Yellowknife or in other communities or down south. We are very sensitive to the issue raised by Mr. Lafferty and we know it is not a perfect system. We are trying to do all the things we can to make it the best we possibly can. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another issue is the drug and alcohol treatment, in my riding, anyway. I have said a number of times in the House that the Dogrib have taken the initiative. They have put half a million dollars into training counsellors and they do not have the facility to work in. On one hand, we are talking about decentralizing and supporting the small communities, but then I have to compete with Yellowknife because they have facilities that have failed on two or three

occasions and are not working. Then I have to compete with them to get a facility in my riding because they have existing facilities.

As you know, the way the capital acquisition program goes, it is for the protection of assets. I am just wondering if the government put money into some of the areas in Yellowknife, they are probably going to support those programs, even if they fail and there is something that is positive in the other regions. It seems to me that a lot of times, larger centres get more of the funding and smaller communities are being left out. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to assure my colleague that one of the underpinnings of how we do business is the issue of equity and balance. We want to make sure that the services are where they are needed. We have committed to recognizing the socio-economic impact of major resource development to work with communities on a project-by-project basis.

In terms of the alcohol and drugs, I know there was a significant push in the early 90s for the government to build facilities and have residential alcohol and drug treatment centres. By the mid 1990s, there was a move away from that, and now we are left with one facility in Hay River, which has 30 beds, which puts us at about four times the national average in terms of bed per thousand.

The issue to me is what kind of service are we providing? Is it more of a program issue than necessarily building and investing a lot of money in bricks and mortar? It is a discussion I am prepared to have with the communities and the regions.

I also want to make the case that I think it is time as a government, as a department, that we have to look at linking the pots of money that we have, like addictions and wellness, and blurring those lines, because we are dealing with the same people in very similar program areas, but we tend to parcel out the money separately. What is the most effective way to deal with addictions in a community? Is it just automatically building a facility? I am not convinced of that.

I am prepared to work with the Member and with his region to look at the money we are spending and if we are going to go ahead, because his area is one of the impacted ones with all the resource development. How do we better address those impacts? They are not just alcohol and drugs. There are suicides, there is abuse, there are all these issues.

We are prepared to work with him and his region to come up with a plan that will link a lot of these areas and not just attempt to deal with them as separate issues. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. General comments? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister raises a good point, but you have to look at the failures and successes when you weigh all these things in the programs. If the programs do not work in some of these areas, then you should not support them any longer. Maybe those 30 beds could be used for some other program. I see in the newspaper that Yellowknife is out of apartments and other areas like that. Maybe they could use them for that. Let us put the programs where there are successes.

The other one I want to add to that is to support my colleagues when they talk about medical travel. There was one occasion last week where one of my constituents had to be medevaced to Edmonton on a charter. On that charter, there were some extra seats, but relatives were not allowed to go with him. If we are paying for those seats there, and they want to go one way, I think the department should have been able to allow them to go one way.

Also, when they get over there, I understand that Larga House has condominiums where they only charge one person for the night and it does not matter how many people stay there. They only charge for the one person they keep there. I think maybe we should look at everything on medical travel and maybe even for keeping families there for compassionate reasons. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have noted the concerns on medical travel and as the Member indicated, he is reinforcing the concerns already raised by his colleagues. We thank him for his comments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): General comments? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my question to the Minister is in the area of assisting communities to develop capacity, especially in the areas that a couple of my colleagues have touched on. In small communities, we have definitely seen a decline in programs and services. Also, because of the dependency on regional centres, Yellowknife and Inuvik, we in the communities have seen a major decline with regard to the whole area of capacity in our communities and the imbalance between the health professionals in our communities and elsewhere.

I am talking about the areas of mental health, looking at social workers. We always seem to have a problem with social workers. Simply to try to keep professionals in our communities and ensuring that we have a full slate of nurses and other people to work within the health and social services area is a real problem, trying to deal with retention and ensuring that we have the people there.

One of the other concerns is the whole imbalance between what we are paying people to work in the different mental health areas, social workers and also alcohol and drugs. We seem to have a real problem of maintaining staff for a long period of time. We seem to have a high turnover in those different areas. I would like to ask the Minister what he is doing to improve the capacity of our health professionals in our communities. I mentioned yesterday the problem we seem to run into every spring and summer, especially in Aklavik, the Delta communities and the Beaufort communities.

I would like to ask the Minister what he is doing to ensure that the communities have the capacity, so when we do have a lack of health professionals such as nurses, we have a backup system there to ensure that the other people in the different areas are able to either fill in or ensure that we have people who are there for the long term and we do not continue to see the problems we have seen over the last number of years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there has been significant investment in developing the training programs for social workers and nurses. There is somewhere in the neighbourhood, I believe, of 70-some nurses currently in training. We are expecting a significant number to graduate this year. As well, we have a Northern Social Worker Program in Aurora College. We also encourage and have special programs for those students and folks that want to go to medical school to try to support them in a more appropriate way for that long course of study.

We want to look at the training and professional development that we provide to the staff we have. I agree that the issue is not so much just recruitment, but is retention as well. We have to retain the staff we have. We want to make sure that we continue to have a competitive package of compensation and benefits. We want to better collaborate and share our resources and planning so that we can, in fact, do the most efficient type of recruiting and retention possible as a system of only 42,000 people. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other area that I touched on is the lack of infrastructure in our communities, especially housing. In trying to recruit people, one of the biggest challenges we have in our smaller communities is just trying to get professionals, such as mental health workers, into our communities when you do not have accommodation for these individuals because of the lack of housing in our communities. I would like to ask the Minister what he is doing to ensure that we do have the facilities or resources to ensure that these people coming to our communities are assisted in the different areas, that we try to find adequate housing, working with the private sector or working with the communities to have the resources to do that.

I will use an example. In the community of Tsiigehtchic, they have been trying to get a mental health worker and also trying to get someone to work in the economic development area, but there is no housing. The band has gone out of their way to purchase two trailers to bring into the community but it is at their cost. This government is not assisting in that area. That is the frustration in our small communities.

The government has not put any real infrastructure or any major capital investment into our communities and we are feeling the effects of these various programs and trying to deliver these programs in our communities but not being able to attract people because of things that are workable. A simple thing like housing or accommodation we do not have in most of our communities.

I would like to ask the Minister if there is a program or something in place to assist communities such as Tsiigehtchic, where they have had to go out of their way to purchase trailers to bring into the community and set them up for mental health workers, teachers or other professionals?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the issue of housing in the smaller communities is one that has a direct impact on service delivery in some

cases. I know the Minister of Housing has announced some programs that we have been supporting to try to create a better climate so that home construction can take place in the communities, in terms of purchasing land and making the cost of construction hopefully somewhat less prohibitive, so that the actual rents charged are not unaffordable by people in the communities.

I know that is not the only answer and that it is not a total solution, but it is the one that is before us now and is going to require a lot more work and it is going to continue to impact on the service delivery, as the Member pointed out. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to follow up on the points you raised regarding alcohol and drug programs and assisting, where we can, to develop our alcohol and drug programs closer to home. Right now, we only have one facility on the Hay River Reserve. It has to serve the whole Northwest Territories. You have touched on the area of development and the impact and effect of development on our communities. I have pounded the table many times during the 13th Assembly with your predecessors on the Tl'oondih Healing Society. There is much reluctance. I do not know if it is the bureaucracy or this government that wants to see new ideas or new initiatives taken to find ways and solutions to deal with those problems.

Right now, the Tl'oondih Healing Society has been accessing program dollars through the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, because at least they are listening to the communities and they are funding programs to assist the communities in regard to community wellness, early childhood development and what has happened with the different problems in residential schools.

I would like to ask the Minister, what does the community or an organization have to do to get this government to assist or to help those communities that do have people trained, have spent the money, developed the human resources in our communities but do not have the support of this government? I would like to ask the Minister again, what does it take for a community, an organization or an institution such as the Tl'oondih Healing Society, who are running federal programs in our regions but this government does not want to support them or assist them to run programs on behalf of this government? Yet we are exporting people to the south for alcohol and drug programs but we are not able to assist in our communities in regions.

I would like to ask the Minister, what does it take to utilize the Tl'oondih Healing Camp, which is over a \$2 million facility sitting there, running programs on behalf of the federal government, but this government will not allow them to run GNWT programs. What does it take?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I indicated in the House, I believe it was yesterday, we recognize in the action plan as a government that there are impacts because of major resource development. We recognize that we are behind the curve here in terms of responding. We are making attempts to bring the resources of the GNWT together to look at what we are going to do. How do we work with communities, the federal government and

aboriginal governments to respond to the impacts of major resource development?

As I indicated yesterday, this is not a process that we are anticipating is going to be months and months of study and protracted meetings, but it is a situation where we want to be able to look at things on a project-by-project basis, at least initially. We want to be able to look at and use the systems and services that we have in the regions and in the communities. How do we support and possibly supplement or add to those services?

I am very clearly aware of the Member raising the issue of Tl'oondih. I have sat through the 13th Assembly just a few chairs down from the Member and I can even spell Tl'oondih. The Member has been very, very vigilant in raising that issue.

I am committed, along with the department and the JLC and the health boards, to sit down with the communities. I have committed to you and to the people of the Inuvik region that I am going to go back up there to all the communities. I have also talked to you about how, as Minister, I have never seen – and you had encouraged them to send me a proposal, something we can initiate discussions with.

We are interested. We, the health and social services system, will sit down with the affected communities and we will work through how we can respond in as timely a way as possible. Thank you.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going back to my earlier questioning about diagnosis of diseases, I would like to ask the Minister if they have any information on how many people in the larger centres versus the smaller communities die of cancer, the statistics that are out there. I would just like to know, is there a trend that is there that needs to be looked at and dealt with so that it does not happen anymore? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we made a commitment to provide the Members and the Social Programs committee with the cancer rates by gender, by the type of cancer, by the geographical area so that we can see and review those. We have health stats that we put out. We will pull that together. You will note, as I indicated yesterday, that there is a rise in cancer rates generally across the board. I cannot tell you at this time if there are any specific increases by region or by community. I can just indicate that we will get that information for you as I committed to you yesterday. Thank you.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Also, having been a patient and using the Stanton Hospital, I hear rumours that some of the support staff are looking at maybe moving south. Ontario was able to give raises for support staff. What are we doing to help them or to retain them in the North as we have done for the nurses and the doctors? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are currently engaged in negotiations with the Union of Northern Workers for GNWT employees who are members of that union. We also have negotiations underway with the doctors. We are constantly monitoring the competitive nature of our benefit compensation package, so it is an issue we know is important and we are engaged in that process as we speak. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope we do not wait too long and start losing some of our professional staff there because if we do, it will be hard to get them back up to the North. Just a comment, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Minister, did you want to respond to the comment? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have heard statistics on some of the health issues facing Northerners, such as diabetes and the prevalence of this emerging illness. When we think about the importance of diet and nutrition in preventing illness, I just wonder if the Minister has any thoughts on some statistics I have heard in the Northwest Territories. For example, we consume 20,000 cans of pop a day.

When you go into any of the small communities, there are grocery stores in which there seems to be an inordinate number of shelves dedicated to what we would call junk food; pop, potato chips, cheesies and these sorts of things. Does the Minister have any thoughts on what we can do as a government to counteract this trend? It is a well-known fact that diet and nutrition, exercise, some of these things less talked about are big contributors to healthy bodies. I would like to get the Minister's comments on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if the Member would like my thoughts I would be very happy to provide those. I agree wholeheartedly with the issue that she has raised and the way she has framed it, that these are critical issues. I mentioned in the House yesterday when we discussed sustainability, that those kinds of basic choices, nutritional choices, personal choices in terms of drinking and smoking, are very fundamental.

As she well knows, the department has a number of areas in terms of dealing with active living and diabetes and pregnancies and smoking strategies, trying to better educate and promote the benefit of making the right choices. Is it enough? Clearly it is not, given the unfortunate statistics that we are aware of in terms of smoking and drinking.

I know the issue of diet is one that is even tougher, because it affects even the very, very young if you start off with bad eating habits.

I recognize the problem. I know what we are doing. I am very interested in finding out ways, working with MLAs in the communities and the professional people and people who are in this business, of how do we in fact promote that kind of lifestyle that the Member references.

In the long run, it is going to be absolutely critical in terms of sustainability of the system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just hoping that there is a way to bring a focus to the issues such as nutrition and diet. Everybody talks about smoking, drinking, drugs. I think there is a certain level of awareness out there that these are not healthy choices.

What I think there is less awareness and recognition of is that there are people who have, probably most of their life, very unhealthy eating habits. I really think that awareness and the focus on this needs to start with the young people, with young parents as part of the early childhood development, working with family support. I think this is a key component that has to be raised with -- I do not think any time is too early to start that.

Like I said, I know that it is probably thought to be one of the less pressing issues, but I have gone to meetings with folks and sat and watched them down three or four cans of pop in a short meeting. I just do not think it is registering, the kinds of potential health risks there are in that. I think we have just been a lot more focused on the more obvious ones.

I would like to work with the Minister, whether it is through the schools and coming up with healthy lunch or breakfast programs, cooking classes, whatever. I would like to, while we are trying to indoctrinate our young people against the risk of things like smoking, I think we also need to share with them the importance of eating properly over the length of their lives. Just a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments? What is the direction of the committee? Detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 6-9, ministry and corporate services, budget summary. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I know you called page 6-9, but if we have questions on the pages leading up to that, can we ask them at this time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Yes. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I could not help but notice as I went through the organizational charts shown in the book that a position shown in last year's book for an associate deputy minister has disappeared. I was wondering if we could find out what has happened to that position.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That position has been rolled into the deputy minister's office as a training period for a fixed period of time, which I believe is about another year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: I did not quite understand the explanation. So it has been rolled into the deputy minister's office. Is it an assistant deputy minister position then? Has it been rolled into

that position? Where exactly in the organization chart is it and when is it going to be taking over?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it was a two-year position. It has a year left, but it was seen as a training position. At this point, there are no plans past the two years. The government as a whole is looking at how they want to look at senior management training.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: I still did not understand the incumbent's placing on this organization chart. Could the Minister explicitly explain to me how that position fits into the organization chart that we see on page 6-3?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the associate deputy minister position would be off to the side as a training position. It is not a permanent position. It is not one that is going to be formally in the department at this point. It was not put in there. It is just covered under the deputy minister's office and it works closely with the deputy as a senior training position. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe last year though we saw that as a separate box on this page with that dashed line there. I am just wondering why it is not shown in the same way this year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, because of its transient nature and its training focus, it was felt that it was best just covered under the deputy minister's office. If in fact we are going to continue with the position next year, then I think we will be looking at reflecting it differently. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not want the Minister to get the wrong idea. I think most Members of this House support training positions. I think we also expect to see senior positions accounted for in the organization charts. If we saw it there last year and we may see it again next year, I think there is a serious mistake in not showing it this year as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. I will note the Member's concern and we will make sure that come next year, we do it much better. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also have some questions relating to the activity description on page 6-8. On that page in the second paragraph, we note that ministry and corporate services is responsible for setting a system-wide framework for planning, governance, program and service development and resource allocation.

Can the Minister explain to me how ministry and corporate services relates to the Joint Leadership Committee? I really want to know who is in charge.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very clearly, ultimately, the Minister is in charge. The department is run on a day-to-day basis by the deputy minister and the staff that report to him. There is an oversight and ensured leadership responsibility that JLC provides. They meet formally four times a year and do monthly conference calls to look at this broad direction and initiatives underway, such as the action plan. Very clearly, ultimately in terms of the overall system, the Minister is in charge. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. According to the terms of reference of the Joint Leadership Council, one of the points of the mandate is to oversee the implementation of any major reforms to the health and social services system. Oversee the implementation -- that sounds fairly hands-on to me. How does that relate then back to ministry and corporate services if this is the group that is going to oversee the implementation? What is the role of the department in terms of the JLC and the implementation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the board chairs, myself and the deputy comprise JLC. The department, with its functions and its responsibilities, carries out its day-to-day responsibilities plus the broad direction that is provided by JLC in terms of that strategic direction. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess where I have some concern is that in our budget books, we are told that ministry and corporate services is responsible for legislation and regulation and policy-making. When I look at the mandate of the JLC and I see direction setting and recommending approval of system-wide plans and directing the development and implementation of cooperative initiatives, I am confused about who is actually going to be setting policy for health care in the Northwest Territories.

Is policy going to remain something that is determined by elected officials or is it one that is going to be set by the Minister in consultation with the JLC, which is made up of appointed people?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, legislation will, of course, be determined by this House. Policy will be set after due process and once we look at all the requirements and the various issues on the table with regard to specific policy in question, the JLC provides a broad oversight role. The department has legislative mandates, legal mandates that they will follow through on. As the Minister, I will ultimately be responsible for the policies and legislation that comes out of the department or before this House. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am quite aware of what the legislative requirements are in terms of accountability for policy setting. I guess what I am looking for is an assurance from the Minister that policy will be set by elected officials and not something that is determined by him in conjunction with people he has appointed to boards.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as Minister, I am ultimately responsible for the department. As a Member of Cabinet, Cabinet always has and retains and it was crafted in such a way so that it was very clear that Cabinet has the responsibility, authority and the mandate to set the policy. The role of the JLC provides oversight and direction and brings the pieces of the system together so that they can look at these broad issues in a collaborative, cooperative way. It does nothing to undermine the authority and responsibility of myself as the Minister or Cabinet, or the role of this Legislature in terms of doing its job. It just brings an opportunity to bring what was somewhat disconnected pieces of the system together to hopefully work more collaboratively and cooperatively and effectively together.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will the Minister table the terms of reference for the Health and Social Services Joint Leadership Council?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe we shared them with the Social Programs committee, but I would be happy to table those terms of reference.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will move on to detail, page 6-9, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if I could ask what is driving the \$500,000 plus increase in other expenses that we see here between the 2001-2002 main estimates and the 2002-2003 main estimates?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is the legislative action plan and the work that is being done to try to fast-track three pieces of specific legislation and the two discussion papers.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could we get a bit of an outline from the Minister what is included in the action plan and what sort of timetable we are looking at?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I can just give the Member an idea, the intent is to complete the amendments to the Child and Family Services Act this February, as well as the amendments to the Nursing Profession and Pharmacy Acts this session. We want to be able to draft and hopefully introduce amendments to the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services

Administration Act by March. We are going to look at, by next fall, being able to come forward with the Health and Social Services Disciplines Act. As well, to draft and be able to introduce the new Nursing Profession Act by October, and a new Hospital Insurance and Medical Care Act by March, 2003. We hope to carry out public consultations and prepare the discussion paper on the Public Health Act by October, 2003, as well as the discussion paper on the new Health Information Act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister talked about a couple of discussion papers, some going past the expected life of this Assembly. This \$500,000, how much of that is for outside legal consultants to do drafting and how much is for consultants to prepare the discussion papers?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, we are still in the process of putting together those detailed work plans to be able to get this work up and running, the bigger bills that are coming due next fall. I do not have that level of detail available yet. Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to share it as soon as we have it together. It is tied into a lot of the other work that has been done with implementation plans. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are dealing with ministry and corporate services, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$8,066,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Page 6-13, program delivery support, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$24,000,000. Mr. Bell.

Committee Motion 1-14(5): Health Authority Administration Costs (Carried)

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman,

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment work together to standardize, as much as possible, the allocating and reporting of administration costs at the authority level.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those against? The motion is carried. We are dealing with page 6-13, program delivery support, total operations expense, \$24,000,000. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I move we report progress, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those against? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now come back to order. The score was seven to one for Canada with four minutes left in the third period. Item 21, report of the committee of the whole. Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 2 and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Nunakput seconds the motion. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings for Monday, 9:00 a.m. of Accountability and Oversight and also of Cabinet House Strategy.

Orders of the Day for Monday, February 25, 2002:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 1-14(5), Establishment of a Special Committee on Rural Community Affairs
 - Motion 2-14(5), Setting of Sitting Hours by Speaker
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Adoption Act and Family Law Act
19. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003
 - Committee Report 1-14(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 2-14(5), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 3-14(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
 21. Report of Committee of the Whole
 22. Third Reading of Bills
 23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, February 25, 2002, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

