



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wednesday, February 19, 2003

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, Ms. Lee, Mr. McLeod, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: The Minister has a point of order. Mr. Handley, what is your point of order?

Point Of Order

HON. JOE HANDLEY: On page 278 of yesterday's unedited Hansard, Mr. Lafferty says: "I have to say the Minister is a total stranger to the truth." This comment clearly violates Rule 23(h) and (j). Rule 23(h) makes an allegation against another Member, House officer or witness and 23(j) is charging another Member with uttering deliberate falsehoods. Mr. Speaker, someone who is a total stranger to the truth, quite simply put, is a liar. I, at no time, have lied or misled the House as Mr. Lafferty has indicated in his Member's statement. Mr. Speaker, I ask that there be an apology and that this be withdrawn from the Hansard. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The point of order is in order and the honourable Member has brought it to the Chair's attention at his earliest convenience. Does anyone want to make any comment on this point of order? Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the only comment I will make on it is I referred to the section and it is calling me a liar. I have had a look at what has happened in other parliaments in this kind of situation and find that others have certainly accepted this as a point of order. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Any comments? Does Mr. Lafferty wish to make any comments further to what has been brought to the attention of the Speaker? Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has put a point of order on the Table. The definition of what one thinks or what one says differs for everyone. The words I used were to say that he didn't know the truth and he was travelling a separate highway from the truth. I could have used those words. What he is saying in this House and the truth are different. I am not calling him a liar. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Any further comment? I am not going to have a debate. If the honourable Members wish to comment, then we can do that, but we are not going to get into a debate. I have heard one side, I have heard the other side. If there is no further comment I am going to take this under advisement. The

Chair has the unedited Hansard. Mr. Handley, do you wish to make another Point of order?

Point Of Order

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will make another point of order. Without having read the Hansard, just on the Member's comments that what I say and what is the truth are two different things. I don't have the exact wording here, but in trying to explain himself, Mr. Lafferty just went on to give me grounds for another point of order. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. We will deal with that one when I come to it. I have to deal with these one at a time and I am dealing with this first point of order that's raised. If there are no further comments on this, no further debate on it, I will reserve judgment until I have reached the conclusion on it.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 17-14(6): 2003 Federal Budget

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance for Canada, the Honourable John Manley, delivered the 2003 federal budget.

Mr. Manley presented Canadians with a balanced budget, the sixth in a row. In fact, before taking into account the Minister's contingency reserves, the federal budget projections show surpluses for the current and next two fiscal years.

The federal government's strong fiscal position also accords Mr. Manley the flexibility to announce a number of expenditure and tax measures -- investments in health care, in families, in research and education, in national security and in the economy. In total, Mr. Manley announced almost \$6 billion in initiatives for the current fiscal year, and more than \$10 billion over the next two fiscal years.

From a Northwest Territories perspective, however, the budget is a disappointment. Given the healthy federal fiscal position, given the billions of dollars available for investment in new initiatives, and given the fact that Canada receives the lion's share of the fiscal benefits of northern development, it is very disappointing that the federal government still cannot find its way clear to make the critical investments needed in the Northwest Territories. Beyond some resources for the federal government to increase its own capacity in the North, there is nothing that recognizes the unique needs of the Northwest Territories to prepare for and cope with resource development.

We have clearly identified what is needed. Our Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy and our proposal for the Strategic Infrastructure Fund, Corridors of Canada, lay out the requirements for infrastructure, for training, for economic development funding, and for other necessary investments. We continue to be disappointed by the lack of federal response to opportunities in the Northwest Territories that would benefit all of Canada.

The federal budget does include a number of initiatives that will benefit all Canadians, including Northwest Territories residents. Increases in the National Child Benefit, including a new child disability credit, will benefit NWT families. New investments in housing, money for the environment and support for aboriginal languages are all steps in the right direction, and we hope that the needs of the NWT are included in these budget measures. The budget confirmed the additional dollars or health care that the Prime Minister committed to earlier this month. It did not address the special needs of the Territories. We are hopeful that the Prime Minister will address this shortfall in his meeting with Premiers Kakfwi, Okalik and Fentie later this week.

The budget did also include some measures of special interest to Northerners:

- Two new 10-year infrastructure funds will be created -- one a strategic fund, the other for municipal infrastructure. However, the funding available in the early years is small, and we do not yet know how the money will be allocated across jurisdictions;
- The air travellers security charge will be reduced from \$24 to \$14 for a round trip ticket -- a measure that will directly benefit northern air travelers;
- Federal corporate income tax rates for mining and oil and gas companies will be reduced over the next five years, to match reductions announced for other corporations three years ago. This measure will benefit the resource sector that is driving our economic growth;
- The extension of the mineral exploration tax credit for an additional year will benefit the mining sector;
- Additional funding will be made available for aboriginal business development;
- And finally, \$32 million will be allocated over the current and next two fiscal years to increase federal capacity to conduct environmental and regulatory assessment prior to the construction of a northern gas pipeline.

Unfortunately, there is nothing to address the needs of the other NWT governments to respond to northern development. We must continue to reinforce the message in Ottawa that investment in the Northwest Territories is a good investment and that our government, aboriginal governments and municipal governments need financial support to enhance their capacity to meet the demands of economic growth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement today is around the co-payment for medical payment. The co-payment is a \$250 charge that patients now have to pay for each direction of travel when they have to travel for medical reasons. Mr. Speaker, this payment was instituted by the last government because of the cash position we were facing; the large deficit. Since that time, this government has found money to put back into education and health. So we have restored much of what we cut in the 1990s when it came to health and education, but the co-payment lives on.

Mr. Speaker, the impact is mostly on poor, sick people. Maybe not really poor people, but low income people. It's not fair. The requirement for a patient to pay part of their travel does not reflect on their ability to pay. Yesterday, the Minister said we could not deal with issues like the co-payment in isolation of the whole basket of extended health benefit services. Yet, when it was pointed out that he was dealing with the issue of Metis co-payments for extended health benefits outside the whole basket, he said he saw that as a separate issue. Mr. Speaker, is this really a separate issue? This government is increasing Metis coverage to 100 percent for extended health benefits because it is the right thing to do, not because of any constitutional requirement to do it, although the Minister implied there was a constitutional connection in his reply to Mr. Bell yesterday. Mr. Speaker, I think Members on this side of the House agree it's the right thing to do for Metis people and it's the right thing to do for all of our residents. This government should end the policy requiring people to make co-payments for medical travel immediately. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Passing Of Daniel Bouvier Of Fort Providence

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on January 27th of this year, elder Daniel Bouvier of Fort Providence passed away. He was born in Fort Providence on October 31, 1922, and was raised by Joseph and Celine Bouvier in Fort Providence and is survived by his siblings and numerous nieces and nephews. As a child, he attended the mission school in Fort Providence and like everyone else in those days, he attended school long enough to learn to read and write. He spent a lot of time reading and through reading he developed a good understanding of the English language. He was better known as Uncle Cap, and fluent in three languages; Michif, English and Slavey. He lived his whole life in Fort Providence. He had no desire to leave or travel out of his home community. The only travelling he did was to hunt, fish and trap in the immediate area. He kept a dog team and it was his main means of transportation to travel to his trapline and for all his supplies.

He was a humble man who did not have any interest in things of material value. He never sought recognition, attention or status of any kind. He believed the best things in life were free and he did not dwell on things he did not have. Mr. Speaker,

Danny Bouvier was one of the greatest old time fiddlers along the Mackenzie, a title he deserved but did not acknowledge. In his own special way, he inspired his nephews who have become accomplished fiddlers. He played the real Metis style of music and he brought a lot of people happiness with his gift of music. His love for the fiddle was encouraged by his father, his brother and other relatives. His first fiddle was a homemade fiddle and although not a perfect copy, it resembled a fiddle and that was all that mattered.

Mr. Speaker, Danny Bouvier was kind to all that crossed his path, whether it was an animal, a bird or a family pet. His love for nature was apparent and though his health was deteriorating, he did not dwell on it and did what he could to keep his spirits up. Mr. Speaker, we are all thankful for all the wonderful years with him, his loving and kind nature will always live in the hearts of those who had the pleasure of knowing him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Seniors' Prescription Drug Reimbursement Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to bring attention to a matter that affects a very important segment of our population, that being our seniors. Mr. Speaker, as you are no doubt aware, our population is aging and with the aging process, comes the inevitable decline in our health. Very often, Mr. Speaker, our elders are required to purchase a number of prescription drugs. This can prove to be a very costly and time consuming process. Mr. Speaker, the issue of seniors having to pay upfront for their prescriptions has been raised many times with me by my constituents. For many years, Mr. Speaker, long-time employees of the GNWT have been given the option to retain their medical insurance coverage upon their retirement. Mr. Speaker, the process that the Department of Health requires from these same seniors is that they first submit their prescription receipts to Sun Life. Normally, Sun Life will reimburse the seniors for 80 percent of the amount of their prescriptions. This process, Mr. Speaker, normally takes several weeks and can sometimes be quite lengthy. Once the senior receives the reimbursement of 80 percent from Sun Life, the senior then has to forward their original prescriptions to the Department of Health in Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, the senior then waits for the Department of Health to reimburse them for the remaining 20 percent of their prescription cost. Again, this process takes several weeks and, in some cases, months. Mr. Speaker, this whole process is far too lengthy and cumbersome for our seniors to endure.

It leaves many seniors currently covered under the Sun Life plan to question whether it is really worth their while in continuing with the plan. Very often, Mr. Speaker, our seniors are faced with living on a limited income. Should they also be burdened with the added aggravation of waiting several weeks, if not months, to be reimbursed for their prescriptions? At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will have some questions for the Minister on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Equitable Distribution Of Government Resources

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the last Assembly, there was a court hearing because of constitutional rights. Seats in Yellowknife, Inuvik and Hay River were increased to reflect the population in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since the Government of the Northwest Territories was created, we've seen a top down government. A high government employment rate in the city of Yellowknife, central and regional centres, while the communities have no employment. Government seems to be created to keep people on welfare in our communities.

Now why is it that we have increased seats in Hay River, Yellowknife, Inuvik when the majority of the government is here? I recognize that we need to increase those seats, but shouldn't we recognize at the same time, Mr. Speaker, the need for employment in every community in the Northwest Territories? The need for a GNWT presence in every community in the Northwest Territories? In my reply to the Budget Address yesterday, I stated that when a person fills out an application in Tuktoyaktuk, he writes his name and he writes Tuktoyaktuk, NWT. In Fort Good Hope, it's Fort Good Hope, NWT. We need government employment there as well. We have all kinds of programs and services that we try to deliver effectively in the Northwest Territories, government programs and services, Mr. Speaker, but a lot of times we don't have the human resources or the financial resources to implement those programs and services. I say it's time that we follow the constitution and follow the examples taken when they gave extra seats in those communities that I mentioned and start devolving government positions to the communities so that we could eliminate and reduce the high unemployment rates in the communities and deliver programs and services effectively as a government. Spread out the wealth of government in the Northwest Territories. I bet we will see healthier people, happier people, a prosperous government, Mr. Speaker. I think as we go into the next Assembly, we are preparing a transitional document. We should develop a framework that will see that happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a year ago today, I stood in this House and asked the Minister of Transportation to change the schedule of heavy wide loads travelling on Highway No. 3 during the morning hours. I pointed out that commercial traffic during this time affects my constituents and people from the Deh Cho who are going to Yellowknife for medical appointments. This morning's paper printed the restricted load schedule along Highway No. 3 and the Ingraham Trail for this winter road season. Between 9:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. heavy loads are allowed to drive between Rae and Yellowknife. Between midnight and 6:00 a.m. these trucks are scheduled to drive along the Ingraham Trail. After I read this, I immediately wrote to the department explaining that this time frame conflicts with all medical travel and public use of Highway No. 3 during business hours. Medical appointments

can take up to six months, Mr. Speaker. It takes six months to book and people who do not own vehicles have no choice but to take the bus to Yellowknife. The bus leaves Rae during the week at 10:00 a.m. in the morning regardless of what time the appointments are and returns in the late afternoon, Mr. Speaker, this public transit schedule is consistent throughout the year for the many residents of Rae who don't own their own vehicles. Rae has over 800 households with close to 2,000 people who travel to Yellowknife frequently for shopping, medical needs and for a variety of other services. In contrast, there are only 22 people, federal leaseholders along the Ingraham Trail. The logical time for restricted loads to travel along Highway No. 3 between Rae and Yellowknife would be between midnight and 6:00 a.m. Mr. Speaker, just yesterday I received a call from a constituent. He stated that over the past few days, there have been three separate incidents where members of his family had been sandwiched between commercial trucks. He said that these trucks travel in sets of five or seven and when private vehicles get caught in between them, there is no way out and it is frightening and is a safety hazard. Mr. Speaker, whether it's along the Ingraham Trail or between Rae and Yellowknife, it is not fair that members of the public should be afraid to drive their vehicles along public roads because of commercial truck traffic. That is the reason for restricted hours for wide loads. I urge the Minister to change the hours his department selected for truck traffic along Highway No. 3. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Implications Of Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I questioned the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development on the MOU that was signed in the Beaufort-Delta with the Gwich'in. Mr. Speaker, the Minister proceeded to answer me on pages 304 and 305 of unedited Hansard. I must say in the Minister's response, it goes to show how well land claims have worked for aboriginal groups. Because of those land claims, they have been able to settle agreements or get agreements like impact benefit agreements, access to negotiated contracts. In my constituency alone, the visitor's centre, the hospital and now the Aurora College all negotiated contracts into the millions of dollars. The Dempster Highway work guaranteed \$2.5 million a year of negotiated contracts because they are a claimant group that has some clout now. Mr. Speaker, I would say that if I were working for the aboriginal groups, I would do the same to get the best benefit for my group of people that I could get. But I am not, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am a Member of a public government. When I ran to represent the people of Inuvik in the 13th Assembly, I ran saying I would represent everybody equally. That's why I have difficulty, Mr. Speaker, on this agreement that was signed. It is not equal. In fact, I am aware of the Inuvialuit, although included in the MOU, have had no discussion about this. So although they are included in wording, there has been no discussion with them how that would implicate or impact on how they do work. Mr. Speaker, there are many more questions about what impact this will have. What will it have on aboriginal companies that have built up a working criteria and equipment and a payroll if they don't

fit the needs or the plans of the development corporation of the aboriginal group? What happens to them? Are they squeezed out of it?

Mr. Speaker, there are many questions that need to be clarified. The comment that an MOU is non-binding, again, if I were a representative of an aboriginal group and I signed an agreement that said I would have access to 50 percent of the contract value in that region, I would push to get that. So we need to find out from this government what really happens now with all the contracts that have been out there and all the negotiated contracts that are in place right now. I will be asking the appropriate Minister questions later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Observations On The 2003 Federal Budget

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to make a couple of observations on yesterday's federal budget and I share, generally, Mr. Speaker, the disappointment of our Finance Minister Handley in that the North did not figure really at all in this budget. We are an emerging and an important part of Canada and I feel we deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, there are some contrasts in here. The federal government very successfully and very handily has managed to turn the fiscal deficit of this country around. Indeed, I believe it's looking at surpluses totalling \$12 billion over the next three years. We, in the NWT, have to consider our options so carefully as we approach our own \$300 million debt wall. Relatively speaking, Mr. Speaker, this is a huge contrast and is one that we should be able to strike a better partnership with the federal government on.

Mr. Speaker, another irony is that our own resource development activities which, we could argue, are happening in some part in spite of federal ideas and regulatory frameworks are moving ahead as never before. Our royalties are increasing as these developments mature, but our own revenues are not increasing accordingly. Mr. Speaker, while there is a great surplus at the national level, we, in the NWT, have both a fiscal and a social deficit. The impact is growing in our housing, on our community and transportation infrastructures and in the wellness of our people. We are told there are opportunities for us in this federal budget, Mr. Speaker, but we have come up empty handed in the last couple of years on other opportunities that were before us. The Minister of Finance has mentioned Corridors for Canada. The opportunity, Mr. Speaker, that I would really like to realize someday, is that the NWT is a real part of Canada, earning our fair share of the wealth, paying our way and seeing the North really as part of Canada's just society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement On Discriminatory Nature Of The Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish today to speak on the discriminatory nature of the medical travel co-payment. Some of our residents are being required to pay out of their own pocket. This is a topic that has been discussed a lot in this House, especially over the last few days, without a satisfactory response from the Minister. As I understand, Mr. Speaker, this fee of \$250 was introduced a few years back to curb apparent abuse of medical travel but this has become a revenue raising scheme for the government that has resulted in a very unfair outcome. It is so unfair because in practice the arbitrary application of the policy has the government engaging in a discriminatory and punitive action against the select few who fall through the cracks and this has to stop, Mr. Speaker. For example, Mr. Speaker, I know of a case where a very normal delivery in Yellowknife resulted in a medevac because of a shortage of nurses that very night. Her neighbour, who happened to have a normal delivery at another time, would not have to pay the fee. This is about luck, Mr. Speaker, and it is arbitrary, unequal and unfair and discriminatory and it is wrong. My colleagues from Hay River, have pointed out the unfairness of having to pay the fee when they have to travel to Yellowknife for regular services that are normally available in Hay River and I agree with that too. The discriminatory message this policy is sending out does not end there. Mr. Speaker, based on what I know, what I hear is this: if you are working for an employer that gives you insurance, you are the lucky one, then you don't have to pay. If you are Aboriginal, you're the lucky one because the federal government will cover you. If you are a Métis Aboriginal, you are the lucky one because the territorial government will cover you and you don't have to pay. But if you are self-employed and have no private insurance, too bad so sad, you are the unlucky one and you have to pay. Never mind that you don't have sick leave benefits and have to pay all the other incidental costs, too. If you are employed in a low paying job and have no private insurance, too bad so sad, you are the unlucky one, you have to pay. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you, policy treatment based on luck is arbitrary and should not be tolerated. The Minister is well aware of this gap in the policy but he refuses to take any action and it keeps on snowballing. He keeps on mixing it up with a comprehensive review that he has been engaged in for the last 14 months and he says he needs to study it more. Mr. Speaker, there is no reason for further delay. My constituent needs to travel in very short order. Mr. Speaker. May I request unanimous consent to finish my statement? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Ms. Lee, you may conclude your statement.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is no reason for further delay or further study. My constituent needs to travel in very short order, I need an answer for her and so far I don't have a good reason as to why she has to pay when she can least afford it. I ask for the Minister's action on this now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Recognition Of Ruby Trudel And Wilf Schidlowsky

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to take this opportunity to recognize two deserving constituents of Yellowknife South, Mrs. Ruby Trudel and Mr. Wilf Schidlowsky. Both, Mr. Speaker, were awarded the Queen's Jubilee Commemorative Medal last fall. As you know, like all the rest of my colleagues, I was invited to recommend deserving individuals in the constituency for consideration for their long standing work and commitment to improving the lives of fellow residents. It was my pleasure to recommend these two constituents. It was because of their outstanding work in the community, which has been very easily recognizable, that I easily thought of them.

Mrs. Ruby Trudel was recognized for her contribution to breast health and breast cancer awareness, not only in Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, but indeed across the North. Seeing a need to educate women in the North about breast health and breast cancer, she dedicated a great deal of her time for this cause. As a result of her commitment, Mr. Speaker, she has been involved in helping develop a great number of resources that are now being used across the North. Mrs. Trudel's tireless dedication and personal commitment to breast cancer is recognized by women's groups across the NWT. She is a dedicated volunteer to the cause and has provided countless women with support, especially women who have been recently diagnosed with breast cancer.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wilf Schidlowsky, known by many affectionately just as Wilf, has been a long time resident of Yellowknife and a life long educator in the city with the Catholic schools, for approximately 40 years, Mr. Speaker. After having formally retired from teaching a few years ago, he never left teaching and remained involved in education by providing trades skills as part of a life skills program taught at St. Patrick High School in Yellowknife. His work with students has stretched far beyond the classroom by helping students to be successful both in school and in their lives. Former students of Mr. Schidlowsky can attest to his personal dedication and his commitment to them. The knowledge and skills and ethics he passed on to his students were true gifts to many. Through his teaching, Mr. Speaker, and his guidance, he has helped many students who would otherwise have fallen through the cracks if he had not been there to offer help and guidance.

I would like to ask my fellow colleagues today to join me in recognizing these two constituents and thank these two constituents for their personal contributions to the betterment of our fellow citizens. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 2-14(6): Final GNWT Report On The Kyoto Protocol

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Nitah on October 31, 2002, regarding the final Government of the Northwest Territories report on the Kyoto Protocol.

As Members are aware, the GNWT supports the Kyoto Protocol because it is the only coordinated plan to control the global problem of climate change. It is for this reason that the GNWT is committed to participating in federal, provincial and territorial discussions at both the Premier and the ministerial levels so that Canada can develop a truly national implementation plan.

At the October 28, 2002, meeting of energy and environment Ministers, the federal government released a draft framework of actions it is proposing to take. Although considerable work needs to be taken to finalize a national implementation plan for climate change, including the insertion of actions that provinces and territories have agreed should be part of any national plan, the federal government recently released an economic analysis of their draft framework.

The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has completed a review of the federal analysis and a summary copy was provided to all Members of the Legislative Assembly on November 29th.

This is the first time that economic impacts on the three territories have been broken out in any Canadian economic analysis of the cost of controlling greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, impacts on territorial gross domestic product, GDP, are forecast to be within the range of zero to -0.7 percent of forecast GDP relative to a business-as-usual scenario. This impact is less than that which is forecast for any other provincial GDP.

There is still a lot of uncertainty about the projected impacts on our economy. RWED officials will continue to review the assumptions and methods used to prepare these economic analyses. However, it is worth noting that the federal approach outlined in their draft framework does not indicate significant price increases for the fuels we use in the North. The analysis also anticipates that markets for our exports will continue, and most important, federal Ministers Anderson and Dhaliwal have assured me that natural gas from a Mackenzie Valley pipeline will continue to be required in a Kyoto world. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize, first of all, my loyal constituent Major Karen Hoelt. With her today is Major Holly Patterson from Toronto. Major Patterson is secretary for candidates. She works in leadership development for the Salvation Army in the Canada and Bermuda territories. Welcome.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: With weather like this, I bet you wish you were doing the Bermuda section. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 46-14(6): Complicated Prescription Drug Reimbursement Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I outlined in my Member's statement, our seniors that choose to retain their private health care coverage upon retiring from the public service are having to go through an extremely complicated process to seek reimbursement for their prescriptions. They first have to make applications to Sun Life which includes filling out forms, taking photocopies for themselves in case their forms get lost in the mail or whatever, of all their original prescriptions. They then wait several weeks for reimbursement from Sun Life. Then they have to fill out another set of forms for the Department of Health to get another copy of their prescriptions because Inuvik will only accept the original prescription, and calculate the 20 percent of the GNWT portion including the Sun Life reimbursement exemption and then send the whole package off to Inuvik. Would the Minister please state exactly why these seniors have to wait until they receive reimbursement from Sun Life before they can make application for their reimbursement from the GNWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 46-14(6): Complicated Prescription Drug Reimbursement Process

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can acknowledge that the process does indeed appear to be cumbersome. But also the seniors' action plan which is being overseen by the departmental working group and the NWT Seniors' Society has identified the whole issue of seniors' benefits and how they are applied and how they are accessed is one of the things they've asked to be addressed as part of the supplementary health review. That issue will probably be dealt with in that context. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 46-14(6): Complicated Prescription Drug Reimbursement Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the department is reviewing this issue. What kind of time period are we looking at? When can the seniors expect to have some movement on this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 46-14(6): Complicated Prescription Drug Reimbursement Process

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this particular process issue, I will check with the department and see if there are ways that we can look at some kind of immediate relief. If it's just a process issue that can be realigned, if there are broader policy issues or other reasons, then I will report back.

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

Supplementary To Question 46-14(6): Complicated Prescription Drug Reimbursement Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware of the number of forms that have to be filled out and what type of forms they are? My understanding is that certain seniors don't even put in for it because they have a hard time filling out the forms. Will this be part of the review of this whole process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 46-14(6): Complicated Prescription Drug Reimbursement Process

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My dear mother who lives with me is very diligent about pursuing every entitlement she has under this system and she, as well, has muttered numerous asides about the paperwork. So, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of it somewhat and, yes, we will be checking on that.

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

Supplementary To Question 46-14(6): Complicated Prescription Drug Reimbursement Process

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the Minister also acknowledge the fact that by these seniors continuing on with their insurance coverage through Sun Life after retirement that they are actually saving the government money because the government is actually responsible for 100 percent of the prescription if they don't have insurance. So I would think it's in our best interest to do everything we can to shorten the timeframe for these seniors to get reimbursed for their prescription. Again, could I get the Minister to act quickly on this for the sake of our seniors?

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

Further Return To Question 46-14(6): Complicated Prescription Drug Reimbursement Process

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member has my commitment. We will be transmitting this concern as well to the seniors, but the staff listening to these proceedings are making notes and will be following up on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 47-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House I asked the Minister of Health and Social Services if he would consider waiving or even possibly reimbursing people who've made medical co-payments for travel to Yellowknife for physiotherapy services. He did say that he would consider that. If he considered it and

it is a favourable response, what is the process for communicating that to the Hay River health authority so they could enact that decision? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 47-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member outlined, if I consider it and if we agree to move on the Member's request, as she has requested, then very clearly we would be doing this in consultation with all the authorities and it would not be just specific to the Hay River health and social services authority. So we would have a range of discussions and would be, in the final event, putting the whole matter in writing so that the action is clear, should that be the course of action that's taken. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 47-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, specifically related to Hay River, as the Minister pointed out yesterday too, there would be funds expended for wages and benefits, salaries for a physiotherapist. The position is vacant right now. Theoretically, the money that would be spent on a physiotherapist should be building up somewhere unless it's been redirected. So this is a specific situation for Hay River because theoretically they should have the money available to undertake this, so how difficult and how big a review is he going to have to do in order to make a decision on this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 47-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue is one of precedent and looking at a situation where in that particular instance, it may seem very clear but if it's a situation where somebody has a broken leg in Yellowknife but has to be sent south because we don't have the capability or the staff here, is that another situation of possible reimbursement? So we have to look at the implications, but it shouldn't take very long. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 47-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I wanted to know again with respect to process, does the Minister have the ability to direct the expenditure of those funds, which should be accruing in Hay River in the budget, for a physiotherapist? Can those funds be spent on something

else or are those funds still being held for physio services? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 47-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, whatever decision is done that would require more funds or the expenditure of funds in a way that wasn't intended if we could do it from within, if that was the course of action, we would attempt to do that. As the Member has pointed out, on the face of it, there are clearly unexpended salary dollars sitting there. So in terms of a bottom line, we know the resources are there, that some money is being spent to send people to Yellowknife for medical travel. The salary dollars are there. So that's one of the factors we will consider as we look at this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 47-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment In Hay River

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister know what happens with those funds that have been budgeted for physiotherapist services if they are not expended on the salary and benefits for a physiotherapist? Do those funds lapse? Do they become discretionary money for other things? If they were intended in budget for physio services, can they just be spent in this different way? It makes perfect sense to me for medical travel without any policy change. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 47-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment In Hay River

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the authorities have significant latitude on how they spend those funds that are given to them for a provision of the services in their regions and communities. So, if you look at the project that we had at 13 percent, that most authorities, with exception of a couple, are always facing difficult fiscal realities and trying to make the dollars they have meet the needs. The issue of putting whatever dollars that are in the authority budget to use has never been a problem. Thank you.

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

Question 48-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is also for the Minister of Health and Social Services and it is in regards to the co-payment medical travel. The co-payment that I have been pursuing for the last couple of days, Mr. Speaker. A lot has been said but as I indicated in my statement, I am still unable to give a good explanation to my constituent as to why she should pay when she can least afford it. So what is the Minister's answer to that question?

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

Return To Question 48-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, at this particular point that is a policy of the Department of Health and Social Services that is on the books and has been on the books for some time. That is why the department and authorities are still in the position of carrying out and following through with implementing our policy. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 48-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we just kind of went completely backward because the Minister at least showed his indication and his knowledge of the problem in this area and he has shown more motivation to take action and now he is telling me that this is just the way it is and it is just going to have to be that way. Can you not see the discriminatory and arbitrary nature of this and the government should not be engaged in such a practice in the name of money? Can you not see anything wrong with that, Mr. Speaker?

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

Further Return To Question 48-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member initially asked me why her constituent would have to pay. I was just stating the fact in the reality of what the policy is at this point in time. Am I aware of the concerns? Do I see it as an issue that needs addressing? Yes, I do. Having taken steps to attempt to deal with that within the context of the other supplementary health benefits we provide as a government, yes, we have. Are we committed to coming back with a plan? Yes, we are. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 48-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, his standard answer is that he's studying things, he's coming out with a plan, he is looking for blue chip information, you know that sort of worked 14 months ago when he became a Minister. Is the Minister not aware that we are running out of time here, that he doesn't have time to study for the next six months on what to do? When is he going to take any action to the things that are being raised here? When is he going to come up with answers on this thing? How long is he going to study it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Madam Lee. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 48-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services is moving on a whole host of issues and initiatives and has been for the last 14 months with doctors, nurses, training, long-term care, alcohol, drug, mental health, family violence, this is one issue that has been identified as a problem. The whole issue of supplementary health benefits has been identified as a problem. The programs we have are patchwork that have evolved over the years. This one particular piece continues to be an irritant for my colleagues across the floor. We are going to address that and we are going to do that as quickly as we can. We are going to do that in conjunction and consultation with the Social Programs committee. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 48-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With all due respect, this is not a personal issue on my part. It is a public policy question. It is a question about something that is highly discriminatory and arbitrary, and totally based on pure luck as to whether or not you pay this \$250 or not. As it is now, the only people who pay it are the ones who can least afford it. The government is raising \$1 million plus on the backs of these people and this is wrong and he doesn't have to include it with a basket of all the other stuff that he is working on. It needs an answer now so why can't he act on that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 48-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't argue with the Members. In a passion plea, in articulation of the problem, we are going to deal with it in a careful way. That is the commitment I have made and that is what I am going to follow through on. Thank you.

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

Question 49-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, following up on my Member's statement, my question is directed to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and again around the MOU that was signed by this government. Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my Member's statement, there are many questions left out there on what this MOU is intended to do. Mr. Speaker, the Minister, in response to my question in unedited Hansard on page 304, responded to me and gave me a lot of examples of what is happening now in aboriginal governments and development corporations. The examples you gave me, existing right now, are very positive and I think it shows go well for those aboriginal companies that have been able to get these contracts where they've joined to bid on the big contracts but, Mr. Speaker, my concern is on the

small people. The people in communities that built companies that don't have a huge payroll but now are at a disadvantage, it seems, by this MOU. So, I would like to know from the Minister, what is this government going to do to insure that we take care of our residents in our communities when it comes to contracting? Thank you.

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

Return To Question 49-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this memorandum of understanding with the Gwich'in Tribal Council in this government is going to be a very good tool for the Gwich'in and their settlement area to try to build capacity to get themselves involved in business. As you notice, it is a five-year arrangement and calls for 50 percent of contracts that are going to be met to go to Gwich'in businesses, to the Gwich'in Tribal Council, which have developed a list of businesses. As for the other 50 percent, which the honourable Members were concerned about is that they are going to continue to use the existing contracting businesses. What we intend to do here, very shortly, is send a team of officials up into the Inuvik area, visit all the communities in that area and try to explain this to them and try to alleviate the fears that are out there. I understand that whenever there is a change, there is a lot of fear attached to it because of the uncertainty and the unanticipated problems that may crop up as we try to implement this new working relationship with the Gwich'in. I just wanted to assure the Member that we will do whatever we can to work with the Gwich'in Tribal Council to make sure that fears that exist out there today as result of this signing will be identified and addressed. I have talked to the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council a number of times over this, as recently as this morning, to see how this is going to play out. He is very aware of the situation in Inuvik and surrounding communities and he knows the great concern that has arisen as a result of this and we agreed to work together to see if we could find ways of implementing this that would not adversely have a huge negative impact on the small non-aboriginal business that may exist up in that area. So there is a spirit of cooperation there. We would like to honour the principle of the MOU and how we implement it. We would like to work with the communities up there, along with the Gwich'in Tribal Council, to try to identify what the problems are to see if we could solve these as we implement them. This is a new approach and we will have a lot of answers and I am sure there are a lot of questions and we want to do this in a manner that will be acceptable to the people in the region that are going to be affected. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 49-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister is saying that a team will go up and meet with the Gwich'in and discuss how this will be implemented. I would like to know if they will be meeting with the Inuvik Chamber of Commerce as well to further discuss this and show what impacts it might have.

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

Further Return To Question 49-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, yes, the instruction to the team from RWED and other departments associated would be to meet with all the different groups that are going to be impacted such as the chamber of commerce, the municipal governments, the band governments, the Metis, the Inuvialuit and all the different people who will be affected by this MOU. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 49-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as well with this hopefully the Minister will have information as to what impacts this will have. For example, if the company has a guaranteed 50 percent and they are allowed to bid on the other 50 percent, the people who are only able to bid on work who don't have guarantees are going to be competing with others and have to make sure they sharpen their pencils, but if someone already has a 50 percent guaranteed workload, they don't have to sharpen their pencil as much and they seem to already have an advantage on another company. So hopefully as he explains this, he will show how that might be mitigated and what will be done for those other companies who don't have guarantees. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 49-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, this is a new approach. In looking at this through the negotiation of this MOU, we asked a lot of questions. We want to do the right thing for the people who are going to be affected who are not with the Gwich'in. We want to make certain that they know what the implications are and that in talking with the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council that he understands that and that he is willing to look at ways on how to implement it that would be acceptable for the businesses up in the Inuvik region.

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

Supplementary To Question 49-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister also inform us as to what is going to be included as 50 percent contract value? For example, we know there has been a contract signed with the Gwich'in on Dempster Highway work that equals almost \$2.5 million a year guaranteed and any other work after that is bid by other companies. So, is that going to be included as part of that 50 percent guarantee? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 49-14(6): Gwich'in Contracting Memorandum Of Understanding

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, all the different contracts that currently exist are going to be looked at. There are going to be arrangements, a series of meetings between representatives of our government and the Gwich'in on looking at the total work that is going to happen in the Gwich'in settlement area. That would include the highway negotiated contract as well. So all that will be considered in the total 50 percent. Thank you.

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

Question 50-14(6): Three-Tiered Approach To Supplementary Health Benefits

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. It revolves around my statement earlier today on the subject of medical travel co-payments. Right now, Mr. Speaker, we have a three-tier health benefits program for supplementary health benefits. The status Dene and Inuit people have full coverage paid for by the federal government. Metis people now have 80 percent coverage and that is soon to be rising to 100 percent paid for by this government. The balance doesn't enjoy the same level of coverage. How does the Minister justify a three-tiered approach to supplementary health benefits in the Northwest Territories?

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

Return To Question 50-14(6): Three-Tiered Approach To Supplementary Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague has identified one of the reasons we are taking a look at this program and we want to do it in a comprehensive way because there are inconsistencies in a number of areas. We want to look at the whole program and make improvements that are necessary and address some of these fundamental flaws. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 50-14(6): Three-Tiered Approach To Supplementary Health Benefits

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister said he didn't want to deal with things in a piecemeal basis, but we have piecemeal in response to the Metis coverage and are doing the right thing there. Co-payment came in in the late '90s as a result of our fiscal crisis and was solely brought in as a means to raise money. Now that we have started putting money back into health and education, why will the Minister not deal with this irritant to our constituents right now?

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

Further Return To Question 50-14(6): Three-Tiered Approach To Supplementary Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister, I am setting up a process to look at this in as careful and speedy a way as possible to consider all the factors and make sure that we don't leave any revenue on the table that the federal government may be currently putting into the system. We have our own fiscal realities to face. So I am acting on it in a...(inaudible)...manner, in my opinion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 50-14(6): Three-Tiered Approach To Supplementary Health Benefits

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister keeps talking about the money we get from the federal government. If it's over \$1 million, it means there are thousands of \$250 cheques that we are getting back from the federal government. Thousands of them! Mr. Speaker, will the Minister present in this House a fiscal accounting of where that money is coming from? That \$1 million that he claims is coming from the federal government on the medical travel co-payment?

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

Further To Question 50-14(6): Three-Tiered Approach To Supplementary Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to table that information, as well as the information we have on the supplementary health benefits program, so people can have a sense of the scale of what we are talking about and the number of different programs that are there under the same supplementary health benefits. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 50-14(6): Three-Tiered Approach To Supplementary Health Benefits

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister, at the same time, table the cost to collect? I want to know how many people are involved in collecting this fee now that we've instituted it and how many people we've had to increase just because of this fee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 50-14(6): Three-Tiered Approach To Supplementary Health Benefits

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will review Hansard and make every attempt to comply with the Member's request. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 51-14(6): Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I have questions for the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Joe Handley. Last year, when I asked the Minister to change the timeframe for wide restricted loads to travel on Highway No. 3, I was told it was too late to change the schedule. Mr. Speaker, again, I see an identical schedule printed today in the Yellowknifer. I would like to ask the Minister why, after I had spoken out against it, that he would continue with the same kind of schedule as last year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 51-14(6): Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, in setting up schedules for wide loads that are moving down our highway system and up to the mines, we have to take a lot of factors into consideration, one of them being traffic. We did, as the Member requested, look at the time schedules. I asked my department, we looked at the amount of traffic and the length of highway that would have to be closed for short periods of time, based on that it was determined that the lightest traffic is from the hours of 9:00 until 11:30 in the morning. Mr. Speaker, I know there are other factors that have to be taken into consideration. I did have discussions with the Member this morning about the possibility of changing that schedule if it seems to be more suitable. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 51-14(6): Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for the answer he's given me. I would also like to see the information that he's getting about traffic at certain times. That is really great information. Everyone can use that. I would like to ask the Minister if they know when truck traffic is scheduled from Alberta coming into the Northwest Territories, why can't we set the truck traffic in the NWT? Why do we have to go along with industry? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 51-14(6): Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, in moving these wide oversized loads through Alberta and into the Northwest Territories, companies have to arrange for a vehicle to accompany them and shut down highways, so it's not just us, it's also Alberta. In working with Alberta and working with the companies, it's been determined that the safest, best way of doing it is to have the vehicles arrive overnight at Rae-Edzo and then they are marshalled there and brought through that piece of unreconstructed highway, about 50 kilometres, during daylight hours. We and the companies have to work together on this and have to find out what's the best way that will cause

the least disruption and the least chance of accidents for everybody right through Alberta and the NWT. Any one piece has to make a little bit of a compromise somewhere along the way. Thanks.

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

Supplementary To Question 51-14(6): Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad the Minister recognizes the hazards on Highway No. 3. I would also like to mention to him that the Ingraham Trail is a lot narrower and windier than Highway No. 3, but the traffic is travelling at night. Aren't there more safety concerns on that highway than on Highway No. 3? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 51-14(6): Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: No, Mr. Speaker, first of all, on Highway No. 3 we look at everything. Safety is most important. We do not want those large, oversize loads travelling on that narrow old piece of highway at night and meeting traffic. It's just too dangerous. So we arrange to have it during the day. I am flexible on the hours and we have talked. If there is reason to change it from 12:00 to 2:30 during the day, I am fine with that, we can make that arrangement. When it comes to the Ingraham Trail, they do the hauling of those oversize loads up the Ingraham Trail between midnight and 6:00 in the morning because at that time there is virtually no traffic other than trucking companies themselves and the buses that take aurora tourists out on there. They do make arrangements to coordinate everything with the aurora tourist traffic. So that's the best time to do it there. I realize Highway No. 4 is narrow, but there is virtually no traffic during those hours that can't be predicted. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 51-14(6): Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister agreed to making changes on the time and I would like to ask him right now in this House if you would agree to changing the hours and switching with the Ingraham Trail, which would benefit all constituents of mine and all motorists on Highway No. 3. If there is no traffic over there, it doesn't matter what time they go through there anyway according to his statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 51-14(6): Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am going to leave the traffic on the Ingraham Trail where it is now where the heavy oversize loads travel between midnight and 6:00 in the morning. We've had lots of consultation with the people along

that area and that is determined to be the best time to do it and the aurora tourist companies are happy with it, as happy as they can be with it and that's the best time. With Highway No. 3, I will do further consultation, have my department consult with the communities involved, mainly Rae-Edzo and make sure they are happy if we change it to some other time during the day. The one that we will not, at this point, consider is having those heavy oversize trucks go through there in the dark for that 50-kilometre stretch. Mr. Speaker, I might also mention that we only marshal the trucks at 50 kilometres. It's the only place we close the road and partway through that – and that goes from kilometre 272 to 322 approximately – and in the middle of that is Boundary Creek where there is a pullover area. Those big trucks do allow, if there happens to be vehicles, they do pull over and allow traffic to go aside that way. Nobody should be caught for a long period of time. As well, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to put signs at both ends, at the Yellowknife end and at the Rae-Edzo end to alert motorists that might be using the road at those hours that they could be delayed by these oversize loads passing through. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 52-14(6): Federal Budget Impact On NWT Housing

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up with some questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. This is in reference to some information that was contained in yesterday's federal budget, Mr. Speaker, that budget made much of its contribution to reducing the social deficit that I talked about. Housing is one of the big issues across Canada, not only here in the North, and I wanted to ask the Minister what opportunities he sees from the additional \$320 million that was identified in the budget to increase the supply of affordable rental housing in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 52-14(6): Federal Budget Impact On NWT Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In consultation with my colleague, the Finance Minister, the amounts that were announced in the federal budget yesterday on pages 2 and 5, I believe, are so minuscule that it won't impact any of our own programs. So we are going to continue to retain the strategies outlined, our affordable housing strategy, and that's the best method to use at this moment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 52-14(6): Federal Budget Impact On NWT Housing

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, that is disappointing, but I will continue. There was also a reference in the budget to a three-year extension of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's residential rehabilitation assistance program,

\$128 million a year. Is that the same story: It's not going to mean anything for the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 52-14(6): Federal Budget Impact On NWT Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That aspect of the question requires more evaluation and assessment as to what it would mean to the NWT housing social programs. I need to take a little more time to study the impacts, but I will certainly get back to the Member as soon as I can.

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

Supplementary To Question 52-14(6): Federal Budget Impact On NWT Housing

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, a third part of the Budget Address in relation to housing suggests there is going to be a three-year extension to the supporting communities' partnerships, \$135 million a year to help communities sustain their efforts to address homelessness. We, in Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, have a homelessness coalition that has demonstrated it can do things. Will this be a benefit to our continuing efforts to help homelessness, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 52-14(6): Federal Budget Impact On NWT Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of real dollars, I cannot comment on that, but I will make a commitment that we will continue to work with the homelessness coalition with our existing funds. We will also try to find new funds under this announcement. Hopefully with further consultation with my federal and provincial colleagues, we will be able to define what the federal budget means to the issue of homelessness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 52-14(6): Federal Budget Impact On NWT Housing

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess this is on the heels of the tremendous cooperation that our Premier has undertaken with the Premiers of the Yukon and Nunavut to engage in a cooperative effort on the health front. Is the Minister for Housing here in the NWT considering a similar campaign with our sister territories to get more of the federal dollars into the North for housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 52-14(6): Federal Budget Impact On NWT Housing

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that in our last conference call amongst all the territorial housing Ministers, we wanted to take a unified

approach with the federal government to try to access more federal dollars for a number of housing issues. We have tentatively scheduled a meeting for the end of March to further that discussion amongst ourselves to see where we can access those federal dollars for a number of social housing issues. We will continue to pursue that from our own internal discussions with other Members across the country. Thank you.

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

Question 53-14(6): Decentralization Of Government Positions

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for Minister Antoine, also known as the Deputy Premier. It deals with my Member's statement earlier today. Mr. Speaker, there are approximately 3,830 jobs in the Northwest Territories government. Of those, 203 are in Fort Simpson; 325 in Fort Smith; 296 in Hay River; 336 in Inuvik; 1,978 in Yellowknife. If you do the calculations, the other 28 communities share 658 positions. These are current to December 31, 2002 statistics, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it took a constitutional challenge to get representation here. Do we need a constitutional challenge to get GNWT employment representation across the board in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 53-14(6): Decentralization Of Government Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The honourable Member is asking me a question of whether or not there is going to be a legal challenge. I don't know. That's up to people in the communities. I think the example the honourable Member used is with regard to the boundaries commission in Yellowknife. It was the citizens who put this action forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 53-14(6): Decentralization Of Government Positions

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was an example. I don't think we need a constitutional issue to put government employees in every community. It takes political will, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government is currently developing a transition document for the next government to consider. Would the Minister commit that a framework be developed to see some of these positions be devolved to the communities so they can deliver programs and services on behalf of the GNWT, whether it's under the community services board or direct employment for the GNWT in his departments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 53-14(6): Decentralization Of Government Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question, important initiative, that the honourable Member is pursuing in terms of this government, whether we are decentralized enough. Perhaps we should look at ways on how the government in the future should be working to decentralize to the communities. This kind of work requires a lot of allowances, a lot of review. Currently, the life of this government is very short. There are a number of initiatives that this government is pursuing. One of them is the corporate review and transition planning project that is going on. There is also a headquarters review going on. Perhaps those types of reviews would be a place where this specific type of question could be directed, so the people who are doing the review for this would also incorporate what the honourable Member is pursuing. To try to fit it into the life of this government, I think that might be an opportune place where this initiative should be asked. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 53-14(6): Decentralization Of Government Positions

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with 658 positions in 28 communities, the major of which are seasonal, be they firefighters or teachers, Mr. Speaker, to me those numbers don't indicate an appropriate level of devolution in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Minister that we should put this in a discussion for further analysis. That's why I am looking for a commitment from the Minister that a framework be developed for consideration. I would like to ask the Minister what is the level of government programs and services we try to deliver in the communities, a lot of them are with social services, income support, welfare. I think we can eliminate those numbers if we put more positions in those communities. We all say that self-government is going to happen. Let's be proactive. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister once again for some kind of firm commitment to demonstrate the political will of this House so the people working for us who are preparing the document have a clear understanding that there is political will here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Mr. Deputy Premier, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 53-14(6): Decentralization Of Government Positions

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, the only commitment I can make to the honourable Member is that for this department and headquarters review that is taking place, the firm of Deloitte and Touche has been selected to do work for us. Perhaps we could give them the direction to also look at this scenario that the honourable Member is pursuing. I think it's a very legitimate area where we can do the work. I understand that during the review process, the team will be looking at information and materials from other reviews. They will also look at best practices of other jurisdictions and they would like to interview the MLAs and senior management team. Again, in the life of this government, to do a specific direction to ask for more positions to go to the smaller communities, we need to have a

coordinated plan. Perhaps the review might be a good way to pursue this initiative. Thank you.

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

Question 54-14(6): Member Of Parliament's Comments In Response To The Federal Budget

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be for the Minister of Finance and they are coming on the heels of the federal budget and the media reporting of the federal budget.

The Minister is in the local media talking about our dire situation, mounting debt and the deficits we are running and his disappointment in the federal budget in what he sees as essentially shortchanging the North. However, our Member of Parliament doesn't seem to see it the same way, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if the strategic investments that we have been trying to make -- and let's be honest, these are the cause of our deficit budget -- if those have been effectively communicated to the Member of Parliament and if it was the Minister's impression that the Member of Parliament was onside with this approach. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 54-14(6): Member Of Parliament's Comments In Response To The Federal Budget

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I believe our Member of Parliament is very well briefed on all the major initiatives that we have undertaken whether it's strategic infrastructure or health concern issues or housing and so on. She knows our situation. She has certainly expressed support for it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 54-14(6): Member Of Parliament's Comments In Response To The Federal Budget

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I don't know exactly what the Member of Parliament said, but the media certainly is suggesting that she's talked about the federal surplus and insisted that it wasn't the federal government that suggested that we should be running deficits. I'm wondering if she's ever expressed concern about the deficits to the Minister of Finance in the past. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 54-14(6): Member Of Parliament's Comments In Response To The Federal Budget

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I've certainly had discussions with the Member of Parliament about our impending deficit. I have not spoken to her since we have tabled our budget here, but I won't get into the detail of those discussions. But she understands very well that we are being driven into a deficit. Again I won't guess at the media's

accuracy in quoting her and so on. But, in my view, she's trying to put a good spin on the budget, and there are some good things in there for all Canadians. But I'll tell you, it's very difficult to get excited about some of them. If I take as one example, Mr. Speaker, housing. There's \$80 million for affordable rental housing for Canada over the next two years; \$40 million each year for two years. If we were take that on a per capita basis, 0.13 percent, our share of that money, Mr. Speaker, would be \$52,000 per year. That doesn't even build a porch on a house, in most cases. That kind of support is really, really minimal. It doesn't help us very much. If they gave us one percent, as they did with the strategic infrastructure program, that would give us \$400,000. At least we could build a house and a half in the North. But that kind of expenditure or commitment by the federal government really doesn't help us that much. As I go through the budget and try to work this out, I just can't get excited about the little bits of money that are coming our way.

I will help the Member of Parliament in every way I can to try to get away from this per capita thing and give us something that's based on our needs. Every single way I can I'll work with her to do that, because I think that's what we have to do in the North, not fight with each other about who created the deficit.

But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, we cannot keep ourselves out of deficit if we're going to respond to the economic opportunities we have, and we certainly can't expect 42,000 or 43,000 people in the North to pay for all of this investment we have to make. It's impossible. The federal government takes the revenue, they have to put money back in here. Thank you.

---Applause

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

Supplementary To Question 54-14(6): Member Of Parliament's Comments In Response To The Federal Budget

MR. BELL: Thank you. I certainly agree with the Minister. I think the commitments being made are really hollow, and I think the Minister has clearly articulated that. I'm wondering though, considering the meeting of the northern Premiers with the Prime Minister on Thursday, if it's helpful to have the MP and our Finance Minister out there. It seems to be an inconsistent message. Was there not some discussion about taking a consistent message to Ottawa, so that we're not seen to be disputing the cause of the deficit? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 54-14(6): Member Of Parliament's Comments In Response To The Federal Budget

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, we always want to be consistent in our approach to Ottawa, both us as a government with the business coalition, with our Member of Parliament, and in fact with the other territories. We want to make sure that we know what each other are saying.

Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that we were, and I believe that we are, consistent in the approach we're taking with health. I've not been involved directly in the negotiation with the federal

government on the health issues. I know our Premier has a meeting with the Prime Minister tomorrow, and I don't want to get into what the MP may be saying or what the strategy will be tomorrow. I will continue to speak with the Premier on it, but I'd sooner not preempt whatever is happening tomorrow. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 54-14(6): Member Of Parliament's Comments In Response To The Federal Budget

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the same line of questioning about the media reporting of the budget, in the Globe and Mail, a column was reporting that the northern Premiers turned their backs on \$5 billion. In fact, I believe, Mr. Speaker, it's \$5 million. I'm wondering if the Finance Minister has seen this, and if he is going to set the record straight so that Canadians have a better understanding of what we're dealing with.

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

Further Return To Question 54-14(6): Member Of Parliament's Comments In Response To The Federal Budget

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I haven't seen that particular one. But basically what the federal government was offering us was about \$5.2 million a year over the next three years. We need \$15 million just to keep up with our forced growth. That's no additions to anything. We're really looking at the amounts to the provinces and what the federal government took away when they cut our base by five percent, we should be getting \$25 million a year in order to just stay even and keep a health care system here than ensure our people have the same rights to health benefits as anywhere else in Canada. So what was offered in the first offer that the Premiers felt they were compelled to take but our Premiers didn't take from the three territories, was \$5.2 million. It was just so short we were still going to be driving ourselves into debt. I hope Premiers Kakwi, Fentie and Okalik have success tomorrow, and I encourage them to do everything we can to explain to the federal government what our needs are.

In terms of miscommunications in the media, I'd like to see the one from the Globe and Mail. I haven't noticed it yet, but definitely we would want to correct those misconceptions across the country, because most Canadians don't realize the federal government takes all the royalties and most of the taxes out of the North, and we don't have that money. They sometimes think we're just a bunch of whiners up here; but, I'll tell you, we are being forced to the wall because we don't get that revenue but we have the expenditures. We really need the federal government to recognize that and put some of that money that they're taking out of the North back into the North. That's the only way we can resolve this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Question 55-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services, and it's in regards to the co-payment. Mr. Speaker, in the back and forth questions and answers, I suggested to the Minister that perhaps he should look into creating a rebate program so that those who are the least able to pay this could access this program. I had also indicated to the Minister that there's precedence for such a case. There used to be a rebate for property tax. So I'm just wondering if the Minister will consider taking that option. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 55-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member made the suggestion yesterday in Committee of the Whole during the review of the main estimates for Health and Social Services, and I committed to consider that and I will once again restate that commitment, that we will consider that suggestion. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 55-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the important point is that the action will be taken as quickly as possible. So I would like a commitment from the Minister as to when exactly we should be able to see the result of his consideration of this option. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 55-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, we will be discussing the issue of co-payments and supplementary health benefits over the next few weeks. Certainly once the House is adjourned, we can pay more attention to this. We would like to have something, I would suggest, before the end of March.

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

Supplementary To Question 55-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the meantime, could the Minister suggest what I should be telling my constituent about her having to pay this, probably prior to the Minister making this decision?

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

Further Return To Question 55-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are two things. As I indicated, the current policy is still in place with having to come up with a method or a way or an option to change it. We also do have, if it's a problem with personal hardship, indigent benefits, where there's assistance for those who do not have the financial wherewithal to meet these particular demands.

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

Supplementary To Question 55-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, what would he suggest that I say to my constituent who feels that the government should not have the right to raise money on the backs of those who can least afford it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm not sure that's a proper question the Member is asking, however, I'll let the Minister respond if he chooses. Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 55-14(6): Medical Travel Co-Payment Policy

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member needs no advice from me on how to respond to her constituent. She has been an articulate proponent of the issue, and I would suggest that she has all the skills necessary to continue to respond to that issue.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. That's a pat on the back there, Ms. Lee. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 56-14(6): Consultation On Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Joe Handley, the Minister of Transportation. Earlier upon questioning, the Minister said that he consulted with his constituents and the trucking companies, but he failed to say that he consulted with the people who use the road the most, the residents of Rae-Edzo who travel Highway No. 3 for all their services. Can the Minister tell me why there was no consultation in Rae-Edzo, or with myself? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 56-14(6): Consultation On Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, as MLA for Weledeh and where Highway No. 4 is located, I have, as MLA, asked the trucking companies to meet with the residents and the other cabin users along Ingraham Trail to make sure that they understood how that road is being used. So that's the consultation that took place in my constituency with me as an MLA.

In terms of the other users of the road, there are a lot of users in Yellowknife and there are a lot of users in Rae-Edzo, as well as Providence and other people. The department keeps a toll-free line. We keep it open to any recommendations, any suggestions, any requests. If the Member would like to have a meeting in his constituency to meet with his constituents and the truckers, I'd be happy to set that up, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 56-14(6): Consultation On Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The point of having meetings after all the schedules are already made, I don't see any point in having other meetings set up. So I'd like to ask the Minister if he could just change the times and just listen to a commonsense approach from another Member, and just deal with it. Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 56-14(6): Consultation On Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I've already made the commitment that we will consult with the communities, and make sure that the mayor, the chief and the other leaders in the communities are happy. I'm open to changing the schedule. But, as I say, I want to have those oversized vehicles going through the reconstructed piece of road, that 50 kilometres, during daylight hours. It's just too dangerous to make it into a night thing, because that road is too narrow and there are a lot of curves in it and so on. So I'm open, if there's consensus, to changing the hours there. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 56-14(6): Consultation On Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's his answer, but he said he is open to it, he said he will not change it. He did not say he will change it. Will he change it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 56-14(6): Consultation On Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly, if that's the consensus of the leaders in the communities, definitely I'll change it. I think with the Yellowknife constituents, I haven't heard much from Yellowknife people so I assume they'd be happy, they wouldn't care which way we changed it. If Rae-Edzo is happy with it, we'll change it to 12:00, 2:30, or 3:00 in the afternoon if that's a better time. We will also post notices at each end of the road of when there are going to be oversized vehicles passing through. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 56-14(6): Consultation On Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy with that answer. I'd like to make a comment saying that not many people from Yellowknife travel that road because of the treacherousness of it. Even a Member from this House has told me that in the 22 years that he's lived here, he's only travelled that road once. I'd like to ask the Minister if he will consult with the people of Rae-Edzo in the future, if it's going to affect them anywhere, anytime. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Transportation, the final answer.

Further Return To Question 56-14(6): Consultation On Restricted Load Schedule For Highway No. 3

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will consult with the people in Rae-Edzo. If there is a request next year before we start the trucking season to have the truckers over there to meet with the people in Rae-Edzo, I'd be happy to arrange that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Time for question period has ended. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to Opening Address. Item 10, replies to 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 Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 14: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 16-14(6): Errata To 2003-2004 Main Estimates

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document: Errata to the 2003-2004 Main Estimates. One line item for the sewage treatment project in Lutselk'e was inadvertently left off when the document was originally printed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 2-14(6): Health Care Funding

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 21, 2003, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that this Assembly urges the Prime Minister to establish a Territorial Health Care Fund to address the unique challenges and special needs of Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut residents.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move the motion that I gave notice of today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to move his motion. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Lafferty, your motion.

ITEM 17: MOTIONS

Motion 2-14(6): Health Care Funding, Carried

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS in September 2000, First Ministers adopted a vision for publicly funded health services delivered to Canadians in a cost-effective and fair manner no matter where they live;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut face extraordinary costs in making sure that their residents have access to health care services, facilities and professionals;

AND WHEREAS the Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada recommended in November 2002 special consideration for the health needs of aboriginal Canadians and Canadians living in the territories and rural and remote communities;

AND WHEREAS provincial Premiers recognized in January 2003 that health reform and the financing of health reform must take into account the special circumstances of the territories through the establishment by the federal government of a Territorial Health Care Fund;

AND WHEREAS the three territorial Premiers chose not to support federal health renewal provisions and funding arrangements arising from the February 4 to 5, 2003, First Ministers meeting and have continued since then to collaborate on solutions which will benefit all territorial residents;

AND WHEREAS the Prime Minister and Health Minister McLellan have recognized that national health reform program funding to the territories which is based upon per capita will simply not produce an improvement in health and health care services;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Thebacha, that this Assembly urges the Prime Minister to establish a Territorial Health Care Fund to address the unique challenges and special needs of Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut residents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. We have a motion and the motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Is the House ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Recorded vote.

MR. SPEAKER: A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

Recorded Vote

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Lee, Mr. Roland, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Bell, Mr. Nitah, Mr. Braden, Mr. Steen, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Antoine, Mr. Handley, Mr. Allen, Mr. Ootes and Mr. Delorey.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed to the motion, please stand. All those abstaining from the motion, please stand. Mr. Clerk, may I have the envelope? Thank you. The results of the vote: yeas, 16; nays, zero; and no abstentions. The motion has been passed unanimously.

---Carried

---Applause

Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 19: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 6: Electoral Boundaries Commission Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill provides for the periodic establishment of Electoral Boundaries Commissions for the Northwest Territories. The first commission will review the electoral boundaries of the Northwest Territories within two years after the 2003 general election, to be followed by a new commission established within two years after each second general election. A commission will conduct public hearings in the course of its review, and will subsequently prepare a report. This report will be made public and it will be laid before the Legislative Assembly. The commission will dissolve 60 days after the report is laid before the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. We have a motion and the motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

---Applause

Bill 6 has had second reading and is, therefore...The honourable Member for Nunakput.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act, moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) on this bill. Are there any nays? There are no nays. The bill stands referred to Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 7: An Act To Amend The Legislative Assembly And Executive Council Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act to delete provisions that would automatically repeal at the dissolution of the 14th Legislative Assembly the electoral districts that return Members to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. We have a motion. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 7 has had second reading. The honourable Member for Nunakput.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have the bill forwarded to Committee of the Whole for today. Are there any nays? There are no nays, therefore, Bill 7 has had second reading and, accordingly, will be moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 8: An Act To Amend The Elections Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Elections Act, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Elections Act to provide that persons imprisoned in correctional institutions may vote at an election by way of special ballot, and clarifies that persons who are incarcerated, attending studies or undergoing medical treatment outside of the Northwest Territories do not lose their residency during the period of that absence from the Territories. The bill adjusts the time within which a candidate may withdraw his or her candidacy, requires the Chief Electoral Officer to arrange the printing of the required number of ballots for an electoral district and extends the period within which the Chief Electoral Officer must arrange for the publication of notice of an advance poll in a newspaper. In addition, the bill corrects several provisions that contain references that no longer pertain in view of the earlier amendments to the act, and minor amendments are made to the French version of provisions related to the content of the ballot paper. 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.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 8 has had second reading. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Elections Act, moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 8 moved into Committee of the Whole for today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to Committee of the Whole for today. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bills 3, Bill 6, Bill 7 and Bill 8, committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6), with Mr. Delorey in the Chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I'll call the committee to order. We're here to have a number of issues discussed in Committee of the Whole. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to recommend the committee continue its consideration of Bill 3 and committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6) concurrently, and that we continue with the detail of consideration of the Department of Health and Social Services budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The Chair calls for a break, and we will come back to review the Department of Health and Social Services.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I call the Committee of the Whole back to order. We are here to review health and social services. Does the Minister wish to bring in any witnesses?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses in, please? For the record, Mr. Minister, could you introduce your witnesses, please.

Bill 3: Appropriation Act, 2003-2004

Department Of Health And Social Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mr. Dave Murray, the deputy minister of Health and Social Services; and Warren St. Germaine, the director of finance for Health and Social Services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Page 6-9, health and social services. We're still on general comments, so I'll call for general comments from the floor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

Detail

Directorate

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Detail. Okay, we'll go to page 6-9. Directorate, operations expense, total operations expense, \$6.198 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Program Delivery Support

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 6-13, program delivery support, operations support, total operations expense, \$28.595 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Earlier in general comments, I raised the issue of the retention and recruitment section of the department. Seeing under program delivery support there's some mention of recruitment and training here, I'd like to know from the Minister if he's had an opportunity to look at...if he's got numbers that he can provide the committee regarding how many staff have been hired through this recruitment and retention section.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have numbers that we can offer in regard to nurses that job offers have been made with. We can also give the Member our current vacancy rates that will indicate where we're still short. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be glad to have those numbers and just to be clear, is it numbers where the recruitment and retention section has helped in hiring of new staff, or is that just staff overall? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we can provide the numbers of staff that have been hired with the assistance of the recruitment and retention unit. As well, we will also, just for general information, provide the latest vacancy rates in the authorities and in the department so the Member can see where we still have problems. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. We're on page 6-13, program delivery support, operations expense, total operations expense, \$28.585 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 6-15, program delivery support, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$15.715 million. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I notice that the amount that we're contributing to health and social services authorities for telehealth coordinators is going up. I was wondering if we could get a bit of an explanation for what the plan is for the expenditures in this coming year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, while we don't have all the funds we would like, we are seeking to put in three new sites: one in Yellowknife, Lutselk'e, Deninu. They won't be the full-scale telehealth sites. They will have video conferencing capability, and we'll get the frame in place for further expansion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can we get a bit of a snapshot of where we are in rolling out telehealth? I think that Members had been quite supportive of this initiative when it was first announced, with the expectation that we would be able to improve services to Northerners. I think it would be interesting to know how successful we've been at implementing this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just grab this one piece of information here. Mr. Chairman, we have coordinators for Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, and Yellowknife, two in Stanton, which is a total of seven of complete funding. We also have information we provided to committee, which shows the system usage as of April 1, 2002, to December 31, 2002, in terms of the type of usage and the total number of people served, which I can share with the committee once again. I'm not sure if it was given to Committee of the Whole or Social Programs, but I can share that with the committee. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that information would be interesting. Unfortunately, if it's just being shared with committee it doesn't get into the public realm, so perhaps the Minister could table the information and that way make it public. I know you can't do it today, but perhaps tomorrow you could table it so that the public has some understanding of what is happening.

If I could move on, Mr. Chairman, I notice there's approximately \$500,000 going into funding for professional development and retention, over and above what was happening last year. What's this extra half-million dollars going to be used for in the next year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm looking through my notes here. What we've done is we've reprofiled some money. It was part of the recruitment and retention document that was put out. It's going to allow us to do things like professional development, remissible student bursaries, social work, mentorship program, and we got, which totalled I believe, \$482,000 in that area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the Minister said remissible bursaries. I thought that a bursary was a grant. Can we get a bit of an explanation as to how the bursary system works?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the intent of remissibility is to help attract professionals coming out of school and assisting them with paying off and paying down any of the costs they may have incurred, and set up a range in the harder to staff communities where the percentage of remissibility is greater than it would be in some of the larger centres. But the whole intent is to try to provide an incentive to attract professionals: nurses, doctors, and other allied health professionals.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Chair recognizes Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of contributions to health and social services authorities under professional development and retention, can the Minister inform us who is eligible for this professional development?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's open to all allied health and social services professionals, and it's going to be based on current job evaluation. It will outline the training requirements based on that particular document being done, it will indicate what's required by the particular employee and profession. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Was that fully taken up in the previous year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that particular program just came into play late in this fiscal year, so we've been working on the uptake and setting up the process to make sure that it is accessed. But it's relatively new in the latter part of this fiscal year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister inform us as to how a nurse would be able to take this within the existing conditions they find themselves working in? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have to work with the authorities, and we have been working with the authorities on this particular initiative. One of the issues is, of course, to have the time and the backfill capacity so that nurses and other allied health professionals for social services and health can take that. So it's going to be a management planning function, where if you're doing your job evaluations and you have enough lead time, you have to work with the authorities to make sure that they have the adequate staffing so that when a nurse or an employee goes off on professional development that the service levels are still maintained. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under contributions to health and social services authorities, just going back to your comment you made earlier in the House today about the discretionary latitude of health authorities to reallocate money within their budget. I'm a little bit concerned about that, because when you talk about having a system that clearly defines the services that are available in any particular community or region, if there are difficulties with staffing in order to carry out certain programs and services, what you're saying then is that that money could be spent on anything else and it kind of undermines the whole basis for the budget process. If health authorities come forward with budgets, there are certain line items in there for certain programs and services. But then when unforeseen things happen such as the inability to staff positions, that money can just be arbitrarily used for something else. I have a problem with that, particularly since health authorities, all except for a couple of them, have been facing deficits. It seems like it might be a deficit recovery. There could be some incentive to not staff positions in order to address deficits. In fact, then the money gets used for something else. It's just kind of a downloading of the costs associated with that service, for example, people having to go to Edmonton or go to Yellowknife to receive those services. Another thing that could occur if it's at the territorial level here, is the example that Ms. Lee gave today, where there's a shortage of nurses in a certain area of service. So people get medevaced, then that doesn't come back to show on their budget, the potential costs of Larga and whatever the Alberta government charges for those services at a different hospital out of territory. So I want to know in your new plans if you have specific measures you're contemplating to address that potential problem with that discretionary latitude. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we do, Mr. Chairman. We've been working, over the last 14 months or so, to try to better coordinate all aspects of all the authorities and the department to do this together. The issue of adequate and accurate financial information is one that we

are still working with. But we are now working on variance reports that come in quarterly. We also have program people tracking expenditures. We have the senior managers of the department and authorities meeting on a regular basis, as well. I appreciate the Member's concern, and it's a concern that I share as well, that we don't want professional development money, for example, that is important for retention, to be used for some other unanticipated expenditures that may not be what was contemplated, putting us at a disadvantage. So we want to, within reason -- and authorities have within reason -- flexibility, but they don't have total latitude. We are working collectively to make sure that we all stay on task and on target. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. Just on the subject of deficits and contributions to the authorities, what is the status of the deficits right now and deficit recovery? Stanton's deficit, now that there's no board, how are you planning to address that situation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, for the most part, the authorities are on track with their deficits. The Dogrib Community Services Board is the one experiencing the most trouble right now. Stanton is also on target. Even though there's no board, the expectation is that they will still comply with the agreement in terms of deficit recovery program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: So just in terms of Stanton's contemplating deficit recovery actions, so instead of those kinds of directions being provided now by a board, that's just being decided by whom?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it would be the Stanton staff, through the CEO, working with the deputy minister in his capacity of public administrator. We've indicated as well, I believe earlier, that the Joint Leadership Council also provided at a broad level just that oversight on these larger issues of where we're going with this particular issue and others. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: In terms of following up the progress of how any new plans are going to address this discretionary latitude autonomy by health authorities, where might I look in terms of what part of your plan addresses that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I don't have the action plan here, if that's the document the Member is referring to. We are working to better

integrate and upgrade all our financial systems. We still don't have capability and a standard financial information system among the authorities. So that is a work in progress, and we will continue to speak to the business planning process as we try to move that particular initiative. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: That's all the questions I have right now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Page 6-15, program delivery support, grants and contributions, contributions. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be interested in following up on Mrs. Groenewegen's line of questioning about the Stanton authority. Is there any position being taken right now in terms of the potential or the possibility of a new board being reinstated in some capacity to help run or help guide the operation at Stanton? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's the intention for the foreseeable future to go with the current system, as we try to focus our attention on the management and responding to the recommendations coming out of the consultant's report. We will get to the governance issue in due course. But at this time, the intention is to focus more on the program side at Stanton. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. That's all, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Program delivery support, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$15.715 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Health Services Programs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll move on to 6-17, health services programs, operations expense, total operations expense, \$118.535 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 6-19, health services programs, grants and contributions, grants, \$50,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Contributions, \$97.601 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total grants and contributions, \$97.651.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Supplementary Health Programs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll move on to 6-21, supplementary health programs, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$14.2 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll move on to 6-23, supplementary health programs, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$9.849 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I had a question under grants and contributions under the item that was just approved. Am I allowed to ask a question on that?

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Agreed. Go ahead, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today in the House, the Minister was questioned on how much money it costs us to recover the co-payment under the medical travel, and that will be an interesting response. I will look forward to that. First of all let's just ask, in a case where the patient does not have the means to pay, is there any provision for financing that \$250 co-payment on a temporary basis for people who don't have the cash on hand? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if it's a case of financial hardship, then we have the Indigent Health Benefit Program that is set up to help people in that circumstance. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the indigent health benefit, I understand that that would be for people on income support and people who could prove that they didn't have sufficient income. What about people who just don't have the money saved up or the cash, but may have the ability to pay if they were given some time or some terms under which to do that? Is there provision for that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, currently there's capacity and processes in place to bill back people and to arrange payment with them, the key point being that medical travel is not denied. We will work out the keys to get the client to the service, and we have those particular options available. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well I think that is a good thing, and I'm sure that will also factor into the costs of whatever efforts the government has to take to collect that co-payment. I was just wondering, in the case where the government is unsuccessful in recovering that money, that credit that may be extended to a patient, is it treated as any other type of debt owed to the government whereby if at some time in the future that same person were applying for some other form of government assistance, that that would be denied until such time as that debt was cleared up. I just want to know how strict they are in the recovery process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is that it would follow the normal government process of write-offs and forgiveness over the years that it takes to do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So say in the unfortunate circumstance where somebody, a single parent is working but not earning very much money and is faced with the unfortunate circumstance of a child, for example, being sick and having to make several trips to Yellowknife or Edmonton and being assisted with that. Then at some time in the future, that same patient applies for student financial assistance for upgrading or something of that nature. I just want to know if that debt would then preclude them from other forms of government assistance or funding at some time in the future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member, in her time in this House, knows as well as I that there is sometimes tremendous latitude when it comes to write-off and forgiveness. Will we hunt down to the ground somebody who owes us \$250? I would assume that through this government process that it's there. I know that the follow-up, from my time in committee, on that type of recovery is modest at best. Are we very efficient and effective in terms of our information system and capacity to do that? I don't think so. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wish the Minister wouldn't refer to what I know as well as he knows. I'm not being paid to answer the questions; he is. So I might suggest that his editorial comment with respect to what I know, he might refrain from. That's all the questions I have right now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Chair will recognize Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Also on 6-22, we had some discussion in the last couple of days about the supplementary health program, specifically about the co-payment. Yesterday the Minister had indicated that these were a basket of programs and he didn't want to deal with them piecemeal in isolation. Not his exact words, but that's the sense that I got of it. But he had, in fact, announced that he would be increasing the benefit to Metis health benefits. I think that's a good thing. I think though that there is still this gap that needs to be dealt with, and the Minister has acknowledged that that gap exists. So now it's up to us to find a way to help those folks who are falling through the cracks where the program is concerned.

Mr. Chairman, I guess what I'm looking for here; maybe I should just start with the Metis health benefits. The main estimates don't appear to show any increase in funding, despite the fact that the Minister said as of April 1st we are moving to 100 percent coverage of the co-payment from 80 percent. I'm wondering if I don't understand this, or somehow this is cost neutral, or why the Minister hasn't planned for further expenditures here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is a demand-driven program, so we've put in what we know the costs are. We know the intent is April 1st to go to 100 percent. We don't have a clear sense to the dollar of what we figure the uptake will be, but we will be allowing for that and funding from within existing resources. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It seems to me that even if we took this baseline information -- \$404,000 last year - - I assume that's the 80 percent coverage, and they increased it by 20 percent. If we were to assume that the uptake -- and he indicated it's demand-driven -- is consistent, all we need to do is add 20 percent, and it seems that we get a better indication of what this might be likely to cost us. As opposed to saying, well, we're increasing the program, we know it's going to cost more money, we don't know how much exactly so, therefore, we're not going to make any projections. We're going to go with what it was last year and we'll see what comes out of the wash. Doesn't that seem to make more sense, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, it does, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: I guess I am glad the Minister agrees. We'll move on to the next point then. Maybe the Minister can explain to me a little about the Metis health benefit. I understand it to be third party insurance. It did provide 80 percent coverage of this \$250 co-payment will now be 100. As we've indicated -- and Mr. Dent spoke to this in his Member's statement today -- there is still a segment of society that is not covered, has no third party insurance and is forced to pay for this themselves. I am wondering if we couldn't come up with a third party insurance scheme for those who are currently missed that would allow for coverage of this type of thing exactly. I know the Minister has this discussion paper with four high level options. It doesn't get into that level of detail. We've said scrap the co-payment. Do whatever you want, we just want to see the thing scrapped. But I am wondering if he's considered some sort of third party insurance plan for those who currently aren't covered. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, that is one of the options that we've been discussing as a way to close and address this gap. So, yes, it is. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Well, I certainly support this type of initiative. I am sure people would much rather have, even if they had to pay monthly insurance dues for something, a nominal amount for insurance, so that they don't get stuck with a \$250 co-payment out of the blue or much worse than that, huge medical bills for other treatments. I don't know why it's taking us so long to look at this option. Let me ask the Minister, with the current third party insurance that we've set up for Metis health, who pays the dues? Is this something that each individual who signs up for the program pays monthly or is it something that is covered by the government? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a government-funded program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: So the dues are paid by the government and then the government also pays 80 percent of the treatment and 20 percent is left to the folks who are covered by this. Is that the same type of plan, the same type of program that he's currently analyzing and running up the flagpole to meet the needs of those who aren't currently covered, the same type of third party insurance plan?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is an option. I should point out that we pay the cost of the program. There are no fees or dues. We have a

contractual arrangement. Blue Cross administers the program and we just pay the charges. One of the options being considered is some type of arrangement similar to this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So we have a boiler plate for the mechanism or the vehicle with our current program with Blue Cross. Can the Minister give us some indication of what the costing would be then to expand the type of third party insurance program to everybody who isn't currently covered, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not at this point, I can't. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Okay. If we are going to truly analyze this option and this is something that we really are serious about pursuing, we are obviously going to have to get some costing of this and quite soon. We have been looking at this problem for quite some time. I know one of the Members asked for information on the co-payment and what, in fact, we collect each year and how many of these \$250 payments amount to this \$1 million that we talk about. So we are going to need accurate information, we are going to need accurate costing, if we are going to talk about the expansion of this program. When we get that information and that costing, we will see that it really is a small segment of residents of the Northwest Territories that are excluded unfairly and when we have that information, we can talk about the value in having an equitable system and an equitable plan that covers everybody and doesn't exclude anybody. If we have the costing information on that, we can then weigh it out. I think it's going to show that it really wouldn't cost us very much money to do the right thing and expand this program. So I hope the Minister will pursue this and pursue it with vigor and handle this quickly because I think we need some information. Time is running out and I know Members on this side of the House are interested in pushing for this kind of equal coverage for all residents.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. I didn't hear a question there, general comments mostly. Mr. Miltenberger, would you like to respond to that?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I accept the exhortation from the Member and we will pursue this with vigor in close consultation with the Social Programs committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Okay. Page 6-23, total contributions, \$9.849 million. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we get the program delivery details, it shows on 6-22, that there is \$3.675 million in extended health benefits. Metis health benefits and the indigent health benefits have been separated out and medical travel is separated out. Could we get a listing of what is included in extended health benefits, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the Member asking for us to provide him information or does he want us to read through the list? We have the policy here that we could share. It's quite a number of pages to it, but we would be glad to share that. We've already committed in the House earlier today to table in the House the information requested by the Member in addition to the various programs under the supplementary health benefits program. So I need some direction. What would the Member like? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent, could you clarify your request?

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps the Minister could just list off some of the key points that are in the policy and then when he tables it tomorrow, we will have a complete copy of the package.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, maybe I will just list off the schedules to give a broader sense. There are six schedules, one for specified disease conditions; one for drug benefits; one for medical travel benefits; one for medical supplies; appliances and prosthetics benefits; hearing aid and eyeglass benefits; and another for dental benefits. Then there is the preceding preamble that outlines some of the schedules and the detail and it speaks to escorts and schedules which are fairly thick. The disease ones go from alcohol dependency, alphabetically all the way down to Wegeners Granulomatosis and dozens of diseases in between. Drug benefits, I imagine, would be the same.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's the basic information I was looking for. This 3.6 million, who gets the coverage that is provided? As I said the indigent health benefits are listed separately and the Metis health benefits listed separately. So who qualifies to get the extended health benefits, the \$3.6 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It applies to seniors or if there are individuals with specified diseases.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the Metis health benefits, the dollar amount of \$404,000, does the Minister have any idea how many beneficiaries of that program that covers?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, we have numbers but not immediately before us, but we can provide those to the Member if she would like.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Under the extended health benefits and the portion for seniors related to Pharmacare formulary, I have heard lately, and I don't know if it's true, that the list of pharmaceutical vitamins and various items that are available to seniors at no cost under extended health benefits are available to every senior in the Northwest Territories regardless of need. It's not a needs-based thing. I understand that the formulary for people covered under the NIHB Pharmacare, status Indians and Inuit, it's far less comprehensive. So, in fact, there is quite a gap between what's available to aboriginal recipients under NIHB versus what's available under the territorial government's program which is available to everyone. Is that the case?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are differences between the two lists. The one that we look after is much more current and much more active. One of the problems with NIHB is they are very slow to change, add or delete drugs or bring in new drugs. They are not very forward about giving us information about when changes have been made. They have also capped that program, so they are looking at controlling costs at every opportunity. So there is a difference. The one that we administer through extended health benefits is much more actively managed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand it's not only more actively managed, it's also more comprehensive, so is the full coverage and the full formulary extended to those persons who are covered by NIHB as well?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mrs. Groenewegen, did you want to finish?

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Sorry, I just want to finish my question then. Do we extend the same full coverage to people who are covered by NIHB and then unable to recover that because their formulary is less comprehensive than ours? Are we picking up a big tab on the difference or are we just not offering it to the people who are covered by NIHB? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is that it's not offered to NIHB clients. They are administered and receive the benefits of that program and not the other one. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So under our program, for every senior in the Northwest Territories, regardless of their income, regardless of how long they've lived

here, that particular formulary includes things like vitamins? It's quite comprehensive. So what you are telling me is an aboriginal senior comes in and they would be denied access to those things at cost to our government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, at this point, as I indicated, if you are a recipient under NIHB, that's where you get the service and you get the service prescribed by NIHB. As we look at supplementary health benefits, these kind of very legitimate questions are going to have to be addressed because there is going to be the issue of two-tiered, three-tiered systems especially when we know that the NIHB is seeking to control their costs and it's a capped program and they are not very progressive. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That does seem a little unfair I must say for someone who may have technically lived here their whole life and perhaps be of modest means and they would not have access to the full benefit plan of Pharmacare offered to seniors in the NWT by this government. When was the last time the Minister or someone in his department raised this issue with NIHB, specifically the discrepancy between our program and theirs and encourage them to enhance their formulary for seniors? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, That's one of the items on our agenda for the three territorial Ministers when we get to meet with the federal Minister of Health. I also understand the whole area of NIHB is one of the items on the table tomorrow with the Premier and Prime Minister. So it is an issue of significant concern to all three territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no problem with the good services and products that are available to NWT seniors across the board. I am just concerned where that benefit is narrowed down for seniors who are covered by NIHB. I do think that's unfair to the government. They should possibly think of ways of correcting that inequity in the interim. It would be unfortunate to see seniors who are of aboriginal decent disadvantaged in any way by not having access to those products which may help them live healthier, longer lives. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's a good point and part of our review in addition to the co-payments and other supplementary health issues will include that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Page 6-23, supplementary health programs, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$9.849 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Community Health Programs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): On page 6-25, community health programs, operations expense, total operations expense, \$58.664 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 6-27, community health programs, grants and contributions, contributions, \$45.265 million. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You didn't call page 6-26, but I have a question about the information on that page. I was wondering if we could find out from the Minister why there has been a sudden jump in the cost of services to adults shown here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we've added through forced growth \$1.1 million to adult supportive living; another \$1.5 million to the long-term care facility staffing; and, \$250,000 inflation for supplies; \$10,000 for the collective agreement. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: I didn't get all those numbers written down. Maybe the Minister could outline for me how much forced growth was and how much were program enhancements?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: It's all forced growth. I can read them off again if the Member would like. It's \$1.1 million for adult supported living -- this is all under forced growth -- long-term care facility staffing, \$1.5 million; inflation supplies, \$250,000; and, \$10,000 for collective agreement cost.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$1.1 million, if it's forced growth, does that mean we will not be able to see any increased numbers of adults living in supported living situations?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: No, Mr. Chairman. Forced growth in this case was because there was the waiting list of 20-some adults that money was put into this particular program area.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Page 6-27 again, community health programs, grants and contributions, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under contributions to health and social services authorities for children services, funding for health and social service authorities that provide services to eligible Northwest Territories residents in the area of foster care and residential care for children. I notice that the number there has gone down fairly significantly and yet we hear that the number of children we apprehend and take into care has actually increased. I am just wondering if the Minister could explain the decrease in those costs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I was busy rustling my papers and I missed the page number. The Member is asking about the \$8.5 million dropping to \$8.1 million? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I think those are the correct figures. Mrs. Groenewegen, is that correct?

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that's correct.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you could just bear with us, we are rooting through our paper.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Miltenberger, you are indicating to refer to Mr. St. Germaine?

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has actually been an increase of \$831,000 for forced growth between 2002-03 mains and 2003-04 mains. During 2002-03, the revised mains reflect one-time funding to reflect supplementary funding required to cover off board deficits in the area of foster care 2001-02. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. St. Germaine. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So this is not reflective of there being fewer children in care. In fact, there are more children in care now than there was a year ago now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: That's correct, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the costs of placing children in foster homes and residential care, when is the last time the foster care rates were reviewed for Northerners who participate with the government in this work? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The authorities and the department are working right now on the whole foster care program, both the program itself and the rates because there is a significant variation for foster rates

among the authorities. So we are trying to come up with some common standards that reflect the need for the children as well as the cost of living with the different authorities so we are working on this together. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: My question was when was the last time the rates were reviewed and you are saying there is work going on in the department right now to look at that. At one point, there was consideration given to a program similar to what they have in Alberta that would actually see different types of foster homes licensed, the parents trained to take care of different children with different types of needs. So in fact you could have three different levels of foster homes, perhaps ones who would do just short-term placements that might not require too much training while the children are in transition to something more different, more permanent or more extensive. You might have another type of training available to a home that would be licensed to deal with children and their behaviour problems, actually accrediting different homes with training for the parents to look after these children. What is the status of that work? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just wrote a letter to the Member for Mackenzie Delta with his concern about foster placements and I indicate in the letter that there have clearly been inconsistencies identified in per diem rates, special needs, reimbursable rates for children across authorities. There is a working group that is working with the Foster Parent Association and with departmental authorities to look at some of the issues raised, not only the funding rates but some of the issues raised by Mrs. Groenewegen in terms of the types of foster homes, which would affect the rates as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if the Minister could also tell us if there has been any consideration by the department given to the concept of rather than apprehending and taking children into care, actually offering parental support in the home where there are a number of children and it could be even more effective and perhaps more cost-effective to bring someone into the home as opposed to taking the children out. What's the Minister's and the department's stance on that concept?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a method of interaction between the department and parents that has shown a significant increase over the last couple of years. There are voluntary agreements reached or joint agreements reached between the parent and the department that would allow the department, by working together, to bring resources to the family situation. So it is a method that is gaining usage and is being encouraged to try to keep children with the family and support the family whenever possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that approach with family support being taken right now as we speak in the communities in the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, it is. It is a fairly standard practice. Some of the child welfare stats that we have just recently pulled together, which I would be happy to share with the committee, outline the approach and how it's used, how often it's used compared to just taking children into departmental care. There has been a significant increase in usage of that approach.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What kind of credentials or background would people have that would be hired by the health authorities to do this kind of work to go into homes and work with parents?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there are social workers and child protection workers. Is the Member asking if we hire people to work with the families in terms of support like CNAs or some kind of aid? I am not quite clear on the question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am talking about people who would be hired to go into the home to spend eight hours a day with the family, offering support to the parents and to the children, as opposed to removing the children from the home. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would depend on what the need is identified to be. For example, we're currently working to try to provide support to one family with a child who has very special needs. She's asked that we use the approach that they use in BC, which is funds are flowed to the parents and the parents bring in the resources that they know best are required by their child. We are working to try to assist that way. So that's one option that we're using, as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I recognize the clock. Can I ask another question?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. You have a couple seconds left. There is nobody else on my list, so...Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this area of community health programs, I was wondering if the department

or if the Minister could give us a status report on the work that's being done with the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors, and exploring the design and development of a dementia facility here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there was a \$50,000 contribution made, and we are expecting a report I believe in March that is going to put on the table the findings and the recommendations of that particular group. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the receipt of the \$50,000 from the department is very welcome, and at least in part, I understand, has been put to good use. Bringing something like this on stream is a multi-stage process. I'm wondering if the department anticipates anything in the coming business year that will help move this process along. Is there anything anticipated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we've indicated in the budget that we've increased staffing levels in the short term to deal with some of the immediate pressing needs. But we recognize that this is a growing area of need, and that we may in fact need a new facility. But we're also going to have to look at possible upgrades in other communities, where it may be more appropriate or cost effective just to try to do necessary renovations to allow that standard of care to be provided. So this is on our work plan. Once the report is in in Yellowknife we will look at what the recommendations are, we will look at the numbers. We know that there's an issue with waiting lists, and that many of the supported living situations may in fact eventually evolve into some greater need as well. So this is going to be an issue where, in all probability, there's going to be capital dollars required at some point, either for new construction or renovations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think there's more urgency to the need than the Minister is giving us to believe. There is in fact in today's issue of the Yellowknifer some interesting information about the current level and demand. Really we are booked up here in the city. I guess what is even more interesting, especially in light of the budget that we're looking at, are the costs, Mr. Chairman, as quoted in the Yellowknifer; the cost of a patient at Aven Manor is about \$130 to \$140 per day. This is in an assisted living situation, whereas a more acute care patient who has to be moved to the Stanton Hospital facility, Mr. Chairman, is costing from \$1500 to \$1800 a day. Neither of these facilities, I'm sure as the Minister is aware, were designed for the care of dementia patients. But as our population ages this is a natural occurrence and we have more and more of these sufferers in our facilities.

I guess it's a combination, Mr. Chair, of the cost of caring for people in facilities in... It's not that they're inadequate, but

they're certainly ill-equipped and ill-designed to care for those people, and the number of them that would seem to compel us to look with some urgency at bringing a facility on line. I guess I'd like to see what the Minister's comment is to that information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we recognize the urgency of this situation, which is why we've gone back in the interim for staffing increases and supportive home living increases. Very clearly, we want to be able to afford a plan that looks at all the communities that have long-term care facilities and cognitively impaired patients or residents. So we recognize that there's pressure in Yellowknife, there's pressure in Inuvik, there's pressure in Hay River, there's pressure in Fort Smith and Fort Simpson. We want to be able to address all those areas, and we want to be able to do it in a timely way. It's a question of identifying the cost for these renovations or the cost for a new structure, what kind of new structure, and then, as the Member indicated, moving through that multi-stage process, especially if it's new capital construction, to get it done as expeditiously as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Chair will recognize Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of questions, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I'd like to follow up on the issue that Mrs. Groenewegen was asking about. I believe that the government funded the development of a program in Yellowknife called, I think it was, the family reunification program, that would have seen social workers working intensively with families in advance of an apprehension to try and make sure that the family was supported and the apprehension didn't have to take place. Can the Minister tell me if the development of that sort of program was funded by the government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, I don't have that information immediately at hand, but we can make a note and check. I would expect that the Member's memory is probably accurate, but I don't have any detailed information. We'll have to get that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd appreciate getting that information that the Minister has offered. Could he also make sure that he advises us whether or not that program is still in operation in the way that it was developed? I'd like to know how much this government spent to develop the program, how long it ran, and whether or not it is still in operation and, if so, how many clients it has served. So I'll look forward to all members of the committee getting that information, Mr. Chairman.

The other area I'd like to address is the area of health promotion. I know that I've heard the Minister, and in fact the Premier many times, talk about personal responsibility, and the need for individuals and families to address their health and

social needs, as well as the system. I would think, given the Minister's interest in this area, that there would have been more emphasis placed on health promotion. Certainly I would expect that money that's spent in advance of seeing a medical condition develop, to try and forestall that is money well spent. So if you put money into the prevention of illness rather than having to treat illness after the fact, you're probably going to come out way ahead. Why haven't we seen more money going into health promotion?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are trying to shift the focus of the health and social services system to the whole area of prevention. We're trying to set up our community services so that in fact we can work in a proactive, pre-emptive way with families, clients and patients. We've also initiated discussions, for example, with the Minister responsible for Youth. We want to sit down, myself and himself and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I want to look at trying to move some of our health promotion money over to the youth secretariat so we can be more active and pool our money with the money that's there for youth and some of the money that Education is spending. So while we haven't put in new dedicated resources, we are looking at ways to try to shift the way we do business. We want to be able to work more cooperatively and collaboratively with other parts of government that are involved in the same kind of work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Page 6-27. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again under children services. We, as a committee, had a chance to tour a number of southern placement resources for NWT children with very specialized needs in the south. It was pretty evident with some of those visits with the adults and the children, that some of those services would not be difficult to develop here in the Northwest Territories so that clients and residents could be closer to family in the Northwest Territories, and at the same time also providing Northerners with an opportunity to provide those services and have the jobs and do the work with those people. So I'm just wondering if the Minister could outline for us what's underway in the department right now with respect to repatriation options and opportunities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have to look at the repatriation issues on a case-by-case basis, but the one option that shows promise for us in terms of expanding our capacity in the Northwest Territories is discussions we've entered into with Somba K'e out on the road to Detah. There's money in the budget to upgrade the Territorial Treatment Centre, but it's not a building that has much great use, I don't think as a child welfare facility. We are very interested in trying to come to an agreement to access that particular facility to expand our capacity for extra beds, rather than spending capital money upgrading the Territorial Treatment Centre. That would allow us to expand our capacity. That's the one area where we have capacity and potential, where we're moving towards looking at either to take

more children for treatment in the North and not having to have them go south or, where possible, if there's room to look at repatriating, as the Member has indicated. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the other things that we saw on this other tour was companies that set up a network of homes for adults. They would require assistance with their daily living, so perhaps three residents might live in one home with one attendant around the clock on a 24-hour basis, and the clients would be out and about in the community, fairly well integrated. They might do community service, those types of things. That is another thing which looked fairly doable for the Northwest Territories. So I'm wanting to know what opportunities there may be for... I realize it may be difficult to find homes in some of the smaller communities; but in some of the larger communities, is there an opportunity for people to come forward with offers to do a similar kind of work either through NGOs or through some form of a company that could be established that could provide those services here in the Northwest Territories? Would the Department of Health and Social Services be receptive to proposals from that in order to bring these people back home? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to some extent that capacity now exists in Yellowknife for sure. We have money for supportive living. We've identified that there are adults in need of that type of service identified by Mrs. Groenewegen. So we are interested in that. There's a three-pronged approach that we take that we're looking at under continuing care and facility living, supportive home living, and trying to expand support to homecare to keep people in their communities as long as possible and in their homes as long as possible. So, yes, there is an opportunity there. The hope, as well, would be that these supportive home living opportunities would exist in the community where it's needed, or as close to where the client or the person in need may be from. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would the Minister give us an idea of how many adults and how many children are in care in placement facilities in the south at this time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe there's in the neighbourhood of 25 or so children in care down south, and a similar number, 20 or so adults as well. We're just going through the briefing book to find these particular numbers, but if my memory is correct that's approximately what it is. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. Just following up on those numbers, first of all. It's my understanding that these southern placements are not inexpensive, that in some instances where there's specialized care required for a behaviorally disturbed child, for example at Bosco Homes, that they're probably running \$300 or \$400 per day for some of these southern placements, and with that goes a fairly large complement of staff. Is that the kind of facility that the Minister has in mind when he talks about developing the resource of the Somba K'e, if the government could get their hands on that property again? Is that the type of facility he's talking about?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, it would be the intent if we were successful to take the Territorial Treatment Centre program that is now there and look at moving it and having more bed capacity. Having more bed capacity would possibility also affect the options and opportunities we have in terms of programming. So we'd have to look at that as well. But the initial intent would be to just expand the beds for the current program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: So if that were to come about, then would the Minister anticipate that some of these 25 children which are now in southern care would return to the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that would be one of the goals. We would do our review of the case files to see who would be appropriate for that but, yes, that would be one of the opportunities we would hope to realize. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Definitely I would support that. As I say, I saw some children who were from the Northwest Territories who had some really profound challenges that they really needed this very high level, specialized care. But we saw others, adults and children, who I couldn't see any reason why they couldn't be cared for in the Northwest Territories. So I hope that the Minister will pursue that and be able to report back to us in the near future on how successful he has been in that, because it's something we've been talking about for a while. I just think it's more effective to look after these Northerners in the North, and I think it's also a lot more cost effective. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. General comments there. We'll go on to 6-27, community health programs, grants and contributions, contributions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 6-28, total contributions, \$45.265 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 6-28, active positions, information item. Page 6-30, health and social services authorities, active positions, information item. Page 6-31, details of work performed on behalf of others. Page 6-33, detail of work performed on behalf of others. Total department, \$23.172 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go back to 6-7. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize, I must have missed it when you called page 6-34. Could I seek consent to go back to that page, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The Member is seeking consent to go back to page 6-34. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if the Minister could advise us which line on this page includes the \$250 co-payment for medical travel that he collects from my constituents.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand the authorities collect it and it doesn't show in this document as a separate line.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the amount that's collected from the federal government for status Dene and Inuit people show on this page?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand it's under vote 5, which is page 6-31.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since other residents who pay the \$250 medical travel co-payment, since their \$250 goes directly to the health boards, can the Minister explain to us do they get to keep that money or is there an offset so it's calculated as part of their overall grant and what they collect from the co-payments they get to keep, but there's a claw back. Or do they get to keep co-payment sums in addition to their grant?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is an offset.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then I expect that the Minister will include in the information that I'd asked for previously and that he committed to giving us, that he will include the cost to the authorities to collect this co-payment as well. Could I seek his commitment for that, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go back to 6-7, department summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$226.182 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Community Health Programs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go to capital acquisitions, cap 9, Health and Social Services, community health programs. Cap 10, total community health programs, \$2.860 million. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if you'll remember both AOC and Social Programs had considerable trouble with some of the capital projects that are shown in this budget. The amount of money that was shown for the Fort Smith Health Centre has moved dramatically from what we saw in last year's budget. Could we get some detail from the Minister on why, although it's not in the 2003-2004 budget, but it seems to change from a total expenditure plan to \$10 million now? That's way more than what we've seen previously. Why is that project dramatically increased?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the two projects we've sought to maintain are the half life projects in Hay River and Fort Smith. The placement costs in the capital plan are based on the technical assessments which I, in fact, have copies available if the Members would like. And it's based on the technical assessment which identified the building failure and the need done in 1998 indicating some of the significant problems that are going to have to be addressed. So I'll possibly get Mr. St. Germaine to give you some of the history of how it got into this, how they both were in there. I do know that bumped up Hay River, and we kept Fort Smith, but they both seem to be in urgent need of these upgrades of that building inflow. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. St. Germaine.

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a bit of the history on the Fort Smith technical assessment that was done in 1998 which identified significant problems with the

building systems, and suggested that within five years if corrective action wasn't taken we'd have to abandon the building. Initially, attempts were made to deal with building systems as they failed. Several have failed in the interim. The boilers had to be replaced, the chiller had to be replaced, the roof is currently under repair and building envelope itself has failed.

The last two fiscal years we attempted to include the Fort Smith facility in the capital planning process. It didn't make the cut, and it was bumped, therefore, it didn't show up on the five-year plan. This year, given the nature and severity of the failures, mitigation efforts are not possible. We do have to do something in fairly short order or the building will have to be abandoned. So in this current year's planning process it was a high enough priority to remain in the capital plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. St. Germaine. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, you know that members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs never received any detail that would justify the seriousness of the need to replace the building and that's one of the reasons that we were surprised. It seemed to all of a sudden appear in the five-year capital plan because it hadn't been seen by us before and it didn't start appearing at the end of the plan and working its way forward as we were expecting that most projects would. So members of this committee would welcome seeing a copy of that 1998 assessment. I hope the Minister will distribute that to members of Committee of the Whole, please.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am hoping that my executive assistant is listening because we have both technical assessments available and they should be here momentarily.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the absence of that information, it's difficult for us to say any more than what we said in our reports. All I can say is Members will have to have a look at that and as we said in the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight's report, we will certainly be trying to make sure that Members in the 15th Assembly are aware of our concerns with this issue and that they have a very good look at it before considering the budget when the money should start to fall in the next year. We have not yet been convinced that it's justified. So I am looking forward to seeing the information and we will follow up from there, I guess.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Miltenberger, do you have any comments to make on that?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this capital project has been on the books for some time since it was identified through the technical assessment and we have a big box of assessments being lugged around the corner by one of those poor pages. I appreciate the Member's comments. The information was

there. If it wasn't provided, it was an oversight. We would have been more than happy to provide that, but here it is and the two projects have been in the process almost simultaneously. The information is there and will be handed out. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister is being questioned about the renovation on the Fort Smith Health Centre and he says he has technical assessments for both projects. What are both projects? There is nothing in the committee report that is talking about any other renovation project, so why does he have a technical assessment on both projects? Maybe he can enlighten us on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, they are there for comparison purposes. These projects are very similar. They are happening in the same time frames and have gone through the same procedure and process. So they are there. If the committee doesn't want them, that's fine. I wanted them to have all the information available, so that we had the full facts. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. I guess the question was what two projects are you referring to? Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. The technical assessments for both Hay River and Fort Smith and I am prepared to bring in the technical assessments for every facility including the upcoming proposed renovations for Stanton, as well, just so that everybody is aware that this work has been done, has been going on over the years and is part of the issue of protecting key assets. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just find it strange that the Minister is trying to tie these two projects together. The committee report and the questioning in the House today had not raised the renovation project in Hay River at all. Yet, the Minister is talking about if we want to leave "them"... Does the Minister feel from his comments that if there is anything about the question about the Fort Smith renovation that automatically includes the Hay River renovation in the issue of the problem raised by the committee? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are attempting to respond to issues of concern raised about a capital project that is very similar to another one. The information is there. I expect at the end of the day, the committee will make the decisions it deems appropriate. There is a concern raised about doing half-life renovations in the committee report. I think it's very critical to point out that Hay River, Fort Smith, the planned one for Stanton are all half-life renovations and protection of key assets. So it's an attempt to provide as much information as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hear what the Minister is saying, but it doesn't sound like it to me. There is a renovation project for Hay River's hospital and it's been on the books for awhile now as a result of a technical review and just because the Standing Committee on Social Programs raised concerns with where the Fort Smith renovation was coming from in terms of timing and cost and raise that, I guess there is something I find not too comforting about the Minister's desire to tie Hay River to it. If there is a problem with Smith, we will have to consider them in tandem. If there was going to be any delay to the Smith one, it's automatically going to have to be delayed in Hay River as well. I don't like the tone of that. It sounds threatening to me. There was no mention today of the Hay River renovation from the committee or Members around here until the Minister brought it up. I just want to express my concern about that. I don't like the tone of it. It's in keeping with some comments that the Minister made to me as well after he heard about the committee's concerns about the capital project in his riding. It is in keeping with comments that he also made to me and I just want to state for the record I don't appreciate it. Ministers are not in their positions to promote projects in their own riding and when they don't get the support they want for them to threaten other Members who already have capital work that is planned for their riding that has been on the books and properly gone through the capital planning process. I don't like the tone of it and I want that on the record. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to point out that I made a considerable effort to make sure we moved Hay River up a year and that it stayed on the list. So it's unfortunate the Member doesn't like my tone. So if she doesn't like it, I apologize for the tone. This is an intent to work through a budget of \$200 and some million and to do it in a balanced, fair way. That's what we are attempting to do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. We will go to tab 10, total community health programs, \$2.860 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total health services programs, \$7.644 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, \$10.504 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that consideration of the department's estimates is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The committee has agreed. Thank you, Minister, and your witnesses for appearing.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The next department on the list is MACA, but we have a number of other issues to discuss in Committee of the Whole. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend that we move on to consideration of the Department of MACA.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Municipal And Community Affairs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will move on to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Does the Minister have any opening comments? Mr. Steen.

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. VINCE STEEN: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' main estimates for the fiscal year 2003-2004. MACA is requesting \$77.9 million in operating expenses for the 2003-2004 fiscal year and \$8 million for capital acquisitions. This is a 4.6 percent increase over the 2002-2003 main estimates. This budget reflects the important role community governments play in serving the needs and interests of people in the Northwest Territories. It is my department's vision to support capable, accountable and self-directed community governments as they strive to provide a safe, sustainable and healthy environment for their residents.

The operating funding in MACA provides community government assistance in ensuring quality municipal programs and services are available to their residents. Working in partnership with community governments in this way helps us achieve the goal of providing better governments for the people of the NWT, a key priority included in Towards a Better Tomorrow.

The bulk of MACA's operating expenses are provided to community governments through contributions. These contributions include ongoing community government operations through formula funding as well as additional funding for projects such as sports and recreation, water and sewage infrastructure, senior citizens and disabled persons property tax relief, grants-in-lieu of property taxes, infrastructure contributions and community development.

In total, Mr. Chairman, 71 percent of our operating budget goes to community governments. This funding also includes over \$3 million in forced growth, which will go directly to community

governments to assist with things such as increased fuel costs and insurance premiums.

I am pleased to announce that the government has allocated another annual funding of \$1 million to support a program to chipseal the main streets of non-tax-based communities as a form of dust control. Working in partnership with the Department of Transportation, we will provide necessary road upgrades and chipseal paving and roads beginning with communities on the highway system or with winter road access and will look for other opportunities to carry out the chipsealing projects in conjunction with other prime projects in order to maximize efficiencies. My department is working with the Department of Transportation to develop a five-year work plan that will ensure the most efficient allocation of resources by carrying out upgrading and chipsealing work in areas where work is proceeding to stockpile gravel or to work on highway repairs and runway resurfacing. Part of the funding will be used to purchase the necessary equipment for communities and to provide training to communities so they have the capacity to maintain their roads.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out a concern regarding the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight support and the review of draft 2003-2004 main estimates. Contrary to what the AOC report states, I did not indicate any community did not meet the criteria for this program. However, I did stress the fact the department must work closely with the Department of Transportation to take advantage of any crushing, stockpiling or chipsealing program that the Department of Transportation presently has scheduled. There were no non-tax-based communities excluded from the program as long as there is an opportunity to split the cost among other highway or airport projects administered by Transportation.

Members in the Legislative Assembly have raised concerns about the availability of sports and recreation facilities in non-tax-based communities and about the government's ability to provide more support for such facilities within the constraints of the current corporate capital planning process. The Special Joint Committee on Non-Tax-Based Community Affairs also raised concerns about access to programs and services in its interim report. As this was a first step towards addressing these concerns, I am pleased to announce the department has been allocated an additional \$1 million ongoing annual funding to support community priorities. The new community initiative program will allow communities to apply for up to \$100,000 per year to support initiatives in the area of youth, families and active living.

The interim report of the Special Joint Committee on Non-Tax-Based Community Affairs has flagged many important issues and made recommendations on areas that impact significantly on the work of the department. The committee's final report will be a key influence on the department's ongoing work with non-tax-based communities. We will look forward to the release of the final report during this session.

Mr. Chairman, these are some of the highlights of the department's funding request for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. I believe that the investments MACA will make in communities will help us continue to work towards the goals outlined in Towards a Better Tomorrow. I look forward to your comments and any questions you may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Would the standing committee reviewing MACA have any comments? Mr. Roland.

Standing Committee On Governance And Economic Development Comments

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The mandate of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, MACA, is to provide community governments with the support to deliver public programs and services essential to good community life, to assist with the development and maintenance of community governments, and to provide the resources necessary to achieve community goals.

The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development met with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and his staff on Friday, January 17, 2003 to review the Department's Draft Main Estimates for 2003-2004.

Committee Members noted a net upward adjustment of \$11.001 million in the department's operations expense from its 2003-2006 business plan. This net increase is due to: \$1.266 million increase in overall changes to the department's amortization adjustments; \$1 million increase for community programs to address community priorities such as youth and family, with a focus on active living; and \$8.735 million increase in other adjustments resulting from the reporting of infrastructure contributions as an operations expense instead of a capital expenditure in accordance with the government's tangible capital assets accounting protocol.

The committee also noted a net downward adjustment of \$6.845 million in the department's capital expenditures from its 2003-2006 business plans. This is the result of: an additional \$1.39 million increase in funding for new investments comprised of \$1 million for main street paving, \$40,000 for solid waste site replacement in Deline, \$50,000 for solid waste site replacement in Rae-Edzo and \$300,000 for the land development fund; \$500,000 moved forward from 2004-2005 for the replacement of the above ground pool in Fort Providence; however, \$8.735 million was transferred to operations expense as part of the main estimates reporting protocol as required by the government's tangible capital assets accounting requirement.

Main Street Paving For Non-Taxed-Based Communities

In March 2002, during the review of the 2002-2003 main estimates for MACA, the Committee of the Whole passed a motion that required the Ministers of MACA and Transportation develop a program to pave the main streets within non-tax-based municipalities having a population greater than 500 residents and located on the Northwest Territories highway system.

Based on the above criteria, the department advised the committee in separate correspondence that the following communities would be eligible for the paving of their main streets: Fort Resolution, Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Fort McPherson and Rae-Edzo. Paving would be the chipseal type.

During the review of the department's draft 2003-2004 main estimates, the department provided the committee members with a preliminary implementation schedule for the main street paving program for non-taxed-based communities. However, committee members noted with concern that Tuktoyaktuk, an

ineligible community, is proposed to receive \$1.250 million for the chipsealing of its main street over the next five fiscal years. Although Tuktoyaktuk has a population of 979, it is not on the NWT highway system. The department remarked that the listing may change depending on community priorities and the Department of Transportation locations.

The committee brought this issue to the attention of AOC for further input from all regular Members. After careful consideration, the members of AOC advised the government in a letter that funding for main street paving for non-tax-based communities must be scheduled specifically for those communities that clearly qualify.

The government recently replied that the main street in Tuktoyaktuk will be paved, regardless. FMB has extended the program to include all non-tax-based communities and directed that communities be scheduled in such a way as to maximize efficiencies between the paving program and other projects. As transportation's crushing and other equipment will be available in Tuktoyaktuk in the summer of 2003, the government added that it would be most cost effective to undertake the main street paving project in Tuktoyaktuk at that time.

Highway Emergency Rescue Vehicle

In many communities, the local fire department provides emergency services to the municipality, vicinity and the nearby highway. Unfortunately, in most cases, a response to a highway accident may leave a community with no emergency services. A highway emergency rescue vehicle would significantly contribute to a greater level of safety and services for communities on the highway system.

The Minister agreed with the committee, but replied that funding would be difficult to obtain under the current corporate capital planning process and the federal joint emergency preparedness program. As a result, the committee members made the following recommendation: The Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development recommends the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the Department of Transportation reconsider their approach to the delivery of emergency services on the highway system, and place a higher priority on the emergency rescue responses that are accompanied with sufficient resources including highway emergency rescue vehicles.

Follow-up: Recognition of Firefighters

Firefighters and volunteer firefighters perform an important and indispensable community service and should be appropriately recognized. Special license plates similar to those issued to Members of the Legislative Assembly should be reconsidered for volunteer, full and part-time firefighters.

The Minister responded it is within the Department of Transportation's mandate to make revisions to the government's license plate program and he would work with transportation and the committee members on this initiative.

A number of committee members also suggested that five years of service should be properly acknowledged with a medal rather than a pin. All pins should be replaced with medals, which denote a greater importance. The department should ensure medal design adheres to standards in other Canadian jurisdictions. The Minister agreed to take the committee's

suggestions into consideration and consult with the fire chiefs on any revisions to the current recognition program.

Water And Sewer

During its review of the department's draft 2003-2004 main estimates, the committee noted an increase in MACA's water sewer services subsidy. The purpose of the subsidy to provide funding to communities to assist with the provision of water and sewer services. These communities include Fort McPherson, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Rae-Edzo. The Department of Public Works and Services charges full cost recovery plus a nine percent surcharge for the provision of water and sewer services to these communities. Public Works and Services recently proposed an increase to their current surcharge from nine percent to 16 percent, effective April 1, 2003. Committee members pointed out that the increase to MACA's water sewer services subsidy may have been made to offset the increased surcharge proposed by Public Works and Services.

Committee members questioned at length the rationale behind the proposed increment, as MACA would have to increase its water sewer services subsidy to communities to balance the increase in expenditures. The committee concluded that the proposed surcharge would severely strain communities. Communities are already operating with limited resources. The proposed increase is considered excessive and out of line with administration fees charged by other departments. Funding to offset the proposed increase may be used to fund more important programs and services. Significantly, the proposed increase was made without consultation with the client communities, their respective MLAs and the standing committees.

In a recent letter to AOC, the government agreed with the standing committees that the proposed increment was excessive. It assured the Members that until this matter is discussed with the affected communities, the current nine percent surcharge would remain unchanged for the provision of water and sewer services.

Plan Review Fee

The committee noted a significant decline in the department's projected revenue for its plan review fee. A few years ago, a recommendation was made by the government to implement a new fee structure for plan review services as part of its regulatory reform initiative. The proposed fee was to be based on a percentage of the project cost. This fee would be charged to building owners, developers and contractors who would submit drawings and specifications for review by the office of the fire marshal. The office of the fire marshal would review the plans for compliance with the National Building Code and the National Fire Code. The department had planned to implement the proposed fee effective April 1, 2003.

However, a recent court decision, *Eurig v. Ontario*, stipulated that the government's charges for providing services must be based on actual costs. Thus, the proposed fee structure for plan review services has been amended to a flat rate of \$85 per hour. The revised revenue estimates are based on this hourly rate. A number of Members were concerned that the *Eurig* decision may have an impact upon the government's other "for service" fees and suggested that the government would be wise to review its current fee structures.

That concludes our report on MACA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Fine job. You came in with one minute to spare. The Chair is going to recognize the clock and rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now come back to order. May I have the report of Committee of the Whole? The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004 and would like to report progress and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do I have a seconder for the motion? The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden, seconds the motion. We have a motion that is in order. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

--Carried

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

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Special Committee on Self-Government and the Sunset Clause at adjournment tonight, at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, at 10:30 of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, and at 11:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development.

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 20, 2003:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents

15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 3, Appropriation Act, 2003-2004
 - Bill 6, Electoral Boundaries Commission Act
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
 - Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Elections Act
 - Committee Report 3-14(6), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 4-14(6), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 5-14(6), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2003-2004 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 Thursday, February 20, 2003, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

