



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

6th Session

Day 12

14th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, February 26, 2003

Pages 331 – 364

The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Tony Whitford

(Kam Lake)

Hon. Stephen Kakfwi

(Sahtu)

Premier

Executive Council

Minister Responsible for

Intergovernmental Affairs

Minister Responsible for the Status of

Women

Hon. Jim Antoine

(Nahendeh)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

Minister Responsible for the

Intergovernmental Forum

Minister of Resources, Wildlife and

Economic Development

Hon. Roger T. Allen

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Minister of Justice

Minister Responsible for NWT

Housing Corporation

Minister Responsible for Public

Utilities Board

Minister Responsible for Youth

Hon. Joseph L. Handley

(Weledeh)

Minister Responsible for Energy and

Hydro Secretariats

Minister of Finance

Minister Responsible for the Financial

Management Board

Minister Responsible for the Northwest

Territories Power Corporation

Minister of Transportation

Minister Responsible for the Workers'

Compensation Board

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger

(Thebacha)

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister Responsible for Persons with

Disabilities

Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Jake Ootes

(Yellowknife Centre)

Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment

Hon. Vince R. Steen

(Nunakput)

Minister of Public Works and Services

Minister of Municipal and Community

Affairs

Mr. Brendan Bell

(Yellowknife South)

Mr. Bill Braden

(Great Slave)

Mr. Paul Delorey

(Hay River North)

Mr. Charles Dent

(Frame Lake)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. David Krutko

(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Leon Lafferty

(North Slave)

Ms. Sandy Lee

(Range Lake)

Mr. Michael McLeod

(Deh Cho)

Mr. Steven Nitah

(Tu Nedhe)

Mr. Floyd Roland

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David M. Hamilton

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

Clerk of Committees

Mr. Dave Inch

Law Clerks

Ms. Katherine R. Peterson, Q.C.

Mr. Charles Thompson

Sergeant-at-Arms

Ms. Nicole Latour-Theede

Editor of Hansard

Michele Vanthull

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	331
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	331
23-14(6) - FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGISLATION	331
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	332
MR. MCLEOD ON HARMONIZATION OF INCOME ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL HOUSING PROGRAMS	332
MR. DELOREY ON EDUCATION WEEK 2003.....	332
MR. ROLAND ON HEALING THE PROBLEMS OF FAMILIES AND YOUTH	332
MS. LEE ON NEED FOR A NORTHERN ACADEMIC RESEARCH CENTRE	333
MR. NITAH ON IMPACT OF HOUSING SHORTAGE ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION.....	334
MR. BELL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION LEGISLATION.....	334
MRS. GROENEWEGEN ON DIAMOND JENNESS HANDBELL CHOIR	334
MR. LAFFERTY ON HARMONIZATION OF INCOME ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL HOUSING PROGRAMS	335
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	335, 348
ORAL QUESTIONS	336
REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES	344
REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS	345
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	345
MOTIONS	345
5-14(6) - FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION LEGISLATION.....	345
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	348
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	363
ORDERS OF THE DAY	363

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 26, 2003****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Before going to orders of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a new clerk at the Table today, Mr. Andrew Stewart.

---Applause

Andrew is taking up duties at the Table which will add to his experience as an assistant committee clerk as he has been working for the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act and on the Implementation of Self-Government and the Sunset Clause.

---Applause

For those Members who were with us at the community feast and dance in Fort McPherson this summer, this is not the Andrew Stewart from Fort McPherson, but the Andrew Stewart from Yellowknife.

---Laughter

Join me in welcoming Mr. Stewart to the Clerk's Table.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister Allen.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 23-14(6): Family Violence Legislation**

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the matter of family violence legislation in the Northwest Territories.

This has been and is an issue of importance to each and every Member of this Legislature as evidenced most recently by our unanimous endorsement of the protocol agreement to support the development of an action plan on family violence in the NWT presented by the Status of Women. It is important to all of us in the House, and after hearing the Members' statements, I believe it is important to many, many people of the Northwest Territories.

As a government, we must act and we, as Members, must act together to develop and pass effective family violence legislation within the term of this Legislative Assembly. We must also strive to ensure that, within the limited time available to achieve this, the legislation is relevant to our jurisdiction, works for our people and communities and represents the input from important stakeholders dealing with and affected by this issue.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this House have referred to the legislation developed and relied upon in other Canadian jurisdictions and indicated their approval of that legislation on behalf of the people of the NWT. The legislation of and the experience in other jurisdictions can be very useful as a tool and will be relied upon in development of NWT legislation.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues which must be addressed through timely consultations and policy development, and those include the definition of family violence, the remedies we include in such legislation, determining who can apply for relief under the legislation and the best delivery model for the NWT. The department plans to conduct its consultations and start its policy work immediately with a view to determining these questions. Our goal, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that we develop legislation that works for all NWT residents, whether they live in large centres or small isolated communities, whether they have RCMP or not.

Mr. Speaker, this work will require the cooperation of all Members of this House to assist in ensuring that we produce an act and a process that most appropriately meets the needs of victims of family violence. We are committed to moving ahead with this legislation as soon as possible.

There will be costs associated with the development and the implementation of this legislation, the extent of which have not been fully determined. The proper delivery of this legislation will involve the RCMP, shelter workers, social workers, court staff, judges and justices of the peace. Additional staff may be required to properly implement and deliver the legislation.

The process is not a simple one, given the complexity of family violence and the diversity of our people and our jurisdictions. However, we can do it and we can do it well, Mr. Speaker, if we have the cooperation and assistance of all Members of this House. The overwhelming sense I have gathered over the past weeks in this House is that the government has your approval and can expect your assistance. What I have heard in this House, Mr. Speaker, is an overwhelming commitment to family violence legislation and on that basis I will commit to introducing a bill at the June sitting of the 14th Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**Member's Statement On Harmonization Of Income Assistance And Social Housing Programs**

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to, once again, voice my concerns over the harmonization strategy. This initiative was introduced and adopted by the 13th Assembly and I have watched with great interest as this program has been deferred, time and time again. It's been changed. It has been transferred from one Minister to another and, in the end, I was hoping it would go away. However, it's very evident that this government is determined to implement this program April 1st of this year.

Mr. Speaker, I question the intent of this initiative. It's certainly not intended to improve the health and conditions in our communities. It is not designed to raise revenues for this government. It is not part of the seniors' strategy. My understanding of this program is that it was to harmonize the income support program with the social housing program. If that was the goal, then why are the seniors and the students rolled into the mix? Most of the seniors and students live on a fixed monthly income, an income that is usually accounted for before they receive it. Mr. Speaker, I hear from the NWT housing staff that seniors across the North are welcoming and embracing this program. If that's the case, I ask why are seniors in the small communities complaining about this new initiative?

Mr. Speaker, the Minister promised in this House there would be a clear communication strategy and an implementation schedule. I have copies of letters sent out to the seniors in my riding as part of the communication strategy. The letter simply states that a new scale is being introduced April 1st. The new maximum rent is at a certain level and on April 1st, the rent would be calculated in a different manner and it gives another lump sum. It doesn't indicate the actual rent that will be charged. The Housing Corporation may have met the letter of the law by mailing out notices of intent of the potential rent increases, but they sure didn't meet the intent of the law.

I contacted every band and municipal council in the NWT, Mr. Speaker, and 87 percent have responded by saying they are not familiar with this program and they needed more information. Fifty-five percent have requested that this whole initiative be abandoned. Mr. Speaker, I was recently reminded that the NWT Housing Corporation was initially formed in the early 1970s under the name of the Mackenzie Valley...Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent. Do I hear any nays? You have unanimous consent, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues. Mr. Speaker, it was recently that the NWT Housing Corporation was initially formed in the early 1970s under the name Mackenzie Valley Housing and their mandate was to deliver housing to Aboriginal and low income families. We have certainly deviated from that mandate. Mr. Speaker, once again I ask that the Minister responsible table a copy of the harmonization strategy in order for us to debate this issue in this Assembly and publicly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement On Education Week 2003

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Education Week being held this week across the NWT. Mr. Speaker, I am particularly encouraged by the fact that this year, Education Week is an interdepartmental endeavor between the Departments of Education, Culture and Employment, Health and Social Services, Municipal and Community Affairs, Sport North and the new Recreation and Parks Association. The theme for Education Week is "Choose to Move...Move for Health." This is an example for residents of all ages throughout the NWT that productive choices with regard to fitness can be made and how we can all benefit from the effects of being more physically active.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Honourable Jake Ootes for the various initiatives introduced by his department over the last year. However, Mr. Speaker, more work needs to be done. I would like to remind the Minister and his department officials of what should be their prime focus, that being our students. We should never lose sight of that fact, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would also like to pay tribute to the parent volunteers that spend countless hours in our classrooms. The parent volunteers contribute greatly to our schools and I don't know that we do enough to recognize their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to hear of the \$2.8 million investment announced in our budget to lower pupil-teacher ratios and to raise student support services in the classroom where it is needed most. We need to be diligent and continue this path in order to provide our students with the quality of education they so deserve. While it is all nice and good, Mr. Speaker, to recognize Education Week once a year, we need to be diligent everyday to remember that we, as a government, need to focus our efforts in the classroom, so the students can directly benefit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement On Healing The Problems Of Families And Youth

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise and speak to the issue of children in the North. Mr. Speaker, that's not something that we go into great detail in the North with the problems we have with our families, or crime rates and what we sometimes find unfortunately in our communities in the North.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to raise the issue of what we are doing as a government or what we can be doing. Not only that, the government deals with programs and services trying to fix people from the outside. Mr. Speaker, a lot of times I have come to work with individuals in my community trying to help them through our programs and services, whether it's income support, health and social services, education, but a lot of

times we are trying to fix people and work with people from the outside. There is little that is being done from the inside and many people, Mr. Speaker, would say that's an issue that's got to be separate. Government, state, as it can be called, and religion should be separate. Many people will say that.

Mr. Speaker, what I found with our programs and services in the social area, all we've done is tried to work with people from an outside perspective, not dealing with them from the inside or their spirit, Mr. Speaker. That's why today I would like to raise awareness from work done by Dr. Clair Schnupp, and Mrs. Clara Schnupp. Dr. Clair Schnupp has his doctorate of philosophy and Master of Arts. His wife has a bachelor's and master's degree. They are both members of the Association of Professional Christian Counsellors and they've traveled the Arctic for 42 years, Mr. Speaker, working with youth and family. In a stretch from Nuuk, Greenland, to Nome, Alaska, they have met with many families and individuals, dealing with the situations that they find themselves in. Dr. Schnupp had talked to me a few months back and asked if I would consider looking at some of the work he's done. It's come to a point now where he's put it forward in a final pamphlet and he's seeking to try to put it out there to raise awareness.

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? You have unanimous consent.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the work that's been done in this pamphlet is the cold, stark reality of what happens from time to time in our communities. It's something that, as I have become aware, is difficult to try to deal with, to try to put a finger on because government deals with programs and services that deal with levels of education, with health care, things that we can try to fix from the outside and it's difficult, Mr. Speaker, to speak to these issues because a lot of us when we come through life have run into our own problems, but have difficulty reaching to the inside, and as I said earlier, to the spirit side of the person.

We've heard lots about traditional knowledge and trying to go back to some of those strengths. I agree, we must do more in that area. I think it has to start at a community or personal level. Hopefully this work that's done, which I will table later today, will raise awareness. It's difficult to deal with in some of the issues, but I think it needs to be done to try to raise the awareness of individuals in the North, to see how we can further deal with these issues. As we heard in the Minister's statement earlier about putting family violence legislation forward, that's a piece of the puzzle and an important piece. On those things we need to continue to work. With that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Need For A Northern Academic Research Centre

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in debate of the budget for Education, Culture and Employment, much of

the discussion has centred on various topics about Aurora College. I would like to speak again about what has been on my mind lately, as well as that of some of my constituents. This has to do with the long-term vision, but I would really like to see Aurora College becoming a fully accredited university in the not-too-distant future. One of my constituents even wrote to tell me that in fact there is land set aside for such a university north of Frame Lake.

Mr. Speaker, we have so much happening in the North that should be of academic interest. People from all over the world come here already, not just to admire the aurora borealis, but to study the wonders and sciences of it, yet we do not have a research centre studying it. We also have had teams of scientists and engineers studying cold weather technology, whether it be for automobiles, road building or construction of houses. We have been a testing ground for all these, as well as an importer of the technology. We could become a world leader in this regard.

The mineral development in the gold and diamonds of modern times is only the tip of the iceberg in the way of mineral and geological findings, studies of interest to academia. I recently watched a program on TV where a team of geologists and engineers from all over the world converged on the Inuvik area because that's where the most pure form of frozen gas samples can be had, but they spent much of their time talking about how excited they were to send these samples to their colleagues in the U.S., German, Russian and Japanese universities. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had an academic research centre in a university setting right here where these samples could be analyzed and written about, so that the scholars would fly here to learn and spread the knowledge out into the world?

The topic of interest for academic research doesn't just end there, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of unique and groundbreaking discoveries going on here politically and socially as well. The evolution of our government and the unique challenges we face in our consensus system could only benefit from political scientists who enjoy the privilege of independent minds and affiliations, not from the southern perspective, but from the intimate knowledge they would have from living and teaching here.

We are also on the frontier of developing governance models as a number of self-government agreements are becoming a reality more and more everyday. I have no doubt that a lot of knowledge can be had in this area that would contribute greatly to the age old world dialogue about how and why a society chooses to govern itself the way it does. The list is endless. Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? You have unanimous consent, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The list for academic research is endless and it should be noted that a good critical economic study is not just for making big bucks in ivory towers. It is an essential element of good public policy making in civil society. It is my hope that our government and college officials and leaders from all over the North would work together to achieve this goal in the not-too-distant future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Member's Statement On Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this being Education Week, I would like to talk about the challenges teachers face in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, in Monday's paper, an article titled "Searching for Solutions" talks about how the Department of Education, Culture and Employment hired a consultant to do surveys with teachers and the Teachers' Association to determine if housing is an issue in their becoming teachers in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, the results wouldn't be completed until mid-March, and by that time this House will be likely adjourned.

But, I've said it, Members of this House have said it, people have told us that housing is a major issue when it comes to educators coming and staying in the North. We all know a comfort level has to be reached between the student and the teacher for a student to have optimum learning capacity. But they have an average turn around of five years and, in some cases, every year you see numerous teachers resign because of housing shortages. We know they are living together. Teachers are forced to live together, live in the schools, in health centres and in churches. These are not places where people are intended to live and we should not expect our teachers to live in those environments.

Knowing the facts of this housing shortage, I'm going to be asking the Minister what his department is doing in partnership with other departments to address this very huge issue.

We need good teachers to have good students. We need good students to prepare for the economic realities of today and tomorrow. In my constituency, the graduation rate leaves something to be desired. In Lutselk'e we haven't had a graduate in a long time and a lot of this is a result of the high turnover of teachers. With new relationships being built, even when they get here and agree to the cost of their units, often because of the new policy and regulations that are regulating the housing market, a person could increase the rent and falsify the information to the teachers and by the time they get here, what are they going to do, go back? Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister some questions on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement On Family Violence Protection Legislation

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take the opportunity today to respond to the Minister of Justice, Minister Allen's statement on family violence legislation because I think it is important to do so, Mr. Speaker.

I think what we've seen here today is a perfect example that our form of government, the consensus form of government, can work, and the next time somebody asks me about consensus and its advantages, I'm going to point to today because I truly believe that what we've seen here is an

example of a Minister who understands, Mr. Speaker, what leadership is all about and has always been one that said, listen, I really want to get this job done, I want to roll up my sleeves and do good things, my door is open and if you have suggestions and ideas and priorities that you want to see hit the floor, come and talk to me. This Minister understood that family violence legislation was a key priority for this House and he is willing to work with us in order to get that done.

There are a million and one reasons why this might not have happened. There are consultation concerns, given the amount of time we have left, Mr. Speaker. There are resource concerns that will require additional resources. There is no shortage of reasons why this could have failed but this Minister wouldn't let it fail and I think that really isn't much of a surprise, given this Minister's track record.

We look at the Human Rights Act. This Minister was key in delivering on that piece of legislation and he got done by being willing to work with the standing committee behind the scenes, making sure that if we had suggestions coming from the public, that we were going to make this thing better. Well, he was going to get them done and get them implemented.

If you look at housing bridge financing, a recent program, the Minister was able to get the program raised from \$10 million to \$30 million, but still the criteria weren't adequate to allow people to access this money. A number of Members sat down with the Minister, raised this point and he said, well, you know I didn't come up with this program because I didn't want it to work so let's sit down and talk about how we can make this thing work. He has done that and now when we look at family violence legislation, he said, and I will quote, "We can do it and we can do it well, Mr. Speaker, if we have the cooperation and assistance of all Members of this House." Mr. Speaker, that is leadership. I think Minister Allen is demonstrating that here for us today. I am very proud of the work he is doing and I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking him.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Diamond Jenness Handbell Choir

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to tell you about a unique group of students that together make a sound that you rarely hear. These students are the Diamond Jenness Handbell Choir from Hay River, and the delightful sound is the ringing of handbells.

In 1997, a trio of staff members from Diamond Jenness School in Hay River had a dream: what if they could purchase musical instruments of a different sort and create a new club in the school. With a lot of hard work, dedication and fundraising, handbells were added to the music department of DJ. There has been an active group of young musicians ringing the bells ever since.

The DJ Handbell Choir has the distinction of being the only one of its kind in the Northwest Territories. They have gained appreciation and overwhelming reviews for their performances, exhibiting their skills and talent. They have performed at schools, the Woodland Manor, extended care at the hospital and for various community events such as Remembrance Day

services, Festival of Trees, Canada Day celebrations and numerous other events.

Since 1997, these young choir members, with the support of the community, have set many goals and attained them. Recently, they have added a third octave of bells to their existing equipment and today they continue to rehearse and practice to perfect their skills. With the leadership of their director, Jennifer Tweedie, the Handbell Choir is planning to attend the We've Got Rhythm Conference in London, Ontario in May. As the title suggests, this conference will feature the timeless music of George and Ira Gershwin. What a great experience for this young choir!

I have just received notice today that the Minister of Youth, the Honourable Roger Allen, has provided support for the Handbell Choir to attend this conference and they will be receiving \$5,000 towards this initiative and I would like to thank the Minister for this contribution and for his recognition of the creativity and enthusiasm of these young northern students.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the DJ Handbell Choir will be here, in the Legislative Assembly in the Great Hall, tomorrow. They are driving from Hay River to Yellowknife today, and will arrive here this evening eager to entertain with their handbells tomorrow. They will be playing from 12:45 to 1:15 and I urge you to either stay for lunch or return early so that you can be sure to hear them when they begin their program. Please join me in welcoming them tomorrow as they come to the Great Hall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement On Harmonization Of Income Assistance And Social Housing Programs

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a significant amount of time and energy has been spent by this government on the harmonization of public housing and income support programs. Harmonization is a word which indicates agreements. In reality, there is little agreement that the proposed changes will create harmony for the clients of these programs. As my colleague, Mr. McLeod, points out, there are faults with this initiative, particularly for seniors, and students as well. The rental scale is not based on the size or the condition of a house or the size of a family. The sole criteria is income, regardless if the income has to support two people or 10 people living under one roof. I am concerned for seniors and for students. The proposed guidelines say that seniors and students currently in public housing will not have their rent increased past \$400. New applicants will have to pay rent based on their income, whether they are living in one bedroom, two bedrooms or three bedrooms.

Right now, for the first time, Treaty 11 scholarships are being taxed. Students will be assessed on money that is already clawed back by the federal government. It seems as though this government is clawing back every penny they can from the people who are most in need. We provide public housing as a way of assisting people on low incomes, but it doesn't seem as though we are helping them get into their homes because we are using their arrears against them. A person with arrears is

disqualified from housing programs when they might benefit the most from these programs.

Options are available. By taking arrears and consolidating them into their mortgages and loans, people with a higher income would be better off owning their own home than if a higher percentage were simply taken off their rent. This is the situation which exists under harmonization.

Instead of harmonization, it might be better just altering existing policies and regulations. This would be simpler and fairer to all clients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have the privilege of recognizing two students from the Western Arctic Leadership Program in Fort Smith. They are Lance Lennie, grade 12 from Deline; and, Daylyn Kakfwi, grade 11, Fort Good Hope. I would like to welcome them to the Assembly.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Premier.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my wife, Marie Wilson, in the gallery.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Welcome. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my two daughters, Robyn and Shawna. Welcome.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I saw a whole bunch of legislative staff here, but maybe they were here to see Mr. Stewart. I would like to recognize my constituent Laurie Golchert. Thank you.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: At this time, I would also like to recognize Joyce McLeod, Mike's better half. Welcome to the House.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS**Question 91-14(6): Aurora College Research Institutes**

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question that will be directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Initially, I didn't have this planned, with Ms. Lee's comments about a research institute in the NWT and that our government doesn't have one, I just want to make sure that we still have one. In Inuvik we have, with the Aurora College, a research institute and there is probably another one. I just want to confirm with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, as it was an area raised in the past, that they are continuing with that program in Inuvik and that they are going to be enhancing what they do there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 91-14(6): Aurora College Research Institutes

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we do have a research institute run under the Aurora College and we have two locations, one in Fort Smith and one in Inuvik. They are very active, both of them, and they will continue to be active. They do naturally run on budgets that are somewhat restricted. We would certainly like to see improvement in that. However, there is always the challenge of accessing additional funding. They are involved in many, many programs, Mr. Speaker, including the Arctic project on the ice with captured gas under the polar ice. That's been a very interesting project for the research institute, amongst many others, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 91-14(6): Aurora College Research Institutes

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must admit, Ms. Lee raised a number of other initiatives that would be good for this government to proceed with. Are there any other initiatives that they are looking at to try to enhance the activities of the research institute? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 91-14(6): Aurora College Research Institutes

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the federal budget of last week, Minister Manley -- I got that right today -- announced that there was \$125 million per year that they are looking to provide to grants and councils. That's going mostly to universities, Mr. Speaker, and it's an area that we want to see if we can access in some way or other. There are chairs of research councils across the country at various universities. We are looking at getting in touch with all of those chairs to do more research here in the Northwest Territories, specifically through the Arctic Research Council. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 92-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. In the debate we have been having on the budget for the department, much of it centred on not just Arctic College, but also accountability or measuring how we are doing with the money that we are giving to the schools. We have increased their budget and it is in our interest to make sure we are doing the best we can with the money. In answering the questions, about 15 percent of the total budget that school boards are getting for student support services, which is to go to special needs, the Minister indicated that there are not a lot of standards on how it's done. I just want the Minister to clarify if that is the case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 92-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have guidelines for the usage of this particular funding. We do have the DECs and DEAs that receive funding for both PTR and for student needs support funding that apply the money for those particular areas, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 92-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could he explain in just easy-to-understand terms what is the direction of the department to the boards, in terms of how they expect the money to be spent as support services or student support needs?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 92-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will give an example of a classroom assistant, Mr. Speaker, that will be dedicated to a student who has special needs, development of classroom assistants, as well as teacher development in how to handle special needs in classrooms, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 92-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate an example, but I am trying to get a sense of what the message is that school boards get when they are given 15 percent of the total budget to spend on special needs. What is the message that the department and the government is sending in terms of the expectations of what school boards should do with the money? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 92-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the funding is clearly identified and we have been in touch with both the union and with the school boards with respect to the funding that is provided, the extra funding we provide each year for PTR and student needs funding. We directed these particular organizations to use the funding for that purpose. That is the instruction provided. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 92-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it might be clear to the committee, but it's not clear to us exactly what objective is being said or what expectations are conveyed to the boards. It should be said in a way that, at the end of the year when the money is spent, we should be able to measure what our level of success is or where the deficiencies are. Could he be more clear about what the department tells the boards? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 92-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the measurement is simple in terms of PTR. I am sure most Members know, because we do get a report back at the end of the year, that it's a little more difficult to quantify the exact numbers of students because the money that's used for student needs is issued for a number of the areas, including support for students, as well as classroom assistants and to add to the classroom assistant numbers. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Nitah.

Question 93-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, we have known for a long time that housing availability for teachers in our communities has always been a problem. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has hired a consulting firm to do a survey. Early results have indicated the conclusion that came up years ago, that a housing shortage is a problem for teachers. We know the results will be in around mid-March. What is the Minister intending to do with those results? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 93-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The intent of my request on this was simply to get some idea of the turnover that we had in this specific area. So we did a small study on this, or are in the process of doing a small study to get some

information on that. I wanted to know some of the reasons for the turnover. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 93-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to this article and based on my personal experiences, it's almost to do entirely with housing; lack of, cost of, condition of, those issues. Once he determines that this is a housing issue, what is he planning to do with that information, Mr. Speaker? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 93-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, part of the reason for gaining this was to see if there were other circumstances other than housing that may be involved in the turnover because, as we know, sometimes it isn't just a housing situation that causes our problems. So I wanted to see where turnover was and how frequent that was. We have no particular ultimate plan on that because the housing problems that may be there are the responsibility of another department of this government, Mr. Speaker, and private organizations and so forth and communities. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 93-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, maybe the Minister can share some information on the cost to this government of teacher turnover rates. What is the percentage of turnover rates in our small communities and our different regions and what is the cost to the Government of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 93-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The turnover rate I believe last year was 18 percent, Mr. Speaker, which is traditional. It hasn't changed much over the years and it's not inordinate in comparison with other areas. The difficulty we have seems to be in specific areas. We are trying to get a handle on that and why that is occurring, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the dollar amounts at my fingertips here, Mr. Speaker, but we can certainly get it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 93-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do agree with the Minister that the turnover rates of 18 percent might represent the territorial perspective, but if you take Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik out of the picture, I would

assume that the turnover rate is probably more like 50 percent plus, which costs this government quit a bit. We say our children are our greatest resources. Maybe the government and the department should be getting back to public housing to ensure housing availability for teachers is there and that the comfort relationship between students and teachers is recreated, so we may increase the graduation rates of our students, so we can prepare for the economy of the day. Would the Minister take that suggestion to his colleagues and discuss it and bring the answer back to us along with the costs associated with turnaround? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 93-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated, the turnover rate fluctuates in different areas, different amounts, different times. We noticed, for example, that if we are able to concentrate on a specific area, which we did in the one case in the territory, our turnover rate dramatically reduced. We worked on a teacher induction program and to help teachers who are new teachers and new to the North, then it makes a huge difference in terms of their retainability, much more satisfaction. We team them up with mentors, for example. This is one area that we use. Housing is one part of the turnover issue, but so are perhaps a lot of other areas, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 94-14(6): Report Of The Business Program Review Committee

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, and I quote from unedited Hansard, in response to questions asked by my colleague, Mr. McLeod, Minister Antoine said: "We are looking at combining the NWT Development Corporation with the Business Credit Corporation and looking at the development of new legislation and also it would incorporate the Business Loan Fund and Community Futures..." My question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. I think we are all aware that there has been an amalgamated working group working on this very subject for some time. I would like to know if there is a report that was produced by this group that could be tabled in this House. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to take that question as notice because I don't know whether we can table the document that we have. I know we have a legislative proposal that went to the Standing Committee on GED. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is being taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Question 95-14(6): Deferral Of The Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing Initiative

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier, the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi. I would like to ask the Premier if he can give direction to his Cabinet so they can defer the harmonization initiative until a further review is done, so that we can guarantee that it will not be a hardship on students, seniors or single parents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 95-14(6): Deferral Of The Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing Initiative

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity yesterday to have some discussion with Members of the Legislature informally when this issue was first raised and I had committed to the MLAs at that time that I would have a discussion with my fellow Ministers and following that, give them some indication as to what we would be prepared to do. We started that first step of the process today. So we will be sharing whatever decision we make in the next few days. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary To Question 95-14(6): Deferral Of The Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing Initiative

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier if, upon talking to his Ministers, they have some idea at what time it will be deferred or changes made to the harmonization program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 95-14(6): Deferral Of The Harmonization Of Income Support And Social Housing Initiative

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The suggestion was made in good faith yesterday by Members of the Legislature, so I had agreed at that time to share that with the appropriate Ministers. I have done that. We will respect the Ministers' right to contemplate the suggestion. I am sure at the appropriate time, they will indicate to me whether they are in agreement with that suggestion and come forward with the appropriate initiative. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 96-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. It goes without saying that we, as a government, owe our volunteer firefighters throughout the NWT a huge debt of gratitude for their tireless service in our communities. These brave men and women put their lives on the line everyday, 365 days a year, so that we may be safe from harm. In this House, Mr. Speaker, on October of 2001, I asked the Honourable Roger Allen, then Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, if he would agree to provide medals of recognition to our

volunteer firefighters, so that they may be shown a tangible form of recognition. The Minister stated then: "Yes, as I have heard in other jurisdictions across the country, I am pleased to say that we will support our Northwest Territories firefighter organizations, so that they do receive some recognition." I would like to ask the current Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs to advise this House as to what progress his department has made with incremental service medals for our volunteer firefighters. It has now been a year-and-a-half since I have made the request and I haven't heard of the progress on these medals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 96-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the question was recently brought up, we have established three types of merit awards in recognition of firefighters and community fire departments. We have an individual merit award for each region and then overall a territorial award, then we have a community fire department merit award and a length of service award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 96-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for his answer. I would like him to expand a little bit more though, Mr. Speaker, if he would, on the type of awards that are being presented. Are these actual service medals and I refer to the length of service medals. What type of awards are we presenting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 96-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department is proceeding with the production of special service pins to recognize two and five-year terms. Years of service medallions will recognize services of 10, 15 and 20 or more years of service. Further to that, Mr. Speaker, we have taken the whole question back to the NWT fire departments and the fire marshal to see if we can't improve on the type of awards, in particular the pins, in recognition of length of service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 96-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly when we are going to recognize our volunteer firefighters, surely we can do it in the form of a service medal that they can wear proudly and wear in conjunction with other service medals. There is a pretty standard form of medal that different groups receive for incremental years of service. I would hope that this department would look at medals and not pins for this. Certainly it can't be a money issue. Will the

Minister commit to making these service medals and not pins? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of MACA, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 96-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, although I would probably prefer to commit to the Member that we could create medals rather than pins, I have to take into consideration the fact that we now put the question to the fire chiefs and the fire department, as well as the fire marshal, and I hate to jump the gun before we get recommendations back from them. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 96-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also asked the Minister back at that time if we could supply licence plates for our volunteer firefighters to recognize them, to give them some recognition in the community. Mr. Speaker, when I asked for that, I was asking for regular licence plates that go on the back. It's done in other jurisdictions that firefighters in the community stand out and it gives them some sort of special recognition. I would like to know with the Minister where this issue is with licence plates for firefighters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of MACA.

Further Return To Question 96-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this particular question was taken to the Department of Transportation and we've been advised that it would require a change of the legislation to allow for such a licence plate. Although there may be some complications with actually keeping track of the licence plates afterwards, it was not recommended by Transportation that we do this. They recommended, and I believe both departments agreed, that the only way to go would be with front licence plates, rather than back licence plates and so long as they didn't have the NWT polar bear image on it, there would be no problem with creating such a licence plate. In that case, Transportation would have no issue at all with the licence plate. That was what we took back to the Member and to the fire departments for consideration. I know it's not what the Member recommended, but it's basically what the department arrived at as the only possible way we could respond to the question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 97-14(6): Income Calculations For Social Housing Rent Scales

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister responsible for the harmonization initiative. However, in light of the Premier's response, I will change my line of questioning to what is calculated as income for the people in social housing. I would

like to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, I have gotten a lot of complaints that there is a new methodology of calculating gross income and based on the income, your rent is adjusted. I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell me what's included as part of the calculations. I am told bingos and gambling winnings are all part of what is calculated. Could he clarify to me what is part of the calculations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Return To Question 97-14(6): Income Calculations For Social Housing Rent Scales

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will speak to the current status of what is declared as income. Since harmonization is not in effect yet, the other calculations such as bingo earnings and various other incomes are not calculated into the current rent scales. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 97-14(6): Income Calculations For Social Housing Rent Scales

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this issue has been raised to me on a number of occasions that we are now trying to incorporate a system that will include items that are considered income. There may not be a formal methodology of tracking it. Could the Minister tell me what would be in place to ensure that information is not based on hearsay? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 97-14(6): Income Calculations For Social Housing Rent Scales

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a very critical point that should be conveyed to the Members is that the NWT Housing Corporation is responsible for the implementation of the harmonization policy in terms of calculating rents. We have sent out a formal letter about the methodology that is going to be used to calculate rents. How we calculate income is something we need to address. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 97-14(6): Income Calculations For Social Housing Rent Scales

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the answer from the Minister, I take it that these new formulas for calculating income are not in place and we're not going to have a bunch of repo men lurking behind the doors and in the shadows trying to calculate what is income and what is not income and who is winning bingo and who is winning card games? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Allen.

Further Return To Question 97-14(6): Income Calculations For Social Housing Rent Scales

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think those are some of the unknowns that we need to really look at carefully. I know the traditional method is to have each tenant coming to the local housing association each month and declaring income and that is the normal procedure, so hopefully we can eradicate some of the misnomers in a very short while. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Ms. Lee.

Question 98-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pursue the questions I had earlier about the funding for special needs in our schools. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, not for technical accounting data of where the money goes, but what his instruction or guidelines have been. Is there anything that he's told the boards about what he expects to be done with the money for special needs? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 98-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on a twice annual basis, I meet with the chairs of the district education councils and authorities, and the superintendents meet with our staff at the same time. During those meetings, we have discussed the issue of funding, PTR and special needs funding, and I've given specific instructions that this money is to be used for the intended purpose to ensure that it goes into student needs funding, meaning that it should go into areas such as school consultants and program support teachers, supports for our students, for materials, supplies that they may need, special transportation and student support assistance and extraordinary situations where students may need some help. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 98-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In those conversations, has he also talked to them about the end result of that? What sort of evaluation does he engage in within these board officials to determine how well the money is being spent? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 98-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, it is easy to quantify the PTR because that is measured and reported in that fashion. It is a little more difficult to quantify and to tabulate every expenditure that is made in support of student funding because of the variety of areas it could be used in: support teachers, student support, et

cetera. That is reported back though, Mr. Speaker, in general terms through our annual reporting system. We have a very, very good reporting system from the DEC's back to headquarters with annual reports. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 98-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question has to do with the special needs funding, not necessarily PTR, and the Minister said two things. One is that, because the area is so complex, he can't itemize everything and yet he is getting excellent reports from the boards. So there is a contradictory message there. I'm wondering if the Minister could provide the House, in writing, with the instructions he gives or guidelines he gives to the boards and what the evaluation is that is coming back. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 98-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the honourable Member wants me to put in writing other than what I have just stated. I did state that I meet with the boards on a consistent basis and we mentioned yesterday that we are on a continual process of better and better accountability of reporting, Mr. Speaker. We are determined to ensure that that transpires. I'll see what I can get in terms of information on this for the Member and we'll provide that as soon as we can get it available. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your final supplementary question, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 98-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He is saying he'll get me information but he really doesn't know what I am asking for. What I am trying to do is; I think we have an obligation, when we are increasing funding for special needs, to do the best we can with the money. Would the Minister give me information that tells me where the money has gone to, what was expected of it and how it was spent? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 98-14(6): Funding For Student Support Services

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those questions are clear and we'll do our best to provide that. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 99-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with my questions there before, I would like to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs again, on the issue of service

medals, does the Minister or the department not have the authority to issue medals instead of pins if they would like to do it, or does it have to come from the fire marshal or what is the process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 99-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department could come up with a medal regardless what the fire department or fire marshal says, but we would certainly like to have their input to it. However, in the end, it is the department's decision. Nevertheless we would certainly like to have their input. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary To Question 99-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, I just have one more question, Mr. Speaker, and that is; when can we see these medals? When are they going to show up or when will they be introduced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize, I've missed the Member's question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, could you restate your question?

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was looking for timelines on these medals, on the different awards that the department is going to be issuing. I would like to know when can you see these? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 99-14(6): Recognition Of Volunteer Firefighters

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is not a very big issue, and I certainly will encourage the department to get it done as soon as possible. Thanks.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Nitah.

Question 100-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, just to follow up on my earlier questions. The response I got was not satisfactory to me, and I'm sure it is not satisfactory to teachers. After they share a house, four at a time, or sleeping on the floor of the health centre or staying in churches, now we hear that there has been a study done. The Minister is saying, okay, we will look at the study and see what we can do. I would like to know if he will commit to providing this Legislative Assembly with a plan by the June session that

will address the housing needs of teachers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 100-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the issue of housing, the government got out of the housing policy several years ago. The work that is being undertaken in these studies will look at a number of things, one of which is housing and some of the turnover issues that we have. With respect to the Member's question, I can't commit to that because it is a government issue and it requires FMBS and I can't speak for all the other government departments that have responsibility in this area, Mr. Speaker. We know that we want to be sensitive to the teachers, that is certainly true. We certainly also need to be aware of the problems that are out there, one of which, as I say, is housing. There may be other particular reasons for turnover. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 100-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly we've known the government to have made mistakes in the past. I believe getting out of housing is one of those mistakes. Teachers are new to our communities, but teachers are quitting at an alarming rate, costing this government and taxpayers a lot of dollars on advertising and recruitment, and he is saying he can't make a commitment because he's not government. He is government. He is a Minister of this government, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask the Minister for a commitment that he will look at the housing needs of teachers and he will come back to this House with something, whether we like it or not, as long as it is something. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Further Return To Question 100-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is a question that is not within my control. Mr. Speaker, naturally, as a Cabinet Member, I can bring issues forward. I have spoken about this issue before, but it is an overall government policy to be out of the housing business, and that involves a number of government departments. I am very sensitive to the needs of our teachers and will continue to be. This is an issue that I do discuss from time to time with various officials.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 100-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can I get a commitment from the Minister that he will consult and talk with his Cabinet colleagues to form a government position on this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 100-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will continue my discussions with various officials and our own officials and the FMBS, as well as the Housing Corporation. There are a number of agencies involved in housing in communities for teachers and it's a challenging problem, Mr. Speaker, and we are well aware of that. We will certainly continue to do our best in this area.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 100-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He is committed to discuss this with his Cabinet colleagues. Mr. Speaker, we have to take the value. When we say our children are our greatest resources, what do we mean by that, Mr. Speaker? If he is worried about the bottom line, and that is what the government is worried about in getting out of housing, then I have a deep worry. My concern is graduation rates, educating our students and we need teachers to do so. Now that he is committed to talking with his Cabinet colleagues, I am not too sure I am crazy about him talking to the officials, but as long as he talks to his Cabinet colleagues, can I get a commitment that he will come back to this House with something in June? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Minister Ootes.

Further Return To Question 100-14(6): Impact Of Housing Shortages On The Teaching Profession

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of housing isn't just an education one. It involves other departments: RWED, Health and Social Services and officials in the communities. We recognize that we have a problem with turnover and we are analyzing the reasons for that. I committed to talk to my officials and my Cabinet colleagues about it and I have done that. Mr. Speaker, we have a government policy that enters into this, so I have to take that into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 101-14(6): Permits For Fuel Wood Harvesting

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I have a different question for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Speaker, it's been pretty well publicized in Hay River that there is no place at present where the public can buy cordwood for fireplaces and not everybody is in a position to go into the bush and get a permit to cut for personal use. So it would be beneficial to everyone if there was a process whereby permits and applications can be processed in a more timely way. I do have a constituent now who has gone to RWED in Hay River and is looking for a permit to cut wood for resale. The process, as it stands right now, is a fairly lengthy paper trail and would take one or two years to be approved. Is there anything this government could do to

streamline that process so that somebody could get into the wood cutting and selling business in a timely manner? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 101-14(6): Permits For Fuel Wood Harvesting

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will do everything we can to help out in this situation with regard to fuel wood harvesting. I just wanted to add that what has happened since the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act has come into play is they have to get involved in the commercial end of approval of these types of permits as well. If we could work with them closer and find a mechanism on how to speed up the approval process, then I think that would be the most ideal way to go. Through the RWED permitting process, we will see how we can speed up the process. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 101-14(6): Permits For Fuel Wood Harvesting

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the department might consider, since wood cutting for firewood purposes is not something that's done on a large scale given the size of the forest that's out there, if it might be possible for the government to acquire a permit for a woodlot through the land and water board and then provide licensing within the mandate of the territorial government for people who might want to do this on a commercial basis. It might be in a tree-designated area, but it would solve the problem, similar to the way a municipality would secure a head lease on lands and then release those to clients. Could the Minister consider acquiring a designated area and then his department be responsible for issuing permits and licences for that purpose? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 101-14(6): Permits For Fuel Wood Harvesting

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will try anything. I think this is a good suggestion that we could look into. I think that there are a number of things that are impeding us in trying to get a simple cord of wood, or allowing somebody to get the permits to cut firewood and then resell it. It's a difficult kind of thing that we got ourselves into. We have an interim measures agreement and those mechanisms are out there. I am sure we will find a way and I think that the suggestion the Member makes is one way of trying to look at it and see if it's doable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 101-14(6): Permits For Fuel Wood Harvesting

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I am sure the Minister is aware, the price of other fossil fuels is rising daily. The cost of propane and heat is going up and it's a very

frustrating situation for residents who live within such a vast forested area not to be able to get cordwood. Given that time is of the essence, is it possible within the mandate of the department that they could make an application through the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board for a wood cutting lot? Is there anything that would preclude the department from proceeding with that in a timely manner? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister Antoine.

Further Return To Question 101-14(6): Permits For Fuel Wood Harvesting

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, there is the political will here to try to find a way out of this situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier if his government's policies are created by man or by the Creator? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could you rephrase the question? I think it may be bordering on a hypothetical question. It is outside of the knowledge of the Premier. Repeat your question.

Question 102-14(6): GNWT Position On Staff Housing

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in asking for a commitment of a Minister of this House, a government policy seems to be in the way of him making a commitment. As far I know, Mr. Speaker, policies are created by man and not by the Creator. If a manmade creation cannot be broken or changed, I am not sure where we stand on this issue. So the question is are policies of this government made by man or the Creator? That's all I am asking, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Premier, a policy question.

Return To Question 102-14(6): GNWT Position On Staff Housing

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Policies of this government and this Cabinet are brought forward by Ministers and officials under direction of Cabinet and are designed, worded and crafted to meet the goals and objectives of government. So they are policies of government. They are not cast in stone and we try to adhere to them to the best of our ability but, as you may know, it is suggested that sometimes we fall short and miss the mark. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Nitah, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 102-14(6): GNWT Position On Staff Housing

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am happy for that answer. Mr. Speaker, the government came up with a policy of public housing. The result of that seems to be a high turnover rate of teachers in the NWT and in the schools, contributing to the low graduation rate and the low education rate of our students. Is that the goal and objective of that policy?

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 102-14(6): GNWT Position On Staff Housing

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we knew years ago that other northern jurisdictions are out of the business of housing. They are able to attract professionals, doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers and other professional people who are required in our communities. So we know that the cost of providing housing in the past was very, very high to this government. Any suggestion to go back into it would be fiscally impossible to entertain at this time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 102-14(6): GNWT Position On Staff Housing

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, maybe I could ask the Premier to provide me with information such as a comparative cost to government and society, of teacher turnarounds, recruitment, retention, travel, relocations, bringing them here, sending them back to wherever we get them from, compared to the cost to government when the government was in public housing. Mr. Speaker, maybe you could compare that the cost to this government is for students who are not graduating, people who end up in the social envelope of the government. Maybe they could do a cost-benefit analysis on our policy of giving out public housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 102-14(6): GNWT Position On Staff Housing

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will speak to the Ministers who are directly involved with this issue to look at assessing the cost and time that would be needed to assess whether or not providing housing in the past or since then has impacted significantly on the teacher turnover over a number of years, and also to see if the graduation and success rates of our schools have changed as a result of the change in our housing policy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary To Question 102-14(6): GNWT Position On Staff Housing

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that maybe we should have used graduation statistics because graduate students, when they have to take college entrance exams, their education level is far below grade 12. We've seen that proven in the past. So let's gauge it towards how well we are educating our students. Mr. Speaker, the newspaper reported that housing is a major issue in the retention of teachers. For the recruitment of teachers, housing is a major role. We know that. Yet we are not doing anything about it because of a policy decision we made years ago. If we make a mistake, shouldn't we own up to that mistake? I would like to get a commitment that that comparison be done, and let's review the policy of getting out of staff housing for government. We know in our communities we are fighting for

our housing already, and it's not fair for anybody to live in a church or a health centre or have to share a unit among four people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 102-14(6): GNWT Position On Staff Housing

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We can look at the teacher turnover in the last five years that this government provided staff housing and look at any five years since staff housing was discontinued and see what the change in turnover is and has been and provide that to the House. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to Opening Address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 7-14(6): Report On The Draft Main Estimates Review Process

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a report on the Standing Committee on Social Programs, Report on the Draft Main Estimates Review Process.

The Standing Committee on Social Programs conducted its review of the draft main estimates for the Departments of Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; Justice and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation between January 14 and January 20, 2003.

As is often the case during these reviews with each of the responsible Ministers and their officials, the committee made requests for additional information, or sought clarification on items of interest. For information not at hand, the Minister and their officials committed to provide the information to committee at the earliest possible date.

Very often the committee's report to the House must include information provided after our meetings in order to be factual, timely and relevant. In most cases the information is provided in a timely manner and the report is completed satisfactorily. The Standing Committee on Social Programs would like to acknowledge the timely manner in which the Department of Health and Social Services and the NWT Housing Corporation provided additional information requested during our review of the draft main estimates this January.

However, there are times when the information is not available prior to the committee's report to the House for a number of reasons. For example, there are instances where the information may be time sensitive and not available, or it may be difficult to gather and collate. In these cases the committee proceeds with its report with the understanding that the absence of certain information was unavoidable.

During our review of the draft 2003-2004 main estimates, the committee encountered two situations in particular which had to do with the timely provision of available information, which were very frustrating, and in fact entirely avoidable.

The Department of Justice was only able to provide its additional information on February 12, 2003, two days after the committee had finalized its report to the House and a full three and a half weeks after our review of the department. What is even more confounding is that the letter from the Minister was signed on February 7, 2003, five days before it was received by the committee. Had this information been delivered promptly, the committee would have had an opportunity to consider it at our meeting of February 10, 2003, at which time our report to the House was finalized.

With respect to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the information was provided to the committee on February 17, 2003, three days after our report was presented in House, and five weeks after our review of the department. We were upset to see that the majority of information provided was dated January 17, 2003 and some was even dated as early as May 2002. This certainly indicates that the information was available long before the date it was received.

In making this report to the House, the Standing Committee on Social Programs is hopeful that future reviews are not hampered by poor communication and untimely responses. The government may wish to consider that one may be left with the impression of a department attempting to avoid scrutiny, since all are aware of deadlines and time frames in this process. While that may not be the case in this circumstance, the timing of responses certainly shows sloppiness in the attention to committee requests for information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 7-14(6), Carried

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave, that Committee Report 7-14(6) be received by the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 11, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 2: An Act To Amend The Territorial Parks Act

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development has reviewed Bill 2, and the bill is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted. Thank you.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 11, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 24-14(6): Child Of The North: A Nurtured Child – A Neglected Child

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a document called Child of the North: A Nurtured Child - A Neglected Child by Dr. Clair and Mrs. Clara Schnupp. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. McLeod.

Tabled Document 25-14(6): Deh Gah Got'ie First Nations Petition On Aboriginal And Treaty Housing Rights

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I have four documents I would like to table. The first one is a document from the Deh Gah Got'ie First Nations requesting they be exempted from the rent scale initiatives. It's a petition.

Tabled Document 26-14(6): Letter From Deh Gah Got'ie First Nations Chief Samuel Gargan Regarding The New Rent Scale

The second one is a letter from Chief Sam Gargan regarding the new rent scale initiatives.

Tabled Document 27-14(6): Deh Cho First Nations Leadership Resolution Regarding The Housing Crisis

The third document is a leadership motion from Deh Cho First Nations regarding the new rent scale initiatives.

Tabled Document 28-14(6): Deh Gah Got'ie First Nations Resolution Regarding The Housing Crisis

The fourth document is a BCR from the Deh Gah Got'ie First Nations regarding the housing crisis in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Dent.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 5-14(6): Family Violence Protection Act, Carried

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS the social agenda conference report called for a Family Violence Prevention Act;

AND WHEREAS on November 3, 2000, this Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a declaration on family violence;

AND WHEREAS this declaration will emphasize a Member's individual commitment to address family violence, also affirmed the collective commitment of the 14th Assembly to work in partnership with communities and leaders to help lift the silence surrounding family violence and create caring supports for people experiencing violence;

AND WHEREAS this government has failed to provide adequate support for people experiencing family violence;

AND WHEREAS the creation and passage of family violence protection legislation would improve the support for victims of family violence;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Social Programs has been firmly requesting the development of a Family Violence Prevention Act since November of 2001, and Members for much longer;

AND WHEREAS the Government of the Northwest Territories has placed great importance on the issue of ending family violence to the point of naming a Minister of family violence;

AND WHEREAS family violence shelters are operating at or near capacity;

AND WHEREAS the Department of Health and Social Services has created the Addictions, Mental Health and Family Violence Strategy which is focused on healing;

AND WHEREAS family violence protection legislation would improve the tools available for law enforcement agencies to help victims of family violence escape the violence without leaving their home community;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that the Government of the Northwest Territories undertake the necessary work to draft and introduce a Family Violence Prevention Act in the Legislative Assembly by June 2003 for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the Minister of Justice's commitment earlier today to introduce family violence prevention legislation by June and it, in some ways, makes the motion somewhat moot. I think it's also still important for us, as Members of this House, to have the formal motion on record as a statement of our intent to see legislation brought forward.

This has been a long-term process. A couple of years ago, I raised the issue of this type of legislation in the House. At the time, the Premier had named my colleague from Hay River South to be Minister responsible for coordinating the development of an action plan to combat family violence. I asked her about such legislation. She told the House that she agreed that the NWT should have family violence prevention legislation and she said she would work on making sure that it came forward. I wrote to the Minister of Justice to ask him to bring forward such legislation. Minister Antoine was the Minister at the time and he told the House that he saw this type of legislation as a priority. He said he would work to bring such legislation forward by the spring session in 2002.

In the House on February 26, 2002, Minister Miltenberger confirmed the critical nature of this type of legislation and noted that the Members had identified family violence prevention legislation as a priority. He committed to write to the Minister of Justice to push for introduction of the bill.

Then on March 6, 2002, the Minister of Justice, Mr. Allen, said he was committed to move as fast as possible on this piece of

legislation. During that same budget session, he said that preparatory work would be concluded in June 2002.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a long record of commitments and the one made by the Minister earlier today was the most clear. I look forward to working with the Minister to see this legislation brought forward and passed. He has my personal commitment for cooperation and assistance.

Mr. Speaker, family violence prevention legislation should be just one part of a clearly articulated strategy for responding to and preventing family violence. We know that that sort of legislation alone is not the answer, but it is one key part of the arsenal needed to fight family violence. The Minister talked today about looking at other jurisdictions, but making sure that our legislation works for our residents. That's a good idea. Some jurisdictions like the Yukon have undertaken reviews of their legislation and have identified strengths and weaknesses. We can learn much from our sister territory to the west. The Yukon review found the legislation made a difference, an improvement, by increasing the protections available to victims of violence. The review team found that the rate of use of emergency orders under the act, taking account of relative population, was the highest in Canada among those jurisdictions with similar legislation. Unfortunately, since the rate of domestic violence in the NWT is even higher than in the Yukon, I think we can probably expect similar rates of use here.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has said we will see family violence prevention legislation in June. I thank him again for that commitment. This is important to far too many of our constituents not to move it forward as soon as possible.

As I have already outlined, four Ministers of the government, including the Minister today, have said that we need this kind of legislation. The Minister has committed to bring it forward by June, so I am hoping now that the government will also vote in favour of the motion so that we can unanimously demonstrate our commitment to confront family violence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the motion. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have too much to add to the comments made by my colleague, Mr. Dent, who I credit with keeping this issue on the radar screen here and really shaping what we have today. He has really put the pieces together and he deserves our recognition, along with the Minister, Mr. Allen, who has taken on the challenge.

When we were talking about this on Monday, Mr. Speaker, I related some of the horrific statistics that are pervasive in our society related to family abuse. What impressed me and perhaps in a sense is also depressing, Mr. Speaker, is that this legislation is only going to be one part of a continuum, a whole basket of programs and services that will be needed to really make a difference in the number of incidents of family abuse and in really achieving a marked decrease. It's going to take a long time. We have started this process and hopefully we have started changing the attitudes and willingness of people to confront this issue, to deal with it and really make a difference. So I hope that in going through the process now, the big process of designing this legislation, especially designing its

implementation, that this legislature will be signalling that we really do want to make a difference. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the motion. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't take much time. I would just like to reiterate the point that I think that this is simply one tool that is going to help improve the situation and allow for some early intervention and hopefully can prevent a lot of family violence. It isn't, as my colleagues have said, the be all and end all. We know we need more drug and alcohol treatment. That's a critical piece. With that kind of treatment, we could make serious inroads and we know our shelters are too full in the larger communities. One of my colleagues from a smaller community said if you think that's bad, we don't have shelters in many of the smaller communities. That's a very key point. That's another issue that we have to make a real commitment to address. So this is one small piece. It's time for us to move down this road. There are many others to follow. I hope we will take up that task. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a short comment in favour of this motion. In many ways, the Minister's announcement today that the government will pursue legislation in this area pre-empted debate on this issue, and I think it's still important to note that the introduction and debate of this motion speaks to the importance that this Legislature puts on this very serious issue. Also, there's a lot that can be said from an act on the part of a Legislature to pass a law. When legislation is passed and a law is made to address an issue like family violence protection, it says a lot more than the public statements we've made. I know that everyone here agrees that we have a very serious problem with family violence and we have to do everything we can to mitigate it and address that. Signing a declaration and making public statements is one thing, but using the power and authority of this House and this honourable gathering place to pass a law that says we take a stand on this...in terms of the detail of this legislation, one of the things we allow is that women in situations of family violence will no longer be forced to be out of the house, but that law enforcement and other measures can be put into force, so that the violator and those who are committing violence will have to suffer the consequences more.

So I support the principle of the bill and the effect of the bill and I applaud the government for agreement to come with the legislation. As well, I would like to recognize and commend the Member for Frame Lake for making sure this does not go unattended to, and all the other Members who worked on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the motion. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to speak in support of this legislation. I know that we talk about family violence and how we can put posters up in our windows saying we have zero tolerance for family violence, but I think it's important that we take it another step forward and this is a good step forward in this process. We all know that it's not the end, as has been mentioned by a number of Members here. We have situations in the small communities, in all centres, where our shelters are overcrowded, they need more resources, and I am sure with this legislation going forward, it

will help all of us to put more attention in that area and make sure that we can do a half decent job of it in support of the legislation. It's a piece of legislation that everyone in this House can be proud of putting their name behind and working towards. So I would like to thank everybody for their willingness to move forward on this piece of legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the motion. Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I feel very humble today to acknowledge the enormous support to push this piece of legislation forward. I want to thank my colleagues from not only this side of the floor, but that side of the floor as well. I think it's important that this Legislature continues to make this a top priority of this government and we assure you that with the unequivocal support of my Cabinet colleagues and the leadership from this side of the House, we will introduce legislation in June and I can confirm that we will commit ourselves to pass this legislation in the life of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have already spoken earlier in the House this week with respect to my support for this legislation being brought in. I would also like to thank the Minister for his response to our request and I would only be repeating what my colleagues have already said if I got into detail on this. I have seconded the motion and have promised and made commitments on numerous occasions when I have spoken at events that were convened by women who work in shelters, frontline workers, that legislation would be passed during the life of this government. So I am happy that it looks like we will be able to go home and report back to our constituents that this is happening and that it will make a significant difference in the lives of victims of family violence. With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member is requesting a recorded vote. To the motion. Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to stand up and say I do support this motion also. This motion can help us keep our families together in the smaller communities and not be forced to go into larger centres for a large span of time. I hope this government will start putting money at the front end for prevention instead of building shelters, and maybe one day we won't need the shelters and we can put more funding into the front end and cut off the problems that arise in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Question has been called. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand.

Recorded Vote

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER: All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. Sixteen in favour. The motion has passed unanimously.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 16, motions. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the order paper.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member is requesting unanimous consent to go to item 5. You have unanimous consent.

**REVERT TO ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS
IN THE GALLERY**

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize in the gallery Mrs. Barb Saunders, executive director of the NWT Status of Women Council.

---Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 2, Bill 6, Bill 7, Bill 8, Committee Reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6), 5-14(6), 6-14(6), with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will call the committee to order. We have a number of issues to discuss in Committee of the Whole. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend the committee continue consideration of Bill 3 and committee reports 3-14(6), 4-14(6) and 5-14(6) concurrently, specifically to resume consideration of Education, Culture and Employment's budget and then moving on to the Executive if we conclude ECE.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The Chair will call a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

Bill 3: Appropriation Act, 2003-2004

Department Of Education, Culture and Employment

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will call the Committee of the Whole back to order. We are here to do the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Does the committee wish to bring in any witnesses? Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in, please.

Mr. Minister, could you introduce your witnesses, for the record?

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. With me today are Dr. Loretta Foley, deputy minister of the department; Lesley Allen, assistant deputy minister for advanced education and careers; and, Paul Devitt, director of management services, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. We left off yesterday on general comments. What is the wish of the committee? General comments. Mr. Ootes.

General Comments

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to make reference to a couple of items. We handed out some reports with regard to the Aurora College campus in Fort Smith and some of the detail that was requested yesterday. As well, I can provide Members with an update as to the occupancy that is there today. Additionally, I have a report for Ms. Lee. This concerned her and there were questions on accountability for student needs funding. We have an accountability framework, Mr. Chair, that is outlined to every DEC and DEA and they are required to fill that report in which we will pass on to Ms. Lee, which identifies areas such as student support funding and how it is used. It is a number of areas the funding is used in. For example, student assessment, student achievement, teaching and learning centres and support staff and so forth. We will pass this on to the Members and we will have copies for other Members under their doors today, Mr. Speaker, in their offices. I will pass this on. We also have expenditures for each particular DEC that goes along with that. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess the question I need to ask is if Members want an update of today's occupancy of the Aurora College Campus in Fort Smith.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Is it the wish of the committee to receive that report? When could you provide that report, Mr. Ootes?

HON. JAKE OOTES: I've got it here, Mr. Chair, and we'll pass it on. On the occupancy rate, Mr. Chair, we have a number of buildings in Fort Smith. In Breynat Hall with 52 units, there are 11 vacant today, however, within two to three weeks, heavy equipment operators, carpentry and housing maintenance courses start so then the units will be filled up. The Brown House has 16 units with zero vacancy; the Green House has 17 units with four vacant; Grand Detour has 28 units with two vacant; Aurora Gardens, 25 units with zero vacancies; houses with 15 and zero vacancy for a total number of units of 153, Mr. Chair, with 17 units vacant and that is at 89 percent occupancy as of today. But it must be noted that this will increase to 96 percent once the heavy equipment operator, carpentry and housing maintenance courses start in early March. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you. That was great. It was a little too quick for us to be able to get all that. I was wondering if the Minister can't just have that photocopied and distributed. It would be a lot easier. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Mr. Ootes, could you get that so it can be handed around? Thank you, Mr. Ootes. We'll start where we left off yesterday. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I thank the Minister for the information. I look forward to getting that information on special needs funding and accountability framework. I have another question coming out of the Minister's opening remarks and there were a lot of mentions there about the need to train our workforce and making sure that they can partake in our economy, but I didn't see much mention of what we are doing for those with disabilities in helping them get educated and getting them into the workforce as well, and, of course, we can assume that this applies to everyone, including those with disabilities. But specifically I want to ask the Minister to elaborate on that and specifically with the maximizing northern employment. I wonder if the Minister could give me information as to whether or not those programs apply for those students with disabilities; those employees, potential employees and graduates with disabilities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. The Maximizing Northern Employment Programs apply to all individuals; they're inclusive programs to be taken advantage of by all individuals. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we are all aware that specific components of maximizing northern employment cater to those who graduate from post-secondary education, either with degrees or diplomas and it is a way to help them in transition to the workforce. There is an internship program there and transition program and also programs for community graduating teachers and nurses and so forth and I believe social workers as well, but, I'm wondering about situations where students with disabilities who may not have finished a conventional college program or diploma or degree program but I would think they need to have as much help to make the transition into the working world. I'm wondering if the Minister is aware whether or not this program or any other program in the department is meeting that need. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the internship program applies to degree and diploma graduates, Mr. Chair. However, there is an area there we do need to look at with regard to the programs for individuals with disabilities to see if we could look at certificate programs to apply as well for those individuals because we are aware that some of those programs that individuals are taking don't apply at the particular moment, and we need to look at that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. I guess the Minister is considering talking about the possibility of extending or redefining maximizing northern employment to include maybe those who

obtain certificates, rather than a conventional diploma degree. If the Minister wants to pursue that, that will be a good thing because I do believe this is a highly effective program. I hear nothing but good things about the Maximizing Northern Employment Program and having been a student myself, not too long ago, I know it's always difficult for secondary students to finish school. They come back and they want to work here and you know often they are told they don't have the experience, and it's really a good way by this program to get a foot in the door, prove themselves and gain the experience and so on.

But I'm looking more into general situations. What are we doing with the students that we are producing who have disabilities? I guess part of the difficulty in this area is the fact that there are just so many different categories of disability. It could be physical disability where they may need physical equipment and that would address that or hearing impairment, or in a more physical sense, but then we have a lot of disabilities that affect the level of learning or ability to have a normal life. I'm getting more concerned about the fact, and I've mentioned this in my other statements in the House, that we have embraced inclusionary policies to include all students with any category or extent of disability into our school system, but what do we do when they finish our grade 12? What is the department doing? What programs are there to help them through the stage after they get grade 12 in terms of them getting through school in post-secondary education and then when they come back to work and come back to the North, to maximize their potential? Could the Minister advise me as to what specific program the department has to address this area? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have several programs to assist students, individuals with disabilities. We have an \$8,000 study grant so that they can be helped through various programs that they may wish to take, and there is that support. Additionally, Mr. Chair, we have a fund of approximately \$100,000 that we have passed on to the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities that individuals can access and we allow the Council for Disabled, who are in the best position to be able to do the appropriate judgment as to who needs and who should gain assistance, Mr. Chair. We also have a career services department that we provide. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that \$8,000 study grant available to...how does that program work? Is that under the offices of student financial assistance or is it a separate program in the department that students with disabilities would apply for? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll ask Ms. Allen to give us a hand here to address that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Ootes. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is under the SFA program. There is funding available for assessment up to \$1,000, and then in addition to that there's an \$8,000 grant for

each academic year for persons with disabilities in the post-secondary system.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Allen. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. Is there a maximum cap on this fund, or can anybody apply year after year as long as they get into post-secondary education? Is there a specific definition as to what the eligible post-secondary education institution is?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: The federal government has a study grant, and the NWT has followed the rates similar to the federal government. It went from \$5,000 to \$8,000 this past year. In terms of a cap, it's per academic year, but it's per program as well. I'm sorry, was there a second part to that question?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Allen. Ms. Lee, could you clarify the second part of your question? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Yes, I was just wondering if the eligibility of this program is limited to the term of the program. For example, if a student with a disability goes for two years or four years, is there a cut-off after that time? The second part of the question is what is the eligibility requirement in terms of the school that you can attend under this grant? What is the definition of post-secondary education under this program? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: It must be an accredited post-secondary institution that provides licensed, certified diploma degree-granting studies.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Allen. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. I'm still looking for what the government is doing for those who are not able to go to the conventional post-secondary education programs. What are we doing with those with autism or learning disabilities, but who are still able to...I'm not talking about students who can go to university but they're in a wheelchair, or they have a hearing problem, or they have a sight problem, or they need a special bed or something physical. I'm talking about a lot of students in our school system and students who have gone through our school system with a disability that impedes their learning ability. They may have FAS/FAE, or they're autistic. There are a whole slew of causes for learning disabilities. We send them out of our Grade 12 system, but when they finish Grade 12 they're not able to get to a college or a university for a two-year diploma or a four-year degree, but they still need to have assistance and they are entitled to the assistance, I believe, from the government to make the transition into the working world so they don't end up in the income support office or rely on their families. Other than the \$100,000 grant that you give to the Council for Disabled Persons, is there a program in the government that allows those students with learning disabilities to go and get education after high school? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: The \$100,000 that we have that the Member is speaking about is under the literacy strategy. So for students who want to go on and get non-post-secondary programs, that's the fund that we have available. As our Minister said, we

have inclusive programs for adults and career services. All of those students can access those services.

In addition to that, we are working on a disability framework strategy with the Department of Health and Social Services. Under that there is one building block called employment options, so we are working on programs there as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Allen. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. I just want to mention another thing in this area, and that is the fact that those students with a disability should have as much statutory protection as the students without a disability. Literacy programs like the one being mentioned that is administered by the Council for Disabled Persons are good and fine, but they don't have the kind of weight and permanence and the message that other students get. So we have a system, it seems to me, where those in the mainstream who finish high school and they get to post-secondary education, whether it's a diploma or a degree in some university or college, they apply for SFA and they get it and they're benefited and they do fine. We have lots of products of that sitting around this table. But those students who have various degrees of disabilities who need help in the interim in order for them to get to the post-secondary education, the conventional universities and colleges, or when they need help to get a job, they don't have the kind of statutory protection that exists under student financial assistance, for example.

I know of a case where a student who was admitted to such a program applied under student financial assistance. At first he was denied, but by way of appeal to the Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board, the appeals board stated that those with disabilities should also get funding from student financial assistance. I believe it really was incumbent on the government to follow up on the board decision. But the communication that I've been getting from the Minister is that that is somehow an anomaly, and the department would not respect that decision. So I'm wondering why the Minister would not give the weight of protection by law, statutory protection for those with a disability so that they don't have to be going to different programs and begging to the Council for Disabled Persons. That they be treated equally so that when they finish high school, they don't have to fight tooth and nail to get assistance to get into the next stage of their life, which is available to everybody else, which is to go to post-secondary education and get a job.

So I have to ask the Minister why is it that the department is choosing not to respect the decisions of the Student Financial Assistance Appeals Board and are going against that ruling? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: We can answer that question. It's quite simply this: under Canada's student loan system, it has to be an accredited post-secondary Canadian designated program that the students need to be going into. If a disabled student goes into post-secondary, then they are funded under SFA. In addition to SFA -- the regular basic grant and supplementary or remissible loan or repayable loan -- they get this study grant. But because some of these other programs are not designated

programs under Canada student loan, such as the one that the Member is talking about in terms of the student in Alberta; Alberta does not recognize that program for student financial assistance as well. So we are following the same sorts of regulations as student financial assistance as offered across Canada, and with the Canada student loan system.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Allen. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With all due respect, I don't think that I'm prepared to accept that answer because I don't think that the decisions that the government makes and the Minister wants to make have to be based on what other provinces, such as Alberta or the Government of Canada, makes in this regard. I believe that the government and the department has what it needs. It has the direction from the board, and the appeal board stated that based on the evidence that the educational institution that this student and other students have gone to in Alberta or elsewhere is a post-secondary school. The board made this decision on the basis of the regulations that we had in place. The regulation very clearly states that the intention of whoever wrote the law and whoever wrote the regulations way back when, it was their intention to create an affirmative action program, or create a provision in the regulations to allow the students with disabilities to get funding. It's very clear in the regulations, and the appeal board respected that decision.

You know, Mr. Chairman, we hear all the time in this House from various Ministers overseeing various boards, always saying we don't want to intervene with the decisions of boards. We respect our boards, we have to defer to them, we have to follow their discussions. So when the board makes a decision that goes contrary to what might be a common understanding of the department, we get busy preparing documentation saying why. We know what the board said, but we don't agree with it or it doesn't follow the guidelines from other jurisdictions in another province or Canada. I appreciate the answer, that's the standard answer. But why can we not do something different? Why can we not respect the decision of the board and do the right thing and change the policy accordingly? Thank you. May I ask the Minister to answer that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair, a couple of areas to be referenced here. One is that the Student Financial Assistance Program for Canada provides us with \$1 million a year of funding that does have conditions on it relating to our Student Financial Assistance Program. So that's important. Secondly, to maintain the integrity of the Student Financial Assistance Program, we did develop an alternate area of support and that was through the Council for Persons with Disabilities.

Additionally, Mr. Chair, we have been working with the federal government on employee assistance for the persons with disabilities program, and that's not concluded yet. That provides another avenue for us to provide possible funding, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to know then if it's the case, and I accept that perhaps it's the case that the Government of Canada that is funding a portion of the student financial assistance might have some requirements that are not

in line with the decision of a board in the Territories. I'd like to ask the Minister what he has done to challenge that, and say that we have different policies here and we have a regulation that clearly states that we respect the right of the students with disabilities to have equal opportunities. So shouldn't that be the job of the Minister to say no, actually, we can't follow that, and that we are going to make public policy decisions to provide for those students with disabilities on an equal footing as everyone else who gets into post-secondary education? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned, we have developed an alternate program of assistance for individuals, and we feel that is the way to go. We can certainly approach the federal government on the basis of recognition, however, as usual, we don't want to pin our total hopes on that. I think it's a case of ensuring that in the interim we do work on alternatives. As I say, we've been working on employability assistance for persons with disabilities with the federal government on this -- HRDC -- and that may offer us funding that would support our financial base, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're thankful for the information the Minister has provided on the technical assessments on the various departments. We're having a hard time, I think -- and this is at first blush here, we're just taking a very quick look at the conclusions of the two reports. Both reports indicate that these Green and Brown Houses are about 445 square metres, and they've come up with replacement costs at \$1.7 million for refurbishment and they're looking at doing \$1.3 million. In here they also estimate present-day construction costs in Smith at \$1,320 per square metre. If you take that \$1,320 and multiply it by 445 square metres -- the size of the building -- you come up with \$587,000 to replace the whole thing, not the \$1.762 million. I'm wondering if the Minister can just walk us through this. Obviously we're missing something here.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll ask Mr. Devitt to address that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, I don't have the detail the Member asked for, but we can certainly get it. What I can answer is that the estimates are based on cost information provided by the Department of Public Works and Services, and I'll certainly provide the Member with that information.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. Well, just as a rough guide, if you use \$130 a square foot, which seems reasonable for construction costs -- it may be slightly higher in Yellowknife now, but that's probably a good ballpark -- you don't come up with anywhere near the \$1.7 million. If we are talking about refurbishing something at \$1.3 million and trying to eke some extra life out of it as compared to replacing it for slightly more -- I think this is the point Mr. Lafferty made yesterday -- why are we even talking about refurbishment when replacement is so close, based on these numbers? I think we do need to have some

discussion with Public Works, because these estimates are right in the information we've been provided and you have to more than double the construction cost of \$130 a square foot. Even if you make it \$260, Mr. Chairman, you still don't get \$1.7 million. So we have no way to understand what this means or what the information provided says. Unless we're missing something very obvious here, this seems strange. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we'll have to get some more information for the Member on that. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: One last question. The additional information you just handed out about present occupancy in Smith -- and there are some notes about Breynat Hall and we appreciate that a heavy equipment course is about to commence, and also in the carpentry course and the housing will go up -- suggests the occupancy rate right now is 79 percent, and that there are 11 units currently vacant. But it stipulates that they are all men's units. I'm wondering why we would have men's and women's units if everybody in these is single. Why would it matter?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: I'll ask Mr. Devitt to answer that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, they have separate wings for the men and women at Breynat Hall. The men and women share a certain kitchen and other facilities, and they've chosen to keep the quarters separate. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: I'm also interested in the comment that the college is concerned that if this were to be longer-term housing, that a number of students would be lost to other colleges. I'm wondering if the Minister can indicate why we think that's the case.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm informed that the college is concerned about the possibility of students being in accommodation that's not suitable, doubling up and so forth. It may happen in a couple of weeks when we start these particular courses. People may have to be doubled up in the Breynat Hall. It's not an ideal situation for many adults. For that reason, there may be a choice made from time to time by individuals if this is persistently happening, that word spreads and an individual may choose to go to NAIT or SAIT or other colleges. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you. It seems a strange comment to me. I think anybody who has attended college outside of the Northwest Territories is well aware that you can't always demand a single accommodation at most schools. It's commonplace to see most rooms in the dormitory are doubled up situations, aside from apartments. So it sounds like an

unreasonable request by students, if they're demanding single occupancy and insisting that they're going to go to NAIT, SAIT or Grande Prairie College if they don't get the room that they want. It seems a little crazy, and I hope the college isn't tolerating that kind of thing. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it's also conditions of the buildings and so forth that may play a role. This is information provided by the college, so we would have to seek further clarification from them if the Member wishes. We can certainly find out more information for him.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. The Chair will recognize Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've had a really quick look at the Green House and Brown House reports. Just going by what is in there, it seems that we're going to be totally renovating the whole building except for the exterior walls. The interior walls have to be replaced, they don't meet the fire recommendations for times allotted for burning. So automatically we just have the exterior walls and that's it. The roof needs to be repaired, so now we're going to have only four walls that are going to be left standing. The report says there is water entering the basement windows. That means the building is sinking. Maybe the foundation is solid, but the whole building is sinking according to the information here. Now we're going to put more money into making the building a little heavier, but adding a sprinkler system and ventilation system, new electrical equipment, we have old boiler systems that are going to have to be replaced. The only thing that is going to stick around is the fuel storage tank outside on one of the units. So what we're looking at here is a report saying if we really get down to the fine printing, if you know what construction is all about is that you need a whole new building or two new buildings. That's all there is to it. For the cost of renovation, it's better just to get a new building that can accommodate the student needs. So if your student need now is for 20 students, then that is what we should be building for.

Right now Inuvik is being set at 87 percent occupancy, then you have 90 some percent occupancy for Fort Smith. But if you take those 22 students out of that, it's no longer in the 90 percent occupancy. It's below that. So there's a greater need in Inuvik for student accommodation. We have the Blueberry Patch over there that the life expectancy of those buildings is not too long, and we're going to throw money into refurbishing those again and we're only expecting a life expectancy of less than 10 years, according to the information we have.

So like I said yesterday, we're throwing a lot of money into bad decisions. If we're going to build, let's build new. Let's put it back where it belongs on the 20-year plan. That's for students that you're afraid to lose. Why should we be afraid to lose to our partners? We have partnerships with those colleges that are out there: NAIT, SAIT and Grande Prairie College. We have partnerships with them. Why should we be afraid to lose them to them? We're all in it for the same thing: to educate and to train people, so we have partnerships with them in order to train all these people. When we're going to do renovations they're going to be out of housing anyway. So if we're going to build, just build brand new. Use the buildings where we can meet the fire regulations with minimum dollars, and put it back on the year 2007-2008 like it was originally planned for a

brand-new building. In the meantime, let's put our money where the need is, and it's in Inuvik and Yellowknife. You've said it yourself, it's needed there.

Right now we're comparing where the higher need is. If you're going to look at it really closely, the need is somewhere else other than Fort Smith. You have accommodation there. You have 22 local residents living in those units, and I have a question on that. Which kind of units do they occupy? Is it the one bedroom, is it the single unit, is it the four bedroom, the five bedroom? Which units are they occupying? That information would be really great to have.

Then I don't understand; you have the Green House and it says a long-term unit geared toward mature students. Aren't all our students mature? I'm not sure how to take that. Also in the Brown House. So are there immature students in other cases? Maybe you can tell me that. I'm not sure how to take that.

So all in all, just looking at the needs, the costs of rebuilding or renovating, it all goes to building new. I can go with building new, but the need has to be there. If the need is somewhere else, then maybe that's where we have to go.

Why can't we run that heavy equipment course in Hay River? We have a highrise full of empty rooms there we can put students in. The equipment is mobile, they have wheels, it can be moved to any town until we can straighten out the needs. We have buildings that are done and unused in Hay River. Programs can be taken there. Instructors can be moved. They're all mobile. I've seen courses being done in all the other communities, even up in the Arctic where our heavy equipment staff are. So there's no need to say that we're going to lose students or we're going to fill to capacity. That's not an excuse that I can accept. We have to use a commonsense approach here to put the money where it's going to do the most good, where the need is. Yes, let's build accommodations for Fort Smith, but only when the need is there. The need is not there now. You can't tell me the need is there when we have people paying different rates for accommodation in Yellowknife when they go to school here. My students are going to Fort Smith because they have no choice. They can't go to Yellowknife. Or they have to go to Inuvik because they can't go to Yellowknife because there are no accommodations. So we have to look at where the need is and where the programs are, where the most students come from and which is the regional centre that's closest to them. We have to look at all that. We haven't even looked at that. Those haven't even come up, where the needs are and where the students come from.

Like I said yesterday, my students would rather be close to home in Yellowknife, and closer to their families when they do their training and their courses. So I'm not convinced yet that we need to renovate any buildings there for a high cost and not build new. We can build new at any time when the need is there, but right now that need is not there. You can't convince me that the need is there with the information here, and the information I know from past experience and being on the board. Most of it is common sense, and the Minister can respond if he wants.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Member's concerns and comments. The indications we have are that there's a substantial pressure on accommodations in

Fort Smith, and if we lose one of the units then we will have difficulty accommodating students at Fort Smith. The reports were done by Public Works and Services. Their recommendations came forward with what the replacement costs would be versus new construction. Because of the difference in cost, the recommendation was that we do go for renovations in those particular units and replacement of 15 housing units.

Mr. Chair, the accommodation issue is a critical one in Fort Smith if the fire marshal does shut down one or two of the units. We do have indication from the fire marshal's office that is a concern and they want us to do something about it. Therefore, we proceeded with the program that we put before Members, and we feel that's only appropriate to address it in that fashion. The concern by the fire marshal is very serious. The accommodation availability can be difficult for Fort Smith if we do not adhere to addressing these issues. I think it is important, Mr. Chair, to point that out. Thank you.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just going back to the information here that says one of the buildings is not recommended for renovation. But here the Minister is saying that both need to be renovated. I lost the page where it says that. So we have a building here that is being water damaged: mildew and from every entrance, windows, doors, and even roof peaks. So we're saying that we're going to do renovation. I think we need a better study than this. I think we need somebody to go in and maybe tear some walls down and look at the main walls from the outside because you're going to have damage everywhere. Nowhere in here is there a picture saying the exterior walls are going to be sticking around for 40 more years. It says the structure is sound. What does "the structure is sound" mean? Well, it means it's still standing. But has anybody torn a wall down to see if the wood is not rotting or anything like that? Obviously every piece of that building has to be replaced, except for the exterior walls.

You continue to say that it has to be done and the need is there. Well just by going with the information in front of us, we can make changes here, we can move students and make it so the need is not there. Until we can build a new building, I don't want to see us throw money into an old building again. Let's build a new building, but let's do it when the need is there. Right now, it doesn't look like there's a need there. You have 22 students from Fort Smith that brings the percentage down. You have students who can be mobile and heavy equipment which can be put anywhere. Why does it have to be Fort Smith? If there are accommodations somewhere else, let's use those.

Hay River really needs clients for that highrise and maybe that's what we should be doing. Maybe we should be helping Hay River by filling those buildings. We're not looking at the big picture. We're here for the whole Territory and not just certain areas. So that's the rest of my comments, and there might be a question in there, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Chair, I'm just going to ask Mr. Devitt to address one of the technical items.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Devitt.

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, one of the comments was whether we would do further studies prior to proceeding with renovations. Certainly one of the jobs of the architect when they're hired is to make sure that they have the necessary information before proceeding with renovation on any of our buildings. So the answer to that would be yes, there would be further work done prior to proceeding with renovation.

Right now the information that we have from Public Works is that the structures are sound, and that we can proceed to renovate both facilities. But, again, further work will be done.

Normally the benchmark we use for renovations is when the estimated cost exceeds 60 percent of new construction, then we would look at building new rather than renovation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Devitt. The Chair will recognize Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to address this for the last time in the general comments section. This is following up on what I was talking about before. This is an issue that I've been dealing with the Minister on for a long time; the issue of having a post-secondary education student financial assistance for students with disabilities that is legislated.

Mr. Chairman, the \$100,000 grant given to the Council for Disabled Persons for this purpose is not entirely correct. That money is used for various things, one of them being for helping students with disabilities. But the weakness with that method, Mr. Chairman, is the fact that it's highly temporary. It's a grant given to a non-government organization, and it could come and go at any time. It is not there for students with disabilities who have to go to all different places to try to get money to further their studies, whether it be for further education, or to get a job, or to learn life skills. I think we have to do better to look after those who we put through our school system under an inclusionary policy, and then we just drop them when they get out of high school. I really think that we can do better, Mr. Chairman.

I do believe strongly that this is really about equal treatment and equal protection under the law, and we're not providing that for the students with disabilities. We tell them you get out of high school, we'll put you through, but you're not protected under the law. You're on your own. You've finished grade 12 and try to get a job or whatever, but you could get a grant here and a grant there, but that's just going to be a handout. I really believe that he had the opportunity to do the right thing when the Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board made a decision saying that this program should be included. I went and talked to him and I pleaded with him to do the right thing, and the letter that I received from him is highly questionable.

I don't want to malign anybody. I know that everybody in the department is working really hard. But in this case, I really believe that they failed to think outside of the box. In fact, the response from the Minister questions the decision of the appeal board. It's sort of not questioning, but sort of saying put a different spin on why they did what they did, when in fact the board decision is very clear. Based on the evidence, they have deemed this institution a post-secondary education, and that

those students with disabilities should be able to get student financial assistance. Mr. Chairman, the Minister also has the aid of regulation. It's written very clearly in section 12 that we have the obligation to provide affirmative action programs for the remuneration of the conditions of those persons through post-secondary school education. The Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board read this to include various institutions to be a post-secondary education program.

I really think it's not fair, it's not right for us to say that those with disabilities line up in one line and that line could end any time because it's a temporary, non-government organizational program that could be given at any time or stopped at any time. It could be moved around at any time. Those students without disabilities take it for granted that they get out of high school, and if they lived here, they apply for a student loan, they get it and go to school.

Another thing with maximizing northern employment, we did a great thing by creating a policy that says we are going to help you with your transition out of school, so you can get a job, start on a career, we want you in our government, we want you to participate in our economy, but those students with disabilities who need to go to school to get life skill training...in the example of the constituent I have been working with, he's in a program that's going to get him a job. He's in a program that's going to make him a full member of our economy and be a participant. At every turn, he's been reminded over and over again that he has a disability and he is not going to be entitled to the same treatment under the law, you are not equal under the law. You have to line up in a different line. This is not something he was told all through the school system. When he went through inclusive schooling, he went through school, he got help and he got there. I guess I could have written another letter to the Minister, but I just figured I was going to get another letter saying the same thing. I would plead with the Minister that he reviews this file, that he reads the letter that he sent to me dated December 17th again and recognize that that is not the right thing. We have a department dismissing a decision of the board and trying to change the decision to maintain the status quo. I really would urge the Minister to revisit that.

At the same time, I would like to get a commitment from the Minister to look at what might be the financial implications of setting up a clear policy, legislation or regulation within the department and not giving to an NGO or grant program, but creating something that is legislated so that it's permanent and something that is entrenched that would provide student financial assistance for students with disabilities. I don't mean students who need wheelchairs or hearing aids, but students with learning disabilities who may have to take alternative educational programs to make them a fully participating member of our economy and who need to go to a school like Fairview College in Alberta or some other programs. Knowing what we know of student populations and the information the department can gather about how many students are out there within our school systems or in various programs, what would be the cost implications and policy implications of entrenching this and following up on the board's decision? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Student Financial Assistance Program is designed for all individuals from all walks of life, et cetera. It

has specifications to it that it must be recognized programs and, as I mentioned earlier, we do have federal funding that applies in this particular case. The Member referenced the fact that possibly we should discuss this with the federal government, which we are more than willing to do. Additionally, we have developed an alternate program for help. In this case, Mr. Chair, that's the assistance we provide through the funding that we have in the literacy program, which has been funded, by the way. I have a Ministerial council, Mr. Chair, that can certainly have a look at this as well, and I am sure they may have looked at this previously. They do annual reports for me. We do an annual report on the literacy funding and that is where this particular \$100,000 in funding is allocated. Yes, it is used for other purposes, but we can ensure that we address the issue of demand on this and we can certainly look at the possibility of alternatives to the program. We are, as I mentioned earlier, looking at the employability of persons with disabilities with the federal government. That may give us opportunities and provide us with a financial base to introduce various alternate programs, Mr. Chair. I will leave my response at that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I think I have made my point. I still am concerned about the Minister not acknowledging that he needs to respect the decision of the Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board and he could do it if he wants to do it. He could do it by mobilizing the department and getting the support of the Cabinet and getting the support of this House. Dealing with the Government of Canada is one thing, but we are a House that passes laws, we set up regulations all the time, we create funds for all sorts of reasons and to meet all social needs. It's totally within his power to state that he respects the decision of the Student Financial Assistance Appeal Board in this regard and to set up the policy to follow that decision, rather than having his department keep repeating that somehow this board did not do the right thing. I am going to leave it there and follow up with the Minister, but I am looking for his commitment to look at financial implications of taking action on this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Member's comments. We are concerned about decisions that are made by various appeal boards and so forth. As an alternative to the program, we established this particular program to assist individuals with disabilities and that was \$100,000. As I say, we are also working on alternatives to that, so it's not as though we are ignoring the issue, Mr. Chair. We are definitely paying attention to it and we are prepared to continue to look at it and continue to do it. We must respect the rules and regulations that may be in place for ourselves with regard to the student financial assistance program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I haven't spoken yet on general comments with the Minister of Education, but I feel that I have to make a few comments on his opening remarks. I know that the Minister has stated quite clearly that people are the NWT's most valuable resource and that the department realized early in its mandate, and so did this government, the need to invest in our young citizens. I take it that that is all geared to doing the very best we can for our

young people and getting them the very best education that they can get and also I could imply by that, that the people we are talking about that are most valuable are also the people who look after the education of our young people, not only in the teaching end of it, but also in the different boards that we have. I think that that's great. Those are very good statements and one can't argue with those.

I am totally amazed, Mr. Chair, that when an issue that's trying to be addressed by the department and there is no will from the department to do anything about it, the number of excuses and the reasons that they can come up with for not doing anything. Yet, when something comes up in front of us here that nobody can make any sense of, at least from outside of the House, anyway, we have received a mountain of paper and a ton of excuses as to why we have to do it. It's certainly not a money issue here now that is preventing us from going ahead with any projects in Fort Smith that we want to do and for projects that hadn't appeared on the books as being urgent, to suddenly come before us with the number of reasons that we are getting that are still very questionable as to why we have to proceed with these issues.

The issue of the board in Hay River; the DEA in Hay River is not a new issue with the department. I am sure he will agree with me on that. I feel that I am not prepared to let that issue go away in promoting our young people and the education of our young people and what is best. What can we do to best educate our young people? I think we have mentioned many, many times that communities that know their people have the most say or should have the most say in what is best for their students. I look at issues like when we talk about young teachers, our teachers, graduating teachers, who are ready to go into the workforce and want to come back North and work. I know the department has done a lot of work towards bringing some of our teachers back. I am not saying that there can't be mistakes made in the department, Mr. Chair. That happens all the time, but when we hear about one that has been missed or when a mistake has been made and it's brought to the department, it's very frustrating to try to get anything done that really, really resembles what the department is preaching about with maximizing our northern employment and getting our students...I would like the Minister to comment on how his department approaches an issue where a northern student has gone through the training, is ready to join the workforce in the North and is being overlooked and is going through hoops and every roadblock in place to stop them from coming back. What is the department's action plan to deal with those particular cases? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I need more clarification here. I am not sure what the Member is speaking about. If he has a specific case where an individual has had difficulty obtaining employment, I am not sure I am aware of what the Member is speaking about.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Delorey, maybe just ask the last question again.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly don't want to bring up any particular case here. I could probably bring up about three that I have heard of, and I am sure there are more in the Territories. I am simply asking if one of our northern students graduated in teaching and it's brought to the

attention of the department that they've been jumping through all kinds of hoops and all kinds of roadblocks about why they can't obtain employment in the North, what is the department's approach to dealing with a situation like that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are concerned about those kinds of situations and I personally intervene to ensure that our policies are adhered to -- I did that last year -- to ensure that students...we do have a situation where we want to hire our own students who graduate from the teacher education program, for example, in our schools. We start at the Maximizing Northern Employment Program. It is an excellent program, one that is working, to all intents and purposes, very, very well. We are finding that people are coming back to the Territories to work. There are cases where individuals have had difficulty finding work in some cases. They couldn't get the job in the specific community that they wished. One of the concerns we have is that we can't guarantee employment to individuals in their specific choice of community, but there are also some people who have perhaps fallen through the cracks and not been employed, and that is of concern to me. I am very concerned that our teachers who graduate are not being employed. However, they must be aware of the fact that they can't be guaranteed employment in a specific community. Sometimes that's just not available. If I know that we have graduates who are not being employed, then we can certainly follow through with that to see what we can do on our part, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We talk a lot about what the department has done, and the pupil-teacher ratios, and I agree that that's been a very important area and the department has done an awful lot and put a lot of money into that area. Obviously, some schools have benefited a lot more from this program for reducing pupil-teacher ratios. The smaller schools have probably benefited a lot more than the larger schools on this. I think we still have some ways to go. I look at some of the schools and the number of parents who come in on a daily basis, who help out in the schools. They do a great job and they need to be recognized. Could the Minister comment on whether he is aware of how many volunteers we have coming into our schools to help out on a daily basis, and what's being done to recognize volunteers who do come into the schools to help out?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, volunteers are extremely important to us and there is a need for us to continue promoting the use of volunteers in schools and there are many. I don't have any participation statistics on hand, Mr. Chairman, but we can see what we can find out in terms of the numbers of volunteers that take place. We have situations like job shadowing in some cases, and recognition programs are a good suggestion. We can certainly put that forward to the school boards and we will certainly be able to take that up as a discussion item with the chairs and the superintendents that we meet with on a constant basis. I am scheduled to have a meeting with the board chairs within a couple of weeks, Mr. Chair. We will take that up as an item that we can do better recognition of our volunteers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I was hoping to address some of this stuff under detail, but with the new information provided by the Minister since our go-round yesterday, and with respect to the facilities that came into question yesterday about the residences in the NWT, I have gone through the pieces of information the Minister has provided. Knowing these are somewhat dated, June 2000, both for the Green House report and the Brown House report and looking at the summaries and looking at the e-mail that is attached to this from the assistant fire marshal, I just have a hard time justifying this, as I said yesterday. The decisions we make are only as good as the information that is provided. I thank the Minister for providing this information, but on the executive summary of the Brown House report dated June 14, 2000, the most significant of which is the practice of blocking fire doors in the open position. Now that's in the paragraph, guess we should start off at the beginning of the sentence, "In addition to the health issues, this building also suffers from fire safety problems, the most significant of which is the practice of blocking fire doors in the open position." Then there is a lack of fire separations, inadequate protection of exits, inoperative doors and hardware and then from the Green House report of the same date, June 14, 2000, "in addition to the health issues related to mildew, this building also suffers from fire safety problems such as lack of fire separations, inadequate protection of exits and inoperative doors and hardware."

These are almost three years old, a couple more months and they will be three years old. The e-mail that we are having a chance to look at here is dated January 20, 2003, and it says that they are making a list of fire safety deficiencies that require immediate attention. Does the Minister or the staff have that list?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If we don't have it handy here, we can certainly attempt to get it for the Member.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would be really appreciated. Definitely things would have changed or deteriorated to even a greater degree, the interval being almost three years. Further to that, Mr. Chairman, as I look through this information -- and this is from the department of staff housing, Aurora College, dated February 2003 -- in reference to Aurora Campus in Inuvik and it says, "The college has additional housing units currently leased to a private developer that can be made available for student housing." I believe there is an agreement with that developer as to what units are available and what he can do with those units. Is it a fact that we lease to him and then we will have to lease back from him for those facilities or row houses? What are the details there? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm informed that we would have to lease them back from the developer, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. ROLAND: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, I was preoccupied with another discussion. Can the Minister repeat please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Ootes, repeat that answer please.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm informed that, yes, we would have to lease those back from the developer but we have the right to do so.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In looking at the stats that have been provided to us, we've seen a couple more slight changes from the last bit of information. So as a Member, I'll just raise my concern that the information provided can either help us make the decision or help us make a different decision. Right now, as I see it, without a lot more detail, it is becoming even more difficult to go with this. So, hopefully the Minister will be able to make his list available on the fire issues as soon as possible, understanding that we will go through this process and, hopefully, we would like to bring a conclusion to the department soon and go forward from there.

I must just put on record again, my serious concerns with the information that is available and the date of it and knowing that the Minister has said one of his main criteria for the replacements is the fire safety issue and the fire marshal saying that they are potentially shutting down these facilities. Hopefully, it is much more formal, I guess, the paper trail leading up to closing a facility, besides a couple of e-mails. So I look forward to that information and, again, I just have concerns. I guess you can call them fairly selfish concerns from my constituency. Hopefully along with this the Minister can also continue to do his work and show how this government will address the shortage or the housing situation, seeing we are building a new residence that is quite different from the old residence. It will be much newer for classrooms, but much smaller in size compared to where they are operating out of now. We'll look at the places they have available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we will do our best for the Member to get as much information as fast as we can on that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Mr. Delorey, general comments.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to just say that I am really frustrated with the lack of action that we have been able to take in addressing the concerns from Hay River, as far as how the DEA fits into the DEC. The Minister has been aware of this ongoing issue for a long time now. I have brought it up on a continual basis and it really disturbs me, Mr. Chair, when I hear now that members of the board are getting so frustrated that they are thinking about filling out their term and packing it in because they are beating their heads against the wall and there just doesn't seem to be any willingness to do anything.

I would like the Minister to comment again, what is the reason why we can't address the issue, apart from the money because we have seen so much money come on stream for anything else that the department has wanted to do. Money is no longer

an issue with me. I think if there was a will to do it, the money could be found no problem at all. So I would like to ask the Minister again; why is it so hard to do something in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The system that has been established in the Territory is a board system that encompasses a number of communities and this was established in that fashion. There were difficulties with regard to the relationships between the Hay River board and communities at the board level, and so we did commission a group to look at how we could help address the particular concerns. That report came forward and added a number of recommendations. The recommendations, I believe, we implemented and it seemed for a period of time to work.

Recently there was a concern expressed about some funding that was split among a number of communities, and that has been raised again. On the question of Hay River wanting its own board, I appreciate the Member commenting that money shouldn't be the issue, but it does enter in to it. It's additionally an issue, Mr. Chair, if every board has difficulties that can't be addressed outside of the funding issue. Then we may have a lot of other boards asking the same question, why can't they just go independently and create their own board and administer it directly and then we could end up with a lot of other boards in the Territories, which does become expensive and we would have to be concerned about that, Mr. Chair. We recognize that there seems to be an ongoing question of communication between the boards and the South Slave, and I think it is important for us to work on that.

I am not sure I have the answer for the particular board, however, without addressing the whole question of if they wish to set up their own board, how to address that without getting into the financial aspects of it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister mentions there's been a problem on a number of occasions with communications. Yes, there is a problem with communications, but the problem goes a little bit further than communications, from everything I am hearing. I have heard it said many times that if we allow Hay River to go ahead, it will create an anomaly and everybody could be after the same board. I just don't see it. When an issue has been around for as long as it has about the South Slave...we hear about Lutselk'e wanting out of the South Slave. They want to be part of Yellowknife. They've even approached the chair of the Hay River board to write up a proposal for them. I don't think there's any question. It's been mentioned many times by different people that Hay River has a good board. YK No.1 and YK No. 2, when they were set up, they were set up under a different arrangement. They have to raise 25 percent of their money. How did they establish the 25 percent that they have to raise? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure how it was established or under what conditions, but the way it works is that the boards in Yellowknife raise funding through local taxation. Their funding from this government is at 75 percent for the K to 9 program and 100 percent for the 10 to 12

program, which works out to an average of about 80 percent, Mr. Chair, for funding. That funding comes from the taxpayers of Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize that it comes from the taxpayers in Yellowknife. What I was wondering about is, if we were to set up a different board in Hay River, would those same figures have to be applicable if a certain amount has to be raised from the taxpayers. Is the 25 percent what we would have to work with? Can that be a negotiated figure?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it's something we would have to look at, Mr. Chair, to see how we have worked it. I have mentioned before, that in the event that Hay River as a tax-based community did wish to look at the possibility, then I would be receptive to discussing that possibility. The costs of doing so have to be somehow covered in this by some party.

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

MR. DELOREY: In a community like Hay River, if Hay River wanted to form its own board, I mentioned before that we have a very strong manufacturing base there. There's lots of industry and lots of companies there if they wanted to pursue the trades a bit more. Would the department look at something of an in-kind contribution that businesses or industry can bring to the school system to promote the trades? Would the department be willing to look at something like that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have a number of programs that could be supportive of this. The Schools North Apprenticeship Program, for example. There are a number of areas that we could be supportive of industry involvement, business involvement with respect to trades and encouragement of our students to enter the trades. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make it clear to the Minister that in talking about those in-kind contributions as far as the trades are concerned, I am talking strictly about Hay River's portion of going after its own board to look at in-kind contributions such as that to make up the difference in what it would cost to set up the board. I was wondering if the Minister could tell me if he knows of any other situations around the North where either communities don't fit into the education board that they are in or that had to switch from one board to another and how the department deals with that. If Hay River was kicked out of the South Slave, how would you deal with them then? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We did have the situation of one board that wanted to change governance bodies and that's their choice, the choice of the community, and we met that requirement. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've talked a lot about the Brown and Green apartments that are up for renovation. I have some questions about the student housing replacement. There are 15 houses in the community of Fort Smith that are going to be replaced. Next year's budget will be looking at the replacement of those issues. We are talking about \$2.1 million for the 15 of them. I would like a little background as to how these got into the capital plan, especially ahead of other projects like college housing in Yellowknife where there is no vacancy. The indications on the capital needs document we have been supplied with and the comments suggest that replacing this housing with a townhouse unit would reduce O and M, for one thing and, secondly, it would simplify management of student housing. I think those are good things. I am wondering how that gets ahead of no student housing in another community. Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Devitt to address that question but, before he does, I have just had some clarification on the footprint of the units and where we were speaking of 445 square metres at a cost of \$1,320 per metre. I am informed that there is a second floor involved plus a basement, and that would hopefully clarify some questions on that. Perhaps Mr. Devitt can answer the question asked by Mr. Bell.

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

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chairman, we have looked at the utilization of college housing for a number of years. As Members have noticed, it does change. As of the fall of 2002, 91 percent of the units at Thebacha Campus were occupied by out-of-town students. The Brown and Green Houses are over 42 years old. Reports show they are in very poor condition and would require either major renovation, which is what we are looking at now, or possibly replacement. Public Works and Services has also been working with the fire marshal's office, as confirmed in the e-mail, on the technical reports and to identify deficiencies, but certainly the needs of these buildings go beyond simple co-deficiencies. There are major problems with mechanical and electrical systems, for example. The older family housing units are currently over 40 years old and will be over 45 years old by the time they are replaced. In this case, they are being replaced because of their age and not because of specific identified deficiencies in terms of health and safety. As we have raised concerns, if these projects do not go ahead given the current utilization of the units, there will be a shortage of housing, particularly in the family units. Thank you.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I suppose if we took the wrecking ball to these 15 houses, we would have a hard time accommodating students, but that's not what we are proposing. Somehow, the replacement of these houses has moved ahead in the capital plan, ahead of dealing with the housing issues in Yellowknife. We have no college housing and we've got a wait list. The consultation comments on the replacement of these old buildings -- and I acknowledge they are old -- but it suggests that replacing these family houses with townhouse units would reduce O and M costs and simplify

management. I think that's something that, as a long-term goal, we should be looking towards.

We are talking about capital priorities. I think we've heard in this corporate capital planning process, the highest priorities should float to the top. The Minister of each department comes to the table and talks about his highest priority items and how to get them on the capital plan and, oftentimes, has to fight very hard to get those projects acknowledged ahead of other very important projects and other departments. So I don't understand how the replacement of these houses gets bumped ahead of dealing with college housing in Inuvik or Yellowknife. It doesn't seem to make sense to me. If there are safety concerns at the Brown and Green Houses, let's deal with those. If there are fire marshal concerns, we've got to fix those right now. We can't have people in unsafe housing. This stuff is just old. There's a big difference.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate there are needs identified in all of the communities. It is decided that this is an important area to address in Fort Smith because if we do lose some of our housing, we will have a very critical problem accommodating people. It's a very busy campus and it's a campus where most of the students are from out of town. It also deals with family housing in Fort Smith and it's important for us to ensure that we have the accommodation available for that particular campus. That's not to say that we don't recognize the need for housing in Inuvik and housing in Yellowknife, but we must address it in terms of what we feel is the priority. There is a need to address it in this fashion, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister just suggested that all the students at the Thebacha Campus are from out of town, but the information that we were provided was that if you look at the number of units occupied -- and this is business plan information -- at that time 162 were occupied. The largest community represented in that occupancy was Fort Smith with 22. Clearly that doesn't seem to be the case, Mr. Chairman. I am just going to make the point that I can't even imagine how this came to the top of the capital priorities for not only presumably the college, but the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I assume these college priorities have to compete with other Department of Education priorities, unless we just randomly decide to allocate \$20 million a year to the college regardless of their needs and how they fit into the rest of the departmental needs. I can't imagine that's the case. This to me, Mr. Chairman, doesn't make sense. This is why we talked about needing to see some transparency in this capital planning process. If you really want to put your finger on something that causes Members' concerns, it's this kind of thing. We can't see how the scoring of something like the student housing, this old housing and the replacement of that scores against a definite need for housing in other communities for college housing where there is absolutely none. It's just inconceivable that it could get ahead of that. I understand that we have to protect assets, but there aren't safety concerns here. It's simply old. What are the plans for these 15 houses after we are going to replace them with an apartment building? Are we going to wreck these houses because they are old? There is no way, Mr. Chairman, we are not. I am sure we are

not. Somebody else will be moving them. Maybe you could speak to that.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Devitt to address some of the points made.

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

MR. DEVITT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct, the Green and Brown Houses is a life and safety issue, a protection of people, a priority. The 15 units are a protection of assets issue, which is also a very high priority. I guess an additional comment is, if the government doesn't continue to replace this asset, the concern is we will be left with this liability in the future. To clarify the numbers in Fort Smith, in the original information given to the standing committee, the college had actually used addresses to identify where students were from and in some cases, existing college students had used Fort Smith addresses and as a result the number of students from Fort Smith were overstated. In the new information, you will see that there is a lower number, 14, but they have not been included in the department's calculation of the 91 percent occupancy rate. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to add a couple more questions on something the Minister stated in answer to my final question last time around. He acknowledged that they had had one community that wasn't happy with their management structure and wanted to change it, and they've accommodated them for that. That seems to me what I heard. How is it that the department accommodated them? Could I get some more detail on that?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's the community of Detah, which is on the border of Yellowknife and it was previously with the Dogrib Community Services Board. It was an agreement by both boards that this change in governance proceed. Detah will be joining one of the Yellowknife school boards, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I assume Detah is a non-tax-based community. How does that play into the funding for the YK board and have they even decided which one of the YK boards is going to take Detah in? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The details of the change in governance haven't been completed as of yet. Both boards had requested the change, both the Detah DEA and the Dogrib Community Services Board. Thank you.

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's just one example where things can take place and how things can be changed when there is a willingness to do it. I don't see any

difference here in what would take place in Hay River if Hay River wanted to change. They've addressed it often enough, but there has been absolutely no desire on the department's part to work with them on that. I am running out of excuses as to why we can't do it, but the Minister continues to state that it's a different situation. What is so different about this situation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The request has come from both parties and the issue is one of a simple transfer of funding from one to the other. It won't cost this particular government any additional funding to bring about this particular change. The challenge with the Hay River situation is that it will incur additional funding to bring about a change. I have worked and spoken before about this to the DEA and members that if there is a wish to change, there has to be consideration made for the cost involved in here and that is fairly substantial by the looks of it.

Detail

Directorate and Administration

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. No further general comments? We will go into detail. Page 9-9, directorate and administration, operations expense, total operations expense, \$5.015 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under directorate and administration, management services, they talk about capital planning. Who else is involved in the capital planning for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: I will ask Mr. Devitt to answer that.

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

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, right now, the department has a manager of planning and analysis who is involved, along with a planning officer. We work very closely with staff from the Department of Public Works as well.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So there are two departments, yourselves and Public Works and Services. What about the corporate capital planning process? I was led to understand that is made up of a lot of the deputy ministers of this government.

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

MR. DEVITT: Yes, the Member is correct. We are part of both the working and deputies' committee for the planning of capital infrastructure. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: So how does it feed through the system when a capital project is going to be put on the books? Is it initiated by the department in conjunction with Public Works and Services and then fed up the corporate planning committee

and then finds its way on the five-year capital plan? Am I correct in that scenario?

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

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, I think the Member is basically correct. The department first works to identify the needs of all projects in the 20-year needs assessment. This is based on capital standards, specified program requirements, the condition of assets and the age and estimated use for life of assets. This information is also reviewed by the working and deputies' committee responsible for infrastructure planning. Then the first five years of the 20-year needs assessment is then reviewed by the working committee, and then the projects are ranked against the identified rating criteria and from that information there are recommendations made as to which projects will be included in the five-year capital plan. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the information used to justify those projects the information that has been provided to committee?

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

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, the information provided to the committee was the information used for the college projects. It does not include all the information we have in the department. It is a summary of that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. We are in detail. Page 9-9, directorate and administration, operations expense, total operations expense, \$5.015 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

--Agreed

Advanced Education And Careers

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Page 9-11, advanced education and careers, operations expense, total operations expense, \$70.654 million. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question about student financial assistance. I understand that the program has a requirement of a certain length of time before someone can qualify for it. Is that still the case? If so, what is that length of time?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The requirement is 12 to 26 weeks.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can we get an explanation of the reason for the rule requiring a minimum of 12 weeks?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Ms. Allen to address this.

MS. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it's quite simply that that is usually the length of a semester. That's the case where we were following the Canada student loan guidelines.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that both the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology are accredited institutions for purposes of student financial assistance, are they not?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, that's correct, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that NAIT is offering one of their projects on an 11-week schedule now, whereas SAIT maintains a 12-week schedule. I have been approached by parents of students who have tried to attend NAIT and have been refused student financial assistance simply because the exact same program, exact same qualifications, exact same certificates at the end of it, in one institution is one week shorter than the other. To me, it doesn't strike me as being fair that we should arbitrarily put a time limit on a program when everybody says it's the same program. It's just that they go for longer hours during the 11 weeks, that they attend one institution as compared to the other and wind up with the same certificate. We won't pay student financial assistance for one student to go to NAIT, but we would for a student to go to SAIT. How do we justify that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The program that was 12 weeks in length is eligible for student financial assistance, even in Alberta under their system as well. The one that is 11 weeks is not a full-time program. I believe -- and I will check this -- that it is a part-time program. Thank you.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate finding that out. The information I had from the parent was that it was the exact same program with the exact same certificate at the end. If it's not, that might explain the issue. One other worry that I have some questions on and I know that the Minister has spoken about, is that the college is hoping to offer a bachelor of education next year. I was just wondering if he could outline for us what the timeline is for the different majors that may be offered through the college. I expect we will only be able to offer one in the early years, but is there a plan to expand on that so we could offer more majors in the North? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: I am so pleased you asked that question. Based on the comments that we got from the standing committee, we talked to the University of Saskatchewan about looking at other majors. We are looking at students who do their access or first year program in the North, and then go down for the high school specialties, in which case they could start taking majors

in such subjects as history, English, et cetera, et cetera. So we are looking at them, and that should occur very shortly.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad to hear that that's going to be expanded. Are we talking about expanding the majors right through the fourth year as well, and, if so, when Ms. Allen says fairly quickly, are we talking within two years, four years, six years? Could I get a sense of the time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. The current program, in which we do the first three years in the North and the fourth year is done at the University of Saskatchewan, still will be a native northern studies major. But if people plan to teach in the high school, then they will go down after the first year and go right into that program. They could leave after their first year in the North, and then start their major right away.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it's good that we're able to offer other majors through the college or at least get them started. Is there any plan to expand the range of courses offered in the North so that we can offer more than the one major through all four years in the North, or are we planning for the foreseeable future to stick with the four-year program being northern studies?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Allen.

MS. ALLEN: Thank you again. The current plan is to continue with the northern native studies major for the four-year program, of which the program is planned to be offered in 2004-2005 in the Northwest Territories. We need to discuss this with the University of Saskatchewan, but it is necessary to keep that major for that particular program at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I can seek some guidance. Is this the appropriate time to ask questions about the detail that's shown on page 9-12?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, we can.

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

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was looking at the detail where it shows the amount for income assistance programs, and I noticed that in the current fiscal year we're expecting to see \$700,000 less spent than what we had thought would be needed and what was in the mains. It's showing a full \$1.6 million less being asked for in the 2003-2004 mains. I know the Minister talked about this in his opening comments, and how we've been able to reinvest in savings within the department.

My concern is looking at how this program has fluctuated over the years, just the years we see even in the book before us. Is this still realistic? I think we've seen a bit of a slowdown in the Delta. Is the Minister still confident that we are going to see the

\$1.6 million saved and we're not going to be in a situation where he can't come forward and talk to us about the cost of living increase in the food basket, for instance?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we feel that we can manage with this, including the possible funding that we might require for the food basket changes. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think many of us feel that an annual increase to the food basket, based at least on the cost of living, should be something that we always look at. Can the Minister tell us when he might be in a position to propose the increases, and give us some detail of what increase we might be looking at in the next fiscal year for the food basket?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We were held up. The stats bureau had to do our analysis, Mr. Chair. With the population question that had to be addressed by the stats bureau, we were not able to get the answers to our particular analysis and that should be forthcoming within a couple of weeks, I suspect. At that point we can introduce any changes that may be required. We don't have any indication yet of the amount of changes that could be introduced. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Lee. Detail.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also have a question on page 9-12, the program delivery detail. I would like to have a breakdown of the \$25.398 million, please.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If you'll give me a moment...thank you. That's contribution funding to the college, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I get more details on where this money is allocated for? Am I to assume that all of it will go to Aurora College?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have an annual report that's produced which we'll get for the Member. We have a college contribution of \$23.677 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I get information as to where the remainder of the money is allocated to? Thank you.

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll just need a moment to check that. Mr. Chair, I'll ask Mr. Devitt to address that.

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

MR. DEVITT: Mr. Chair, in addition to the base contributions for the college, the amount in here includes funding for the teacher education strategy and for both the ongoing programs of \$574,000 and the MNE funding of \$500,000. It includes pre-employment training for oil and gas at \$200,000; diamond training for \$265,000; community skills for work funding for \$290,000; and I think that explains the \$25 million some odd. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. That's it for that line item. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Detail. Advanced education and careers, operations expense, total operations expense, \$70.654 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Advanced education and careers, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, contributions \$8.489 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on the next item on contributions. Should I wait until we get to contributions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. Total grants, \$8.489 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Page 9-14, total contributions, \$28.188 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Total grants and contributions. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on those items under contributions, the first one being Teacher Education Program for \$1.074 million and so on and so forth. I'm wondering for that one in particular, why we have a separate contribution item for the Teacher Education Program when it's one of many that are being offered at Aurora College. Is this separate funding on top of the funding that the government provides to Aurora College?

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

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you. I'll ask Mr. Devitt to answer that.

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

MR. DEVITT: It's certainly a good question. The answer to it, I guess, is somewhat historical in that the base contributions to the Teacher Education Program have been supplemented through initiatives including, originally, the teacher education strategy. The amount of funding that is referred to is funded through there. There has also been funding through

maximizing northern employment that is provided separately to the college. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you. The Chair recognizes the clock. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole? Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): 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 Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do we have a seconder to the motion? The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen. The motion is not debatable. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act at 10:30 a.m., and again of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight at 12:00 noon.

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 27, 2003:

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

15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills

16. Motions

17. First Reading of Bills

18. Second Reading of Bills

19. 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

- Committee Report 6-14(6), Report on the Review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner's 2001-2002 Annual Report

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

DEPUTY SPEAKER: This House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Thursday, February 27, 2003.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

