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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Editors of Hansard

Michele Vanthull
Janet Stewart

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, June 12, 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, Nr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Good afternoon. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 63-14(6): Update On Negotiations**

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to report to this House on a number of important milestones reached at several of our land, resources and self-government negotiating tables over the past few months.

The Tlicho final comprehensive land claim agreement, which was initialed by the three chief negotiators in early March, is now in the process of being ratified. Tlicho members whose names are registered on the Tlicho voters list will vote to accept or reject the Tlicho agreement on June 26th and 27th.

Assuming the result is favourable, the Tlicho Treaty 11 Council, Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories will likely sign the final agreement in Rae-Edzo on August 22nd, during the Tlicho annual general assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the Tlicho agreement is unique. It will be the first treaty in the Northwest Territories to address the inherent right of self-government. It is also the first claims agreement whose settlement area has extensive overlaps with lands used by other aboriginal people.

Following the signing ceremony, we intend to move forward with the process of implementing the agreement in earnest, including the tabling of legislation in the Legislative Assembly as soon as possible after the November election.

Mr. Speaker, on April 16, 2003, Premier Kakfwi joined President Fred Carmichael of the Gwich'in Tribal Council; Chairperson Nellie Cournoyea of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Honourable Robert Nault in signing the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit self-government agreement in principle for the Beaufort-Delta region at a celebration in Inuvik.

Mr. Speaker, the agreement in principle is the first stand-alone self-government agreement in the history of the Northwest Territories. Negotiators for this government, the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit and Canada initialed it on October 3, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, negotiations for this self-government agreement in principle have been ongoing for more than five years. The agreement proposes a regional government that will represent and serve all residents in the Beaufort-Delta communities. It also proposes new community governments that will represent and serve all residents in each community. Finally, the agreement provides for regional aboriginal governments for the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit. These governments will enjoy

increased law-making authority in jurisdictions such as education, social services, training, justice and municipal affairs.

Mr. Speaker, having reached this milestone in the implementation of self-government in the Northwest Territories, the three parties can continue negotiations towards a final agreement, implementation plans and financing agreements.

Mr. Speaker, a milestone has also been reached at the Deh Cho First Nation table as well. On April 17, 2003, the Honourable Robert Nault and Grand Chief Michael Nadli signed an interim resource development agreement. Under this agreement, the Deh Cho First Nations will be able to receive a share of royalties from resource extraction in the Mackenzie Valley before they have a final agreement. It also ensures that the Deh Cho First Nations will be consulted on the terms and conditions for new oil and gas exploration in the Deh Cho region, and be involved in the negotiation of impact and benefit agreements before any major mining project is approved.

On April 11th, the federal and Deh Cho land negotiators initialed 22 land withdrawal maps. The land withdrawal package includes a pipeline study corridor, restrictions on seismic work in certain areas, surface and subsurface, and some surface-only land withdrawals. With the conclusion of these agreements, the Deh Cho table can now focus its attention on negotiating a land, resources and self-government agreement in principle.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform Members about a new self-government negotiating process about to begin in the Sahtu region. Following on the heels of the completion of the Deline AIP, the community of Tulita has indicated that they are about to begin the process of negotiating their own self-government agreement. The first step will be the negotiation of a process and schedule agreement that will guide the negotiation of an agreement in principle. We expect that these negotiations will likely begin this summer.

Mr. Speaker, I would also note that we continue to make progress with negotiations at the Akaitcho and Northwest Territory Metis Nation negotiations and I hope to be able to report on similar achievements at these tables in future.

I believe that the milestones I have outlined above are important achievements in aboriginal rights negotiations in the Northwest Territories. On behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories, I would like to congratulate everyone involved in these negotiations from all parties. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Minister's Statement 64-14(6): Skills Canada Competition

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Northern trade students showcased northern talents at the 9th Annual Canada Skills Competition in Waterloo, Ontario, May 29th to June 1st. For the second year in a row, northern students trained through the Workers' Compensation Board's safety and youth worker program have won medals at the worksite safety event at the national skills competition. In partnership with Skills Canada and Education, Culture and Employment, the WCB holds the territorial competition and supplies an advisor to the youth at the national level competition.

The Workers' Compensation Board of the NWT and Nunavut helps sponsor the annual NWT/Nunavut Skills Canada competition. All participants must complete the WCB's safety and the young worker program, prior to competing at the territorial level. Our ongoing success at the national level can be attributed, in part, to this very successful program.

Congratulations to Yellowknife's Mara Smith, who won her second medal for worksite safety in this competition, adding a silver to the gold she won last year. There were four other NWT medal winners, including two silvers for Richard Walsh of Yellowknife and Reg Evans of Fort Smith, and two bronzes for Amanda Johns of Inuvik and Mandy Lyons of Yellowknife.

Another Northerner, Isabel MacDougall of Iqaluit, made Nunavut proud by winning the gold medal for worksite safety. This was Nunavut's first gold medal at the national skills competition.

I'm sure that all members join me in congratulating Ms. Smith, Ms. MacDougall, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Evans, Ms. Johns and Ms. Lyons, and all members of the territorial Skills Canada team, for their outstanding performance at this year's national Skills Canada competition.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Minister's Statement 65-14(6): Youth Criminal Justice Act

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to have this opportunity to address some concerns and misperceptions about the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The Youth Criminal Justice Act, or the YCJA as it is also known, is new federal legislation that came into effect on April 1, 2003. This act replaces the existing federal Young Offenders Act. The YCJA takes a new approach to youth justice, focusing on addressing the causes of youth crime, rehabilitating young people and ensuring meaningful consequences for youth who commit offences.

The Youth Criminal Justice Act encourages both police and the courts to consider alternative measures before proceeding with charges against a young person. We have been diverting young offenders out of the courts and into community justice committees for many years.

If a young person is charged and convicted, the YCJA sets out that the judge must consider alternatives to custody. These could include fines, restitution, community service, or community supervision. Young people will be sentenced to custody for repeat or serious offences.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice has been preparing for the Youth Criminal Justice Act for some time. The department provided extensive training on the new act to employees and all of the partners in the justice system.

The department has also committed more resources to programs impacted by the YCJA. Recognizing that more youth will serve sentences in the community, three more community corrections workers were hired to supervise youth. The department has also provided up to \$20,000 for every community to hire a part-time justice coordinator as more young people will be diverted to community justice committees.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has its own youth legislation based on Canada's old Young Offenders Act. Our act sets out that youth convicted of territorial offences will be treated differently than adults. During the last session we made necessary amendments to comply with the new Youth Criminal Justice Act in the short term. In this session, Mr. Speaker, I plan to introduce a new Youth Justice Act that will replace the NWT's Young Offenders Act. This act will be based on the same principles as the YCJA and apply to youth who commit territorial offences, such as those in the Motor Vehicles Act or Liquor Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to address the Quebec Court of Appeal decision and how it relates to the YCJA and the Northwest Territories. It has been reported that this decision resulted in the release of young offenders. This is not correct. This decision had nothing to do with the release of young offenders in the NWT. The Quebec Court ruled that the burden should not be on youth who commit serious violent offences to say why they should not receive an adult sentence. This means the Crown must now prove that an adult sentence is required.

I hope that these comments clarify any misperceptions that people may have about the Youth Criminal Justice Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 66-14(6): Conference Board Study Of NWT Economy

HON. JIM ANTOINE: As a recent Conference Board of Canada report states, the manufacturing sector is one "that contributes more in net inflows to the economy as a basic industry or primary economic generator, than would a support industry."

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the importance of manufacturing to our economic development. We asked the Northwest Territories Business Advisory Panel to recommend methods for effectively assisting manufacturers in overcoming the competitive disadvantages facing their sector. These recommendations will help guide the development of a comprehensive manufacturing strategy.

The panel has delivered its report with recommendations on building a favourable environment for manufacturing in the Northwest Territories and cultivating growth in the manufacturing section.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the panel for its work. The report is comprehensive and clearly outlines the groundwork needed for the development of a manufacturing strategy for the NWT.

The next step is to gain additional input from industry, businesses, MLAs and other interested parties. Copies of the panel's report will be available from RWED regional offices and on the RWED web site. The department will develop an action plan based on this feedback.

Again, I would like to thank the Business Advisory Panel for its work on this issue. I am confident we will be able to develop a manufacturing strategy that will help further diversify our economy. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Minister's Statement 67-14(6): Manufacturing Strategy

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the discover of diamonds and a renewed interest in oil and natural gas have created a flurry of economic activity in the Northwest Territories as well as the highest rate of GDP growth in the country. During the next 25 years, this unprecedented growth is expected to continue.

However, not all sectors of our economy are well positioned to take advantage of this growth.

The manufacturing sector, for instance, is still in its infancy. In 2001, it contributed only \$7 million, or .3 percent, to our GDP. Despite its lack of development, the manufacturing sector is very important to the Northwest Territories. As recent Conference Board of Canada report states the manufacturing section is one "that contributes more in net inflows to the economy as a basic industry or primary economic generator, than would a support industry."

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---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Minister's Statement 68-14(6): Aboriginal Law Career Development Program

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today about the success of the Department of Justice aboriginal law career development program. In 2002-2003, six aboriginal students from the Northwest Territories received bursaries to study law at a Canadian university. This is the highest number of students we have ever had participate in this program.

This summer, we are pleased to have two of the bursary recipients working with the department. They are gaining valuable experience that will help them in their studies and give them an idea of the work that is available with the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the aboriginal law career development program provides students with financial bursaries, summer employment, a mentor from the department and the opportunity for students to article with the department after they have completed their education. Over the past four years, the department has provided \$160,000 to indigenous aboriginal students pursuing a law degree.

Each year, more aboriginal students are choosing a career in law. The department is pleased to be able to support them in their goal. We hope these students will go on to a long career in the North. In fact, one of the early participants in the program is now legal counsel with the Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, the aboriginal law career development program is consistent with our goal of maximizing northern employment. One day, these students may fill senior positions in the Department of Justice, and I wish them all well with their studies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On New NWT Sport And Recreation Board

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are facing a health crisis in our communities right now, and I am not speaking about specialists. I am referring to the children of the Northwest Territories who may be facing a lifetime of disease, ill health and frailty due to the lack of physical activity in their lives. Our schools lack the funding necessary to provide a vital physical education program that builds the foundation of amateur sports that we depended on for so long. Children in our communities lack the after school programs that would keep them both safe and provide them viable, physical activity. Small communities lack the infrastructure and funding to provide recreation to our youth.

There has been much discussion in this House and in the media about the attempt of MACA to develop a new system to deliver sport and recreation to all NWT residents. Mr. Speaker, I can understand Sport North and their volunteers being upset

about the new board being proposed by MACA. However, even Sport North and other agencies handling sport and recreation programs in the Northwest Territories have to acknowledge that they have a great deal of difficulty getting coaching and training into our smaller communities.

For example, Mr. Speaker, out of the NWT's 33 communities, only four have a level three trained coach. Out of the 1,100 participants in the regional trials for the Arctic Winter Games, only 23 communities took part. Out of the 321 athletes that participated in 2002 Arctic Winter Games, only five came from my riding of the Deh Cho. Finally, Mr. Speaker, out of the 28 territorial sports organizations, or TSOs, listed on Sport North's web site, 26 of them are from Yellowknife, Hay River or Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, the greatest majority of Sport North funding goes to organizations based in the larger centres with ready access to facilities, volunteers and local companies willing to offer donations. Our small communities simply cannot compete. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, it's time for a change. Mr. Speaker, our smaller communities need a fairer system by which sports and recreation programs are offered and delivered in their areas. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, our children in the smaller communities deserve better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Support For NWT Arts And Crafts Industry

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was sad to hear the news that the Inuvik native arts program is going to be cancelled. Mr. Speaker, I think it's essential for the North's economy and also for the people who don't find themselves in the oil and gas or the mining business that they have just as much right to expand their arts and crafts businesses, from the men and women who sew, to those who carve or make prints. They expand our economy and also build on something that's unique to the Northwest Territories and the North, which is arts and crafts.

Mr. Speaker, we, as a government, spend something like \$900 million a year in the budget, but we can't find \$50,000 to run a program for arts and crafts in our colleges. Mr. Speaker, how do we expect the different economic initiatives that we have such as tourism, arts and crafts ... those businesses that don't seem to have the sparkle of multi-million dollar projects ... compete with this government's tendency to focus in only where they get the big dollar amounts. Mr. Speaker, when the bust and the boom is over, what's left? The people. Without taking advantage of the people we have in the Northwest Territories, especially our artists, we do not have anything to promote to the outside world.

Mr. Speaker, as a government, it's crucial that the programs we develop enhance our industries rather than simply catering to large business. Mr. Speaker, I, for one, have always supported the arts and crafts...

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

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

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, this industry is just as valuable as the sparkle of a diamond or a trickle of oil or being able to put gas in your vehicle. Mr. Speaker, native art is recognized worldwide. It's a...(inaudible)...and other countries around the world. We have a native arts festival every year in Inuvik, the Great Northern Arts Festival, which attracts people worldwide to appreciate this art that our elders, young women and young men have created with their unique skills, such as the coat I am wearing in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, this government has spent a lot of money developing an arts and crafts strategy, yet we have not seen that strategy come to fruition. We are giving out million-dollar loan guarantees to the diamond industry to establish polishing plants, yet we can't find \$50,000 for an arts and crafts program in our college. I believe that's pathetic.

I will be asking the Minister where we are with regard to the arts and crafts industry and to ensure that we continue to support them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Acknowledgement Of Disabled Athletes

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the past few days, there's been considerable talk in this House about Sport North and the organization of sport and recreation in the NWT. A lot of our discussions have been very political, sometimes confrontational and it's the nature of our business, Mr. Speaker, we need to have these kind of discussions and we will get through it. We need to focus more, I believe, Mr. Speaker, on making sure that the kind of discussions we have and the decisions we make really are focussed on the people that they're meant to serve.

Today I want to talk about the very best of what can be done in sport and the volunteer system that we have. More particularly, Mr. Speaker, I want to look at what people with mental disabilities can do when an opportunity is placed before them and a support system is in place to help them achieve their goal.

Mr. Speaker, there is an inspiring example of perseverance, hard work and faith that is evidenced in the NWT's next Olympian, Pierre Lafond. Pierre's winning performance last summer at the National Summer Games in Prince Albert earned him a spot on Team Canada's 2003 swim team. Tomorrow morning, Pierre will depart with 81 Team Canada participants for the world's largest sporting event of the year, the 11th Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin, Ireland. It's expected to attract 7,000 athletes from 160 countries competing in 18 events and it will be watched by more than a half a million people.

Special Olympics Canada is a national organization that provides sport training and competition for over 28,000 athletes

and more than 8,500 certified volunteer coaches support these programs.

As a member of Sport North, the Special Olympics NWT Committee provides opportunities for people with mental disabilities to participate at their level of choice in athletic and sport training programs and competition. Mr. Speaker, Special Olympics NWT is a Yellowknife community-based organization with 38 athletes and 30 volunteers from different Nunavut and NWT communities and includes Fort Simpson, Fort Good hope, Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik, Fort Resolution, Wrigley, Dettah, Rae, Fort Liard, Deline, Fort McPherson and Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, I would like unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge some of the volunteers who are helping Pierre get where he is going. I acknowledge Tracey Robertson, who is recognized as the Special Olympics coach of the year this year; and Karla Cairns, who also supported and coached Pierre and is assisting in him achieving his goals. The NWT Special Olympic Team of volunteers and their program ought to be recognized and congratulated for their great work, especially, Mr. Speaker, our admiration and our best wishes go to Pierre and all his fellow athletes, the Olympians, in Ireland later this month. Way to go! Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Hay River Heritage Centre

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to a group of very dedicated Hay River volunteers who oversee an extremely important venture in Hay River. Mr. Speaker, the group of volunteers I referred to is the Hay River Heritage Society, whose labour of love is the Hay River Heritage Centre. For approximately the past 10 years, ideas were bandied about amongst several key people whose dream it was to see a heritage centre become a reality. Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest hurdles encountered in erecting a heritage centre is the ability to secure an adequate facility. To this end, I am pleased to report that NTCL, a local Hay River company, donated one of their buildings to the heritage society. The building that NTCL donated is an integral part of Hay River's heritage itself, as it is the old Hudson Bay building that dates back many years.

This is another wonderful example of Hay River's corporate sector doing their part. Once a building is located, Mr. Speaker, another challenge is obtaining ongoing O and M funding to keep a heritage centre operational. Mr. Speaker, the support of our community residents is evidenced by the fact that the Hay River public has brought forward a steady stream of artifacts to the heritage centre for display and preservation.

I was very alarmed, Mr. Speaker, to learn the plight of the members of the Hay River Heritage Centre, who have indicated that they may have to close up our heritage centre if more financial resources are not found to keep this centre operating. Mr. Speaker, the Hay River Heritage Society recently held a

press conference and stated that they have three choices: one is to operate the museum on its usual shoestring budget; two is to close for the summer and clean and catalogue the artifacts due to a lack of funding; three is to close its doors permanently.

According to the heritage society, Mr. Speaker, it costs approximately \$10,000 a year to operate the heritage centre on a bare bones existence. The heritage centre creates employment as well, Mr. Speaker, as the heritage society employs one summer student every year.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the preservation of our unique Hay River heritage is vital. Hay River has a long history as a transportation and fishing hub and Hay River has always possessed a cultural component. The preservation of all these facets is critical. Mr. Speaker, the support for museums across the North is nothing new. I have witnessed many examples...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Delorey, your time for your member's statement has ended. What is your wish?

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

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

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the support for museums across the North is nothing new. I have witnessed many examples of this government supporting heritage centres throughout the North and the Hay River Heritage Centre should be no exception. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Application For A Single Rate Zone For Power

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year, the board of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation took the initiative to create a one-rate power zone for power used across the Territories. Mr. Speaker, the idea of a one-rate zone means everyone pays the same rate for power use regardless of where they live in the Territories. This rate structure was something that most communities in the Territories who pay a higher power cost would have benefited from.

Mr. Speaker, before any meaningful input could be given, the Premier and Cabinet stepped in and stopped the public consultations. Cabinet stated that they wanted to hear from people with regard to the territorial energy strategy before any change to the rate structure was made. Consultations have taken place throughout the Western Arctic to hear the public and what type of energy Northerners want to use and how much they want to pay for power.

I know that the Energy Secretariat hopes to complete the strategy and have Cabinet table it for this June session. Mr. Speaker, time is short as session ends tomorrow and I, as well as my constituents, have been waiting to see the document. In particular, I would like to know how the input which people in my riding gave to the secretariat in February will be reflected in lower power rates. Mr. Speaker, I don't think my region is much

different than any other region that consists of small communities. People in the commercial and private sector are having difficulty paying their power bills.

By introducing a one-rate zone, Cabinet would be doing much more than simply making the cost of living affordable for many Northerners. Most communities that rely on diesel generation already have a higher cost of living than those on hydro electricity. Most of the communities that benefit from the low rates of hydro electricity already benefit from being on a road system which, in turn, already lowers their cost of living.

This government has many initiatives on the go, many of which involve infrastructure partnerships which could increase the power rates even more, Mr. Speaker. Something has to give. These communities on diesel generation cannot afford to have their costs increased by government initiatives. I think it is time that we re-examine the structure for power rates, and move to either a one-rate zone or a system where we have a diesel generation rate or a hydro user rate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Travels Of Princess Alexandra Grade 6 Classes

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I have the pleasure of greeting two Grade 6 classes from Princess Alexandra School, along with teachers and chaperones who have come from Hay River on a fieldtrip to visit the Legislative Assembly.

These students have been studying government as part of their curriculum, and have been learning in the classroom about the various levels of government: federal, territorial and municipal. The students prepared for this trip with a classroom visit from my colleague Mr. Delorey and myself, along with an outing to the town hall where they performed role playing, and now, to top things off, they are visiting with us today to witness the territorial government in action.

The Grade 6 teachers Kim Ivanko and Janine Pushie have taken this opportunity while session is sitting to teach the students by giving them a firsthand view of what government does and how it operates in the Legislative Assembly. The group arrived by bus yesterday. They have visited the Prince of Wales Museum, where they enjoyed a scavenger hunt; from there they toured the Buffalo School of Aviation, and then off to the Ruth Inch Memorial Pool for swimming and pizza. This morning they had a bus tour of the Old Town.

I'd like to thank Commissioner Glenna Hansen who made a presentation to the students while they had lunch in our caucus room. I'd also like to thank Premier Kakfwi and yourself, Mr. Speaker, for helping us with a group photo in the Chamber over the lunch hour. I'd like to thank Joe Gagnier from Ile Holdings and Frontier Coachlines for being their bus driver for this trip. I'd like to thank the Elk's Club of Hay River who sponsored the cost of the bus trip. The pool and pizza last night was sponsored by Northland Utilities.

I'd also like to thank the parents, most notably one parent, Wendy Morgan -- her son Mikey is in one of the classes -- who helped coordinate the trip. I would also like to thank the

Pentecostal Church for allowing the use of their facilities to sleep in.

Also, I want to thank public affairs officer Pam Colquhoun for her help with the tour of the Legislative Assembly. I would lastly like to thank the Grade 6 teachers for their efforts in bringing their students to Yellowknife. We welcome the visitors and the chaperones today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Core Health Services Available To NWT Residents

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've had a chance to go through the Department of Health and Social Services' core services document. Mr. Speaker, it identifies core services, defines them, talks about what they are. It suggests that core services are intended to help all residents be healthy, and to lead long and productive lives in their families and in their communities. It defines, as I said, core services as those services and programs that are available to all residents in the Territories throughout their lives, regardless of age, sex, race, culture or location. That's very important, Mr. Speaker.

It then goes on to talk about how the core services are made available to territorial residents. It acknowledges that not all services are available in all communities. Sometimes you will have to travel to other communities or even outside the Territories in order to see healthcare professionals. But what it doesn't talk about, Mr. Speaker, are those who don't have third-party insurance coverage, and the fact that they may have to pay a co-payment to travel, they may have to take care of their accommodations while they're outside their home, they may have to pay for food so they can eat while they're away from home. Mr. Speaker, I think this is an issue that needs to be addressed. It's certainly something that many of us have been talking about for a number of years, since we were elected, Mr. Speaker. I had a chance to go back through some of the transcripts of Social Programs committee meetings and we've raised this issue with the Ministers a number of times. In fact, some of the most compelling arguments were made by the current Minister of Health when he was on this side of the House.

I've looked at the numbers of questions in the House. I've read a couple of articles written in newsletters. It really has dominated much of the discussion in this area over the last couple of years.

I was very happy to hear when Mrs. Groenewegen raised the issue in the House the other day in questioning the Minister, that the Minister has taken a proposal to Cabinet; this is something that Cabinet is looking at and analyzing. I think it's important for us to realize that people without third-party coverage are often employed in lower-paying jobs. They are working people, and they can't afford insurance and end up getting stuck with these extra costs. These are the folks we need to take care of, Mr. Speaker, so that there truly is equity. I urge Cabinet to deal with this, and deal with it quickly so that we can do something for these people before the time that we have in this Assembly is up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Negotiations With Specialist Physicians

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak again about an issue I believe that is worthy of repetition, Mr. Speaker, and that is to remind the government and the legislature of the importance of sending both parties in the specialists' negotiating dispute back to the negotiations table. Mr. Speaker, the way I see it, if the relationship between the two parties continues to deteriorate and the worst case scenario happens -- for example, the specialists are let go or walk out -- the impact on the future viability of this hospital and the future of this city and territory will be a major disaster.

Mr. Speaker, the contingency plan currently in place will not carry us through July and August, never mind until new specialists are found. If we do manage to gather locums together one week to the next, it will cost us a lot more financially or otherwise in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, I do firmly believe, and we must, that there is still room and time for all of us leaders to play an important role in bringing this to a close. I believe there is a way we can contribute without taking sides or interfering with the negotiation process. All of us need to privately or publicly, however we see fit, put the pressure on both the government and the doctors to get back to the table and hammer out their differences.

Mr. Speaker, I believe being neutral on this is putting pressure on both parties to do their talking at the negotiating table, not outside, not in the media. Mr. Speaker, further, there is a judgment call that needs to be made here by all of us. Have we crossed, or are we dangerously close to crossing the line to where we've been before? I know we don't want to revisit the Giant Mine situation of a decade ago, but I was working in the government at the time and I recall all the leaders, everyone from the federal Minister responsible for labour, the MP, the mayor, the territorial government, going around in circles, paralyzed with questions about the power and authority they had, or didn't have, to intervene in the process. Everyone felt helpless about getting directly involved, though many thought, or might have thought, that they had done everything they could. But in the end, Mr. Speaker, the outcome was a major disaster of horrible proportions.

Mr. Speaker, this may turn out very differently, and I do hope that it will. But if it all goes down badly, Mr. Speaker...

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

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

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, in the end, this may turn out very differently, and I do hope that it will. But if it goes down badly, we'll all be responsible for the outcome and the impact of the outcome. I need to be able to know that I've done everything I could at the time that I ought to have, not only to prevent disaster, but to lead the process into optimal resolution.

I firmly believe, Mr. Speaker, it is wrong for anybody, in this House or outside, to think that we're better off paying millions of dollars to southern hospitals and doctors and businesses than to the highly-qualified people and the facility we have right here. Mr. Speaker, our lack of action on this matter is threatening our very sovereignty as an independent and sovereign jurisdiction capable of being self-sufficient.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I urge this government and the legislature and the leaders in and out of here to act on this urgent territorial issue immediately. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Inequities Of The Medical Travel Co-Payment

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the same issue that Mrs. Groenewegen recently spoke on and my colleague from Yellowknife South just today. Several times over the years I've risen to address the issue of medical co-payments, which has created a terrible inequity for my constituents. This \$250 charge for each way of travel impacts people particularly who are in lower income jobs.

I know that the Minister of Health and Social Services has said over and over in this House that his department is looking at the issue as part of an overall review of supplementary benefits. I know, when I made statements on this issue in February and March of this year and asked questions at the time, that the Minister at that time promised he would soon have an answer and would be telling us what that was. So it has been dragging on for a long time and it hasn't been dealt with.

My constituents can't afford to wait any longer. As things now stand, they not only have to pay for a good portion of the travel when they are referred to a doctor outside, but if they're not hospitalized they may wind up being on the hook for food and accommodation as well. So this has become an issue that is broader than just travel, particularly if things don't go well at the negotiation table with the doctors here.

Mr. Speaker, even the most conservative of provinces -- Ontario -- treats its northern residents better than we do in terms of the cost of medical co-payments. Manitoba used to charge \$50 as a co-payment to its residents. They've eliminated that. So I'm pleased to hear, as the Minister told Mrs. Groenewegen, that he will soon be going to Cabinet and that he would see these co-payments dealt with. I can only hope that that plan will eliminate the need for my constituents to come up with those payments.

I call on the Minister to take a look at the example set in Manitoba, and eliminate the co-payment plan completely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Role Of Special Committees

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome to the House the students from Hay River. It's good to see the younger people taking an interest in politics.

My understanding of politics in this House, Mr. Speaker, is that we represent the people, the people vote for us to speak on their behalf and bring their will to this House. One of the ways we do that is through committees. We create special committees, and the special committees go to people with issues to be discussed and decisions to be made on certain issues. We take what the people say back to the House in the form of a report and recommendations resulting from that report. The House accepts those reports and the recommendations, and it becomes the will of the House. The will of the House is the will of the people. The bureaucracy that works for this government, its job is to implement the will of the House, the will of the people.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to explain to the students and maybe some of our colleagues how things are supposed to work. Welcome to Yellowknife, students from Hay River, and thank you for showing an interest in your northern politics.

AN HON. MEMBER: Good statement.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, I suppose that's a good example of how government works. Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement On Tribute To Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise as the MLA for Nahendeh. My constituency is very large, about 20,000 square miles and six communities. The majority of the people are aboriginal people who live there, a large number being Dene as well as Metis. I rise today to speak as the MLA. I would like to speak about the Dene National Chief Bill Erasmus who has announced that he will be stepping down as the national chief of the Dene Nation at the 33rd annual Dene assembly which is scheduled for July 2nd to 8th in Aklavik.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that contributing to public office takes a huge commitment and sacrifice, from both the person and family. Bill is to be commended for doing this very important work for 16 years. That's four terms in MLA language.

Bill was born and raised in Yellowknife, where he attended St. Patrick High School. Bill continued his education and career and received his post-secondary education at the University of Alberta, where he still currently sits as a member of the senate of the University of Alberta. Since 1987, Mr. Speaker, Bill has represented the Dene Nation as the Dene national chief. Mr. Erasmus is also a regional vice-chief of the Assembly of First Nations and is a board member of various committees for the Assembly of First Nations, as well as other similar organizations.

Throughout his career, Bill has strongly promoted the implementation of treaty aboriginal rights and self-governance. In 1993, Chief Erasmus received national recognition for his significant contribution when he received a commemorative medal for the 125th anniversary of the confederation of Canada

from the Governor General. Last year, Bill was again nationally recognized when he received the Queen's Jubilee Award.

Through his strained schedule, Bill still manages to be a dedicated father and husband for his son Lonny, daughter Sarah and wife Reanna. I would like to personally thank Chief Bill Erasmus for all the hard work he has put in over the past 16 years, not only for the Dene Nation but for all people in the Northwest Territories. I know that Bill will find new and exciting ways to serve in the North in the coming years. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Antoine. Item 3, Members' statements. The chair recognizes the honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to go to item 6 on the Order Paper, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to advance to item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays, Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 6: RECOGNITIONS OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a number of people today. Could I just ask them, perhaps, if they could just jump up and give a wave? Their parents might see them on TV this way. I ask the indulgence of my colleagues here. It's an extensive list, but this is very important to them. They had a bake sale to raise money; these kids are really into this. Kim Ivanko, Grade 6 teacher; Jennifer Morgan, supervisor; Chelsea Beck-Mandeville; Michelle Caudron; Jordan Champagne; Michelle Daigneault; Jason Desjarlais; Travis Dobs; James Dumas; Jessica Farmer; Marissa Hiebert; Raelen Lamalice; Mark Leblanc; Patrick Minute; Mikey Morgan; Terry Rowe; Grant Roy; Rena Squirrel; Brent Thomas; and Steven Wade. Welcome.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, and welcome, students. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to make welcome this very distinguished group from Hay River and introduce the other half of the group up there. I'd like to introduce Janine Pushie, the teacher of the second class; Sandy Coady and Cecile Richards, supervisors; and the students are Deidre Aldridge; Shelly Bourne, Bailey Corrigan; Cali Groenheyde; Patrick Hunt; Kyle Isiah; Geoffrey Johnson; Reiss Kruger; Kenny McBryan; Colton Parker; Debra Richards; Jamie Ritchie; Michelle Rymer-Salopree; Shanna Sage; Tiffany Sheils-Campbell; Justin West and I would also like to recognize a constituent of mine and their capable bus driver, Mr. Joe Gagnier. I would also like to recognize my constituency assistant Debbie Pottle up in the gallery who came over to help me. I will recognize Jane's constituency assistant Wendy Morgan. I would like to wish all of them a very safe trip home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: That was a bit over the 30 seconds you are allowed, however the students have come a long way and the people have come a long way, so it was worth the introduction. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two gentlemen in the gallery from the First Nations Bank of Canada. Keith Martell is the chairman and Arden Buskell, president and chief operating officer. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to recognize in the visitors' gallery from the Special Olympics of the NWT, Karla Cairns, the swimming coach and support of Special Olympics; Val Braden, Special Olympics volunteer of the year; Pierre Lafond, Special Olympics male athlete of the year and Special Olympian and member of the Team Canada swimming team for the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin, Ireland. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent and former assistant to the Member for Range Lake, Mrs. Jean Wallace in the audience today.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a few people in the gallery. I understand a senior, Ms. Madeline McDonald from Aven Court and her friend are in the gallery, as well as Blair Dunbar, who is my constituent, as well as Connie Henderson, a Yellowknife resident. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow the lead of my colleague, the Member for Nunakput, in recognizing our Olympian Pierre Lafond; his coach, Karla Cairns; my wife Valerie whose involvement with Special Olympics I am very proud of; and, my constituency assistant John Argue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize today my constituency assistant who is in Yellowknife for a few days, Ms. Denise Yuhas.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to welcome Madeline McDonald to the gallery. She's very special to my former athletic career being a chaperone to our team. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. On behalf of all the Members, welcome to the Legislative Assembly, particularly Mr. Dunbar. Mr. Dunbar and I are colleagues from the social work profession of some years. The chair recognizes the honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee, on a Point of Order.

Point Of Order

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a Point of Order on the first opportunity available to me. My Point of Order is that in answering questions in the House about the issues related to the specialist negotiation situation, the Minister of Health and Social Services has misled the House.

Mr. Speaker, this is my first opportunity as I was not able to verify the page number of the Hansard that I had to quote from. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, the chair is concerned with your Point of Order in terms of being the first opportunity. We've been in the House for an hour, you haven't left. You could have raised it sooner. As a matter of fact, the chair did hesitate earlier in anticipation of you saying something, but nothing came about. First opportunity means first opportunity, but the chair will recognize your Point of Order. Ms. Lee, what is your Point of Order.

MS. LEE: Mr. Speaker, I do apologize. I have had a lot of information to observe. Mr. Speaker, the substantiation of my Point of Order is as follows. On June 4th in his Minister's statement entitled Specialist Negotiations, the Minister stated the following, and I quote from page 1761 of the unedited Hansard: "I wish to reassure members of the Northwest Territories public that primary healthcare, that is care provided by general practitioners, nurses and other front line staff in our communities, will continue to be provided to Northwest Territories residents. People are referred to specialists only if their medical requirements cannot be met by front line healthcare..."

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, a moment, please. What date are you referring to when you refer to this? It's based on my concern about the earliest opportunity. I heard the date, but I am not sure. What date are you referring to?

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand your concern but my point is I was not able to raise this point until I got the documents that I tabled in the House yesterday, which didn't come to my possession until yesterday which sheds a different light on what has been said in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Okay. The chair will hear your Point of Order and we can decide on it after we've heard more information. Ms. Lee, continue.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for your patience and the patience of the Members. Mr. Speaker, he made the statement that I just read, but yesterday I received a copy of the letter dated May 14th, which is a full three weeks

prior to his statement that I just read signed by all 18 general practitioners in Yellowknife and it was tabled yesterday. I quote, Mr. Speaker, from the latter part of the second paragraph of that letter: "Family physicians providing obstetrical care, including high risk obstetrics, will not be able to continue to provide this care without specialist obstetrical backup. Similarly, those family physicians that provide surgical services cannot continue to do so without specialist surgical or obstetrics backup." The letter goes on to say, in the next paragraph: "Many emergency physicians chose to work in Yellowknife because of the level of acuity and the specialist backup that allows ongoing treatment locally. Without specialist backup, the role of emergency physicians will be altered, with more patients needing simply to be transferred south for ongoing care. GP anesthesiologists chose to practice in Yellowknife because of the ability to work with general surgeons, gynecologists, ENT surgeons, orthopaedic surgeons and ophthalmologists. In the event that these specialists are no longer represented in the community, many family physicians will find their scope of practice greatly curtailed. Given the situation, some family physicians may elect to look for opportunities in other communities where they could utilize their skills to the fullest."

This substantiation is that the Minister was misleading the House by not providing the full answer and making a statement that was, I don't want to say contrary, but not a full picture of what he was aware of.

Mr. Speaker, my second substantiation is from what he said on June 4th. This comes in light of the document that I was able to get yesterday. Mr. Speaker, as you recall yesterday, there were extensive discussions about the fact that some mothers were having to travel to Edmonton for labour and he said, on page 1781: "My job as Minister is to ensure the maintenance of the health and social services system, to deal with issues in a careful, measured way, not to promote fear and concern and needless apprehension among the people. Mr. Speaker, the Member has raised and thrown out a number of third-hand comments that I have no knowledge of, I have no context, I have no way to verify what she has said, so I am not in a position to address what may be considered hearsay at this point."

Mr. Speaker, this sheds a different light on the issue for me because of the document that I tabled, which is a letter dated June 5th that gives more context addressed to the Minister and signed by all four members of the OBS department in Yellowknife. The letter states the following, in the second paragraph: "In the short term, we are absolutely clear that we cannot carry on as usual without intermittent locum obstetric backup. Although in theory, we could carry on low risk obstetrics under those circumstances, in fact risk stratification is fraught with difficulties and when impending disaster is diagnosed from Yellowknife, we are hours away by air from additional resources, particularly paediatrics. In addition, two of the family practice obstetric group members have resigned from the obstetrics practice as of July. With holidays, this leaves three family practitioners doing intra-partum obstetrics without paediatrician availability for at least several weeks in July. This is not doable. Thus, we must not accept obstetrics patients from out of town for confinement and we must be making arrangements now to send our local patients to another centre to await delivery. We cannot wait until the end of June to begin this process."

Further, Mr. Speaker, the letter goes on to say, and I quote from the fourth paragraph: "We will be contacting the

communities immediately, advising them that we will not be accepting prenatal patients for confinement and making arrangement with other local patients for their ongoing care outside the territory."

My Point of Order is in saying that he was unaware of this problem and that it was third hand knowledge when he knew or ought to have known this information and I await your ruling. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The chair is primarily concerned with the timing of your Point of Order and the dates that have gone by and want to seek some more reference to this. So I am not going to rule on the Point of Order yet, whether we should allow it or not allow it or hear debate on it, until I have checked out that point. We are talking dates that go back a considerable period of time. I want to be sure that I've looked at some of the facts here first. So I am not ruling on this. I am taking this under advisement and I will bring it back up again either later today or tomorrow. I am not going to allow any debate on it at the moment, until after I have ruled on the admissibility of the point. So we will continue on with our business of the day and we will set that aside for a little while.

Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 4: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 15-14(6): Report On The Review Of Rule 70 Of The Rules Of The Legislative Assembly

MR. BELL: On October 25, 2002 the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories passed Motion 14-14(5) instructing the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures to undertake a review of the operation and accountabilities of the committee structure and system. The standing committee was also instructed to provide a report on such matters to the Legislative Assembly no later than June 30, 2003.

Process

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures initially met on December 9, 2002 to consider background information on the evolution of committee structures in the Northwest Territories and to formulate options on how best to proceed with the review of committee structures and systems.

Committee Members decided the following three basic premises would guide the Committee in its deliberations. It is likely that consensus government would continue for the 15th Assembly.

1. The structure, roles and responsibilities of the Legislative Assembly and its committees would not change in the face of self-government agreements.
2. The review of the operation and accountabilities of the committee structure and systems would be a separate process from the transitional planning exercise.

Mr. Speaker, our staff was instructed to research and prepare briefing notes on potential committee structures that would lend themselves to the consensus form of government.

Committee staff was also asked to consult with key managers on their thoughts on the current committee structure in relation to the legislative and budgetary processes and to receive input

on potential for changes they see as beneficial to both committees and the bureaucracy.

In addition, the standing committee provided direction to staff in the preparation of a survey designed to elicit Members' opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the current committee structure as well as their thoughts on potential changes to committee structure and systems.

Findings

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures met again on April 17, 2003 to review the research undertaken by staff and to examine the results of the Members' survey on committee systems and structure.

Committee Members noted in a majority of jurisdictions modeled on the Westminster parliamentary system, the potential of standing committees to add value to legislation has been somewhat derailed by the adherence to party politics.

For this reason, the rules committee did not extensively examine committee structures in other Canadian or international jurisdictions modeled on the Westminster parliamentary system.

The other committee process Canadians are most familiar with is the American system. While the American committee system is seen as essentially non-partisan, meaning that committee Members from different parties can work together to achieve common goals, there is nonetheless an adversarial approach taken with the executive branch of government that does not translate well to the Northwest Territories' consensus form of government.

As many Members are aware there are other jurisdictions, particularly the Channel Islands, where committees have played a significant role in the day-to-day operations of government. However, these jurisdictions have or are in the process of changing committee structures with a view to improving accountability within their systems.

Remarkably enough, Mr. Speaker, these jurisdictions have engaged in significant consultation with our own Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in adapting the Northwest Territories' committee and Cabinet system to meet the needs of some of the Channel Islands.

The Members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures examined several new options for committee structures that contemplated the increased sharing of powers between the legislative and executive branches of government.

However, it became apparent to committee Members that there needs to be a clear delineation between committees and the executive (Cabinet) in order to ensure that government is held accountable, both in fact, and in the eyes of the general public.

In the end, committee Members were forced to dismiss each option as unworkable and realize that our current committee structure, which is not without its imperfections, does at the very least ensure government is held accountable.

The feeling that government is being held accountable was borne out by the results of the Members' survey on committee structures and systems.

Results Of The Member's Survey

Those Members of the Assembly who responded to the standing committee survey were almost unanimous in their belief that any suggestions for change to committee structures and systems take the form of recommendations to the 15th Assembly.

This made sense to the Members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures in light of the potential for major restructuring of government that may fall out of the transition planning exercise.

Committee Members could see no point in effecting major changes to current committee structure and systems when we do not know exactly the future organizational structure of government at this time.

It was interesting that, even though the majority of Members surveyed thought there was a definite need for a major overhaul of committee structures and systems, no Members were comfortable in making any specific recommendations in the absence of knowledge of the future structure of government.

Many Members responding to the survey also commented on the need to realign the departments to ensure a balanced workload among standing committees.

Members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures also see this need but are hesitant to make a specific recommendation, given the potential for the redistribution of programs and services among existing and possible new government departments.

The survey results also indicated that Members thought there was a need to "firm up" committee guidelines and handbooks and perhaps even provide more training to committee chairpersons on committee operations and running effective meetings.

According to the survey, some Members believe individual Member constituency issues, which should be dealt with in another more appropriate forum, occasionally overtake the committee process.

One suggestion for remedy comes from the Catalanian Parliament in Spain where regular meetings take place between committees and Ministers. These "taking stock" meetings provide Members with an opportunity to discuss overall policy issues, as well as raise specific constituency issues with the Minister.

The 14th Assembly has established a similar convention with the monthly meeting held between the Premier and the Members of the Accountability and Oversight committee at which the issues of the day are discussed and feedback provided to the Premier.

Opinion was split on the need to re-evaluate the budget review process, with some Members believing the current process allows Members the most opportunity to influence government programs and spending, and some Members believing the process becomes repetitive between the in-camera review of the draft main estimates and the review of the main estimates in Committee of the Whole. Senior management, who pointed out that the current process might not be the best use of scarce human resources in the departments, made a similar observation.

There may be an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to streamline the process for reviewing the draft main estimates while still ensuring that Members and committees have influence over government programs and spending.

Development Of Government Policy

In discussing the working of the 14th Assembly and analyzing where problems were encountered, the Members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures observed that the issues that caused the most friction between committees and Cabinet were matters of government policy.

In a majority of cases, a new government policy or changes to an existing policy is developed by the responsible department in response to a real or perceived need.

Once the responsible Minister approves this new policy or changes to an existing policy, he or she takes the policy to Cabinet for approval. Only if the policy receives approval from Cabinet does the appropriate standing committee get informed and become involved.

It was observed by Members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures that by the time we reach the stage of policy development where the standing committees become engaged; the department and Minister have invested significant time and resources in getting the policy to this stage.

It is only natural that by this time, positions have become entrenched and the Minister would be resistant to any significant changes proposed by committee.

The Members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures see a need to establish a new convention on the development of government policy that involves standing committees at an earlier stage. Mr. Speaker, this would allow Members opinions and constituent's needs to be taken into account in the development of the final product.

The benefits of such a convention are twofold. First, if such a convention works, as it should, the small bugs can be worked out prior to any public statement or position being taken. This would allow any subsequent public policy debate to focus on the intent behind the policy, rather than the smaller details that seem to derail us on occasion.

Conversely, if a policy does not have support at the initial committee stage, the government can either withdraw the policy or rework it for further study by committee. It is easier to do this at the committee stage than in a full sitting of the Legislative Assembly when it may have been referred to Committee of the Whole.

The second benefit goes to the true purpose of committees, which is to add value to government. Allowing committees the opportunity to help develop policy rather than just react to government positions, is more in step with the principles of consensus government.

Members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures also believe there is a need for more broad-based policy discussions not related to any one specific policy, to take place between committees and Ministers on a regular basis. A clear understanding of committee Members' positions on such issues as taxation policy would be beneficial to Ministers and their departments in developing policy and implementing change.

Membership On Committees

Another practice the Members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures believe worth examining is how the Striking Committee decides membership on the standing committees on Social Programs and Governance and Economic Development.

As it stands now, the Striking Committee tries to accommodate the Member's preferences in determining which committee he or she will serve on. While respecting the wishes of an individual MLA is an important criterion, it should not be the overriding factor in determining committee membership.

The Members of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures have observed that some of the conflicts encountered in the 14th Assembly were related to a lack of regional or rural perspective on the Social Programs committee or, conversely, a lack of an urban perspective on the Governance and Economic Development committee.

To ensure the perspectives and needs of all territorial residents are represented in committee deliberations, the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures are of the opinion that a new convention, similar to the one used to determine regional representation on Cabinet, should be used by the Striking Committee to determine membership of the standing committees.

Recommendations

1. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the 15th Assembly examine the assignment of departments among standing committees to ensure a balanced committee workload.
2. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the committee manual be updated and training sessions for the incoming committee chairpersons and Members on their respective roles and responsibilities be enhanced.
3. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the 15th Assembly examine the advantages and disadvantages of streamlining the budgetary review process.
4. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends the 15th Assembly examine options for engaging Standing Committees in the early stages of policy development.
5. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Striking Committee establish a convention that ensures equitable regional and urban representation on the standing committees.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, on the potential committee structures and roles for the 15th Assembly.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 14-14(6) And Move To Committee Of The Whole, Carried

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Committee Report 14-14(6) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. We have a motion. The motion is in order, but the chair doesn't recognize a quorum. May we sound the bells?

---Ringing of Bells

Thank you. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour of the motion, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Committee Report 15-14(6): Report On The Review Of Rule 70 Of The Rules Of The Legislative Assembly

MR. BELL: Mr. Speaker, on October 29, 2001, you directed the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures to conduct a review of Rule 70 of the rules of the Legislative Assembly. It was felt there may arise some procedural difficulties, particularly with the provisions respecting the 120-day rule for standing committee review of bills.

In essence, the rule now states that a standing committee has 120 days to review a bill from the day it's referred to a committee until the day it must be reported back to the House. The rule further implies that if a committee has not reported a bill within this time frame, the sponsor of the bill is permitted to proceed with the bill in the Assembly.

Complicating matters somewhat is the occurrence, quite often, of standing committees' review of bills taking longer than 120 days due to the size, scope and impact of the bill, or the length of time between sittings of the Assembly. In all cases, an implicit concurrence of the bill sponsor, almost always the government, not to proceed with the bill in the absence of a committee report has been obtained. On two occasions, this concurrence has been obtained in writing, while others have been an implied mutual agreement.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the potential difficulty would arise under the present wording of Rule 70 if a bill's sponsor insisted on proceeding in the House with a bill that had not been reported from committee and the 120-day period had lapsed. The problem would stem from the lack of a mechanism to return the bill to the House by placing it in some fashion on the Order Paper, most likely in Committee of the Whole.

During the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures consideration of the issue on December 9, 2002, and April 17, 2003, a number of options were discussed.

Having the bill automatically appear on the Order Paper in Committee of the Whole 120 days after second reading was deemed to be undesirable, in that it does not take into account those numerous instances where the standing committee's review may be lengthy due to the complexity or nature of the bill and its impacts. In addition, there are occasions that the length of time between sittings of the House -- from the spring to the fall, for example, Mr. Speaker -- is such that reporting within 120 days is not possible. This remedy would also preclude the continuation of the long-standing parliamentary convention of allowing bills to die in committee.

The option of returning the bill to the House by order of the Speaker was not a preferred option because of the impartiality of the Speaker's position, and the fact that the Speaker would theoretically, and as a rule of procedure, possess no direct

knowledge of the committee's activities or the wishes of the bill's sponsor in order to be able to ascertain whether a particular bill should be returned.

In considering the matter, the Rules committee decided that a mechanism was required to advise the House, and the Speaker, that a bill had not been reported within the required timeframe and that the bill's sponsor wished to proceed with the bill in the House. It was decided that this mechanism be incorporated into Rule 70 and be termed "Notice of Intent."

Mr. Speaker, this notice of intent to proceed with a bill not reported would be given to the House by the bill's sponsor under the item Minister's statements on the Order Paper if it is a government bill, or under Members' statements if it happens to be a private Member's bill. The mechanism would then provide that on the third sitting day following receipt of a notice of intent by the House, the Speaker would place the bill on the Order Paper in Committee of the Whole.

In addition, the committee also feels it is necessary to provide a more formal avenue under the rules for a standing or special committee to secure an extension to the 120-day rule if it wishes to do so. The Rules committee proposed that this be facilitated by an amendment to Rule 70, which would state that an extension may be requested by motion in the Legislative Assembly under the item reports of committees on the review of bills.

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is of the opinion that this course of action takes into account the interests of all parties and provides an effective and efficient remedy to the issues, and hereby recommends it to the House.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures on the review of Rule 70.

Motion To Receive Committee Report 15-14(6) And Move To Committee Of The Whole, Carried

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Committee Report 15-14(6) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. We have a motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 4, returns of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

ITEM 5: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 262-14(6): Proposed Territorial Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Dent on June 5, 2003, regarding the proposed territorial sport and recreation board.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that meeting all of the sport and recreation needs of all of our communities and territorial organizations places great pressures upon the sport and recreation system. This is especially true as our government has made the promotion of active living a key priority.

The intent of the proposed territorial recreation and sport board is not to take away resources from the organizations that are responsible for direct sport and recreation program delivery. In fact, the proposal is intended, in a large part, to streamline the administration and governance of the system, resulting in more resources being made available for programs.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member that volunteers are the backbone of the sport and recreation system. It is only through the dedicated efforts of countless volunteers in all the communities across the NWT that we are able to support the extensive range of activities that are occurring in our communities, such as track and field meets, hockey tournaments, Super Soccer, cross-country ski clubs, races and traditional games, to name just a few.

By streamlining the recreation and sport system and ensuring equitable access to lottery revenues across the territory we hope to realize an increase in the resources that are available to support these activities. If we are successful in this effort, we should be able to provide better support for volunteers in the recreation and sport system across the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, based on the recommendations put forward by the sport and recreation partners, it is obvious that we will continue to rely upon the important role played by volunteers in the system. It is not our intent to replace these volunteers with permanent employees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have another return to oral question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Steen, you may continue.

Return To Question 308-14(5): New Sport And Recreation Board

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Delorey on June 11, 2003, regarding the new sport and recreation board.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs provides funding to community governments through a recreation and sport contributions program that makes funding available to all communities, both tax-based and non-tax-based, upon application, to support local activities. Contribution amounts for this program are determined based on a proportionate share of the total \$825,000 program budget, and range from \$14,000 to \$80,000 per community. Communities are required to account for the use of this funding. This was a new program in the 2002-2003 fiscal year, and I have committed to provide a report to Members of this House on how the funds were used by communities. This information will be available shortly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 7: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 314-14(6): Update On Negotiations

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and it's in regard to closure of the native arts program at Aurora College in Inuvik. Mr. Speaker, this program has been operational for one year. It is a post-secondary arts program at the college, and I think it's essential that we have such a program in place. This government has put a lot of

money and effort into the arts and cultural industry strategy. I would like to ask the Minister, what is his department doing to ensure and encourage that these programs have adequate funding so they are able to continue, rather than simply running these programs for one year?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 314-14(6): 314-14(6): Update On Negotiations

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm not familiar with the reference the Member has made to the college program, that funding has been cut. That was news to me late today and I don't have the details to that. But with respect to funding programs, Mr. Speaker, we fund the college through a transfer payment of approximately \$23 million and they handle the implementation of the programs that are conducted through the college system. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 314-14(6): Update On Negotiations

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons they gave for the closure of this program is that funding was withdrawn by the sponsoring organizations, which were the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in who contributed some \$48,000 each. They're going to spend it elsewhere. I'd like to ask the Minister, is it possible for his department to consider or look for those resources which were given by the sponsor organizations to continue this program at the college in Inuvik?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 314-14(6): Update On Negotiations

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have to check into the situation that has transpired in Inuvik with this particular program, and I will need a day to do that, Mr. Speaker, before I can provide any response to the Member.

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

Supplementary To Question 314-14(6): 314-14(6): Update On Negotiations

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this program has already been established, it's been up and running, the curriculum has been developed, and I think it's important as a government that we do invest in our arts and crafts industry, especially in the North where we do have a very important segment of our population that depends on the sale of arts and crafts, as their income, especially in the smaller communities among the people who are on the promotion side of arts and crafts. I would like to ask the Minister if he would take a serious look at long-term funding for these types of programs so that their stability is ensured, that they don't simply find themselves running one year and then being closed down?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 314-14(6): Update On Negotiations

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have to look into this and see what we can do about the Member's comments and suggestions. I will have to naturally, as well, consult with the college board who have the responsibility for delivering programs and I will undertake to do that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 314-14(6): Update On Negotiations

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my earlier comments, I made reference that this government has spent quite a few dollars developing an arts and crafts strategy so that we can try to promote and enhance that industry. I would like to ask the Minister what's the status of this strategy which does have a fundamental impact on the arts and crafts industry in the Northwest Territories. Could the Minister give us an update of where that strategy is and what we're doing to implement it?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 314-14(6): Update On Negotiations

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of RWED and I struck a panel to do an arts strategy for the Northwest Territories. That is under review by both our departments. We had anticipated having the government's response back by now. We expect it within a very, very short period of time, Mr. Speaker. Responsibility in the area of arts is shared by my department and Mr. Antoine's department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 315-14(6): Contingency Plan For Specialist Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services and it's in regard to the contingency plan in place. As indicated by the information provided in the House by way of tabled documents and letters from the doctors, they have expressed serious concern about our ability to provide healthcare with or without a locum. Having seen these letters, has the Minister changed his position about the viability of providing services with locums? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 315-14(6): Contingency Plan For Specialist Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first let me indicate the letter referred to by my colleague that she tabled and said was sent to me on June 5th, signed by family doctors. It was, in fact, never sent to me. Mr. Speaker, it dealt with the issues and concerns, but it was stopped at the desk of Mr. Woods, the CEO who met, subsequently, with the doctors and resolved their issues.

Mr. Speaker, I have here a letter which I would be happy to share with this House, dated June 11th, signed by Dr. Mansouri, Dr. Fraser, Dr. Peters, Dr. Hansen, Dr. MacFadden and Dr. Woodside, in which they say as family practice members we have met to discuss our ability to provide labour and delivery services under the present contingency plan. Given the availability of obstetric and pediatric backup, we will be able to provide low-risk obstetrical care. The definition of low risk will be decided on a case-by-case basis. As the locum specialists' backup is for emergencies only, we will not plan to keep people who will most likely need the locum specialists' service; i.e., pre-term labour, diabetic mothers or insulin-dependent, et cetera. Whether or not repeat C-sections will be done will need to be discussed with the locum specialist as this is...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, may I interrupt you for a moment? If you intend to read a letter, you must table that letter. Are you prepared to table that letter after you finish reading it as part of your answer?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, I am, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. You'll table that at the appropriate time, of course. Mr. Minister, you may continue your answer.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "We will continue to accept low-risk patients from other communities. We would ask that the charge be reviewed for risk stratification by a central person such as an obstetrical manager or clinical coordinator one week prior to the patient being seen in Yellowknife. This is a contingency plan only. The services provided will be reviewed every two weeks after July 1st. No contingency plan can replace the services provided by regular, full-time specialists, or duplicate the high level of obstetrical care we are now able to provide."

Attached, as well, Mr. Speaker, is a note from Mr. Woods, CEO, indicating that we have confirmed that the locum obstetricians will do C-sections. This is good news and I'm sure that not many mothers will have to go south should there be no other specialists' services. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 315-14(6): Contingency Plan For Specialist Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few points. One is that I don't believe for one second that anything that Mr. Woods is aware of, the Minister is not aware of. He has indicated many times that he is on top of this. I give that as a compliment. He knows what's going on. Second, Mr. Speaker, I have that letter in front of me and I was going to table that June 11th letter. It came to our boxes, Mr. Speaker. But that does not change the question that I'm asking. The concern of the family practice group remains that having locums on a long-time basis is not an answer, and that was my question. How is he prepared to carry his responsibilities as the Minister of Health with... (inaudible)...together locums on a two-week by two-week basis?

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

Further Return To Question 315-14(6): Contingency Plan For Specialist Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the Member continually states that I'm giving answers and she does not believe me. My interpretation of not believing me is that she's calling me a liar. I stood in this House for the past week and a half and listened to the Member say she disbelieves the information I'm putting before this House as a Minister of this government, and that she has better, more accurate information. We are not hiring necessarily on a two-week by two-week basis. We have the coverage. We will work toward the settlement of the specialists contract. We have a contingency plan. There is work underway as we speak by all parties to come to resolution of this. A little information, Mr. Speaker, is a dangerous thing if it's not appropriately used. So I stand on the words I said. If the Member wants to stand up and call me a liar again, she can feel free to do that. But I would ask for your ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The chair did not hear the word liar. That was a word that you raised and the chair will disregard it. That was not the word that the honourable Member used. She may have said things other than that. I can look at Hansard, but the word liar was never used. Ms. Lee, your supplementary.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is an important question that must be asked and that must be answered, and he is the Minister of Health and Social Services. I am simply asking how he sees that as possible that we're going to maintain our healthcare system. That letter that he's referring to says that this will be reviewed on a two-week basis, Mr. Speaker. We're dealing with the same information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Ms. Lee, state your question. You said it at the beginning, but you lost the chair. I'll give you an opportunity to ask the question again, please.

Supplementary To Question 315-14(6): Contingency Plan For Specialist Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Precisely, I have the same letter that the Minister read. That letter says, "This is a contingency plan only, and the services provided will be reviewed every two weeks after July..." We have nothing further than July. How are we going to carry out our healthcare responsibilities on a two-week by two-week basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 315-14(6): Contingency Plan For Specialist Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it speaks about a review every two weeks. We are, in fact, arranging coverage for July and August. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, contingency implies short term, and what we're going to do is make an arrangement with the specialists that will ensure that we continue to provide the services that are currently there. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 315-14(6): Contingency Plan For Specialist Services

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He has not provided this information yet. I would like to know, would the Minister provide the cost implications of filling these healthcare needs with locums on a two-week by two-week basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 315-14(6): Contingency Plan For Specialist Services

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday the plan is, should the locums be required, should the specialists, hypothetically speaking if I may use that word, resign July 1st, then the money that is currently put towards their salaries will be used to cover locums. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 316-14(6): Inconsistency In Treatment Of Medical Travel Costs

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents have told me that when they have been referred to Edmonton for medical service, they had to pay not only the \$250 deductible for travel each way, but were stuck paying for hotels and meals as well. Mr. Speaker, I know some other constituents have been able to access a place to stay and weren't charged for it. Could the Minister advise us why some people have accommodation and meals provided when referred out of the NWT and others don't?

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

Return To Question 316-14(6): Inconsistency In Treatment Of Medical Travel Costs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the way that medical travel is currently structured, those people without third party coverage, an issue raised in this House by Mr. Bell and Mr. Dent and many others, is such that their coverage is not the same as those who do have third party coverage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 316-14(6): Inconsistency In Treatment Of Medical Travel Costs

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware that we have an institution in Edmonton called Larga House. Could the Minister advise which patients who have been referred down south are able to access the accommodations at Larga House?

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

Further Return To Question 316-14(6): Inconsistency In Treatment Of Medical Travel Costs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is geared for the use of aboriginal patients, but they do have a policy that, if there is space, it's open for all Northerners.

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

Supplementary To Question 316-14(6): Inconsistency In Treatment Of Medical Travel Costs

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That just highlights the capricious nature of the charges that we have because we've had people in Yellowknife who have wound up being sent out because of staff shortages at the hospitals and had they, for instance, gone into labour a few hours earlier, they wouldn't have had to travel. Is the Minister planning to deal with this issue of almost whimsy in the system so that there will be a consistent approach?

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

Further Return To Question 316-14(6): Inconsistency In Treatment Of Medical Travel Costs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I commend the Member on "capricious" and "whimsy," those are two very fine descriptive words. Yes, I will have a document to the Members tomorrow that will outline what we are proposing on an interim basis to deal with the co-payment medical travel issue while we conclude the long-term supplementary healthcare review. It's been to Cabinet today and I will commit to having it to the Members tomorrow.

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

Supplementary To Question 316-14(6): Inconsistency In Treatment Of Medical Travel Costs

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has anticipated my final question which would have been when, but since he's left open one other part of it, when we will see the final version of this document?

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

Further Return To Question 316-14(6): Inconsistency In Treatment Of Medical Travel Costs

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the document I will be sharing with the Members tomorrow covers medical travel and covers room and board for patients referred, whether in the territory or out. The longer-term supplementary healthcare review will be worked on. It's more complicated and there's a significant number of programs that are under review. It will be done over the summer and we will have that available as well in the next couple of months. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 317-14(6): Hay River Heritage Centre

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I outlined for everyone in this House the plight of the Hay River Heritage Society and their ongoing quest to keep the Hay River Heritage Centre operational. Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is absolutely critical that the Hay River Heritage Centre remain operational and that it stay that way for many years to come. Will the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment please indicate for this House if he is aware of the plight of the Hay River Heritage Society in securing ongoing funding for the operation of the Hay River Heritage Centre?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return To Question 317-14(6): Hay River Heritage Centre

HON. JAKE OOTES: Mr. Speaker, I have become aware of the situation in Hay River with their historical site building and museum through the media, through the Hay River paper. So I am familiar with the efforts that are being made in Hay River to continue with an organization, with a facility where they can continue to house their artifacts and I recognize the importance of that for the community.

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

Supplementary To Question 317-14(6): Hay River Heritage Centre

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think if I went back in Hansard, I could find where I have brought the plight of the heritage centre in Hay River to this House on a number of occasions. Would the Minister indicate what preference the department puts on whether it is a heritage centre or museum? Are they both funded with equal importance or does one generate more importance than the other? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 317-14(6): Hay River Heritage Centre

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the term "heritage centre" is used in Yellowknife for the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre. It was a name that had to be allocated back in 1979 by the federal government who would not fund museums. They would fund heritage centres. That is the basis under which it got established. In the Northwest Territories, communities have their museums or heritage centres, heritage sites, and I believe they have the freedom to do that and name them heritage centres or museums, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 317-14(6): Hay River Heritage Centre

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister please indicate to this House if he is aware of any support his department has given to the heritage centre in Hay River in the past. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 317-14(6): Hay River Heritage Centre

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't answer that question. I will certainly get the answer for the Member on whether we have and the amounts that we have, if we have supported the heritage centre.

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

Supplementary To Question 317-14(6): Hay River Heritage Centre

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could commit to having his staff direct the department to look into the situation at the heritage centre and look at the possibility of maybe providing a contribution so that centre can stay open this year and be open to the public. Also, maybe the department could give some help deciding other areas where they could obtain help, maybe federally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return To Question 317-14(6): Hay River Heritage Centre

HON. JAKE OOTES: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can commit to have my staff assist the Hay River organization to see first of all, if we can support any applications for their organization in Hay River, if we can find funding from our particular operations. Additionally, we can assist to identify possible funding from Heritage Canada. Heritage Canada does have programs, as well, in addition to our own. We have a program for small museums for revitalization and safety areas. We can look at that possibility for the community, Mr. Speaker. I can commit to have my staff deal with the organization in Hay River.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 318-14(6): Government Sponsored Insurance Programs

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to direct my questions to the Premier today. A number of constituents have approached me and are very alarmed at the escalating costs of insurance, whether that be general insurance, automobile insurance. There have been some real upswings in the cost, anywhere between 25 and 35 percent, which is having quite an impact on consumers. It was interesting to note recently that this became an election issue in New Brunswick when the Maritimes were particularly suffering with high insurance rates and there was pressure put on the government and there was an expectation that the government would step forward with a program, so that the people in that province could realize some lower rates. So the province is now committed to getting involved in the insurance business.

In response to my constituents' concerns, I would like to ask the Premier if there has ever been any thought given to that in

this jurisdiction? We are remote. It's difficult for Northerners to get insurance in other jurisdictions. As a consumer protection measure, has there ever been any consideration given to that?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take that question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 319-14(6): Harmonization Of Social Housing And Income Support

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation about the long-suffering harmonization initiative, Mr. Speaker. Some 20 months ago, this was first announced in the Assembly. It's had a pretty rough ride. In the last session, Mr. Speaker, Members passed a motion to defer it once again and we created a committee of Ministers and Members to look at how this could be overcome and harmonization implemented. The Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation was the lead Minister, but nothing has happened with this committee, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister to explain the progress or lack of it, of this committee. Thank you.

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

Return To Question 319-14(6): Harmonization Of Social Housing And Income Support

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to apologize. There has been difficulty with the logistics of trying to construct a meeting date with the workload of my colleagues from this side of the House. We have been trying to convey to the chair that we want to meet and again the dates have changed. Now we are rescheduled to the latter part of August when we are all back in the business cycle. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 319-14(6): Harmonization Of Social Housing And Income Support

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid as one of the Members who volunteered from this side to assist on this committee, I must say I am not aware of any dates that were proposed by the Minister. I guess I would like to ask the Minister if he could show some evidence of this invitation or these arrangements being made. Could he provide some proof of that? Thank you.

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

Further Return To Question 319-14(6): Harmonization Of Social Housing And Income Support

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The existing method of communication was strictly oral. If the Member cares, we can have a written notice. I will give instruction of the specific dates. In the interim, we have tried to establish many meeting dates without success. So our proposal now is to hold

a meeting in the latter part of October when all Members are back to work.

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

Supplementary To Question 319-14(6): Harmonization Of Social Housing And Income Support

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, earlier I heard the Minister say the end of August and not October, so we will work with August. That's still a considerable delay, Mr. Speaker, to engage in anything that will insist in implementation of this by the agreed upon April 1, 2004. I think we really should get working on it sooner. I would like to think that my colleagues and I would like to get to work sooner. Would the Minister be able to meet us on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 319-14(6): Harmonization Of Social Housing And Income Support

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the record, I stand to be corrected. I meant to say the latter part of August. I would like to sit down with each member of that committee to start working on some time frames and see what our committee days can be. From that, we can certainly take the lead role in establishing those dates and ensure we do have an agenda set. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 319-14(6): Harmonization Of Social Housing And Income Support

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Given the delays, and I think it's safe to say a lack of enthusiasm about this, would the Minister reaffirm the commitment of the government to engage in a harmonization exercise that really can work and be meaningful for the people of the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden.

Further Return To Question 319-14(6): Harmonization Of Social Housing And Income Support

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am under the impression that our committee will set out some of the assessments and also some philosophies and the way we intend to proceed with the agenda on harmonization and certainly, hopefully, we will come out with a position at the end of the meeting, so that we do have something proposed for April 1, 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Question 320-13(5): Housing Meeting In Fort Resolution

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the Minister for attending the meeting in Fort Resolution of the community leadership, Members and the housing authority. At that meeting, Mr. Speaker, a lot of discussions we had were on issues of housing and housing needs, lack of leadership in the

housing authority because of the board of directors. The Minister and his staff made some commitments and my constituents are wondering when they can see the fruition of those commitments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 320-13(5): Housing Meeting In Fort Resolution

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I went into the riding the Member refers to with two objectives. One was to re-establish the local housing organization board. It had been dormant for several months and they failed to respond to a number of questions. Secondly, we attempted to mediate a fair process in how the surplus housing that was vacant at the time would be reallocated to families. So we were attempting to find a solution to those two key questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 320-13(5): Housing Meeting In Fort Resolution

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let's just deal with the housing authority for this particular question. When can the Minister appoint members to the housing authority, so that the business of housing can continue? Right now, it's dormant and still is dormant according to the chief of the community. When can I expect to see the housing authority working? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 320-13(5): Housing Meeting In Fort Resolution

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Inaudible)...of the community in the sense that the political structure at the moment... We had mediated a resolution that they would submit a series of names to the Minister for approval, and that occurred the first week in June, and we would have appointees in place by the latter part of June and we would meet in September to further our discussions. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 320-13(5): Housing Meeting In Fort Resolution

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the issue of housing, the Minister had made certain commitments to Members of my community on housing issues and allocation of housing. Can the Minister give me a briefing in the House today of where that is right now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 320-13(5): Housing Meeting In Fort Resolution

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't recall making a commitment. I mediated some solutions to how we

may develop a process that's more fair to how the allocation will be made. That's what I stand on. The other commitment I made is our district people will come to the community to work with the new appointments, the LHOs, so they can assist the community not only with allocations but also with a number of concerns such as maintenance and providing technical services to the committee. That's the commitment I made, to have our staff go in on an intermittent basis to discuss that level of need with that community and we certainly intend to pursue that. I committed going back in September to reconvene a meeting to see if there was any progress made in that direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary To Question 320-13(5): Housing Meeting In Fort Resolution

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister to follow up with the direction he gave his staff, maybe by starting with a reply or sending a letter to the community leadership about what he intends to do and how he intends to implement the plans he has developed with the community. I think the community is waiting for a response and waiting for a follow-up, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 320-13(5): Housing Meeting In Fort Resolution

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully we have achieved at least a first effort because I did receive a call from a member of the council. I don't know what role that councillor plays, but there was a question raised through a telephone call and I said that I would help provide an adequate answer. If that hasn't happened, I am prepared to do that immediately to ensure that we are following up on those issues that were raised in that general meeting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 321-14(6): Location Of Aklavik Health Centre

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. It is with regard to a project which has been ongoing for some time. It started off with the health centre being located on the Aklavik ball diamond. The community has lost its ball field because of the establishment of the health centre in that location.

There has been a lot of deliberation on this issue among the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the community of Aklavik and this Member. I would just like to ask the Minister, exactly where are we in resolving this problem with the community of Aklavik and trying to ensure that the children of Aklavik have a ball diamond to play ball in?

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

Return To Question 321-14(6): Location Of Aklavik Health Centre

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did attend a meeting with the mayor and other residents of Aklavik this spring on that particular issue and I believe there was an agreement at that time that there would be \$50,000 worth of funding towards a ball diamond from Health and Social Services. The Aklavik hamlet would be contributing some granular material to create a temporary ball diamond for this year while they work at putting in place a permanent ball diamond. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 321-14(6): Location Of Aklavik Health Centre

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister tell me where exactly the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is in all this? We hear that the Department of Health and Social Services is going to put \$50,000 in, the community is going to be putting in gravel and other such matters into it. I would like to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs what his department is putting into this project.

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

Further Return To Question 321-14(6): Location Of Aklavik Health Centre

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe when I met with the municipality that they had a number of options on which approach Municipal and Community Affairs for funding for the ball diamond. One, when capital planning appeared the community could identify the ball diamond there as a priority. That was one option. The other option was that they could apply for funding under the special initiative program that we just introduced. Thirdly, they could ask Municipal and Community Affairs to take a special request to Financial Management Board Secretariat for funding for the ball diamond for this year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 321-14(6): Location Of Aklavik Health Centre

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if he has received any correspondence and information on the different types of financial arrangements that are available to communities, such as emergency funding for this special community initiatives program? Is the Minister prepared to take anything to Financial Management Board Secretariat or Cabinet to try to access funding to complete this project?

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

Further Return To Question 321-14(6): Location Of Aklavik Health Centre

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Municipal and Community Affairs would prefer that we use the

present programs that are available for communities to access funding for capital rather than take them straight to Financial Management Board Secretariat. At the present time the Aklavik hamlet has put in an application to Municipal and Community Affairs under the special initiatives program for \$200,000 toward the ball diamond. The regional office has not responded to that particular application as yet. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 321-14(6): Location Of Aklavik Health Centre

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister tell me and also the community of Aklavik exactly how soon we will hear if any progress has been made with any of these initiatives that your department may have come up with so that we can put this project behind us and move on to bigger and better things. This thing has been dragging on for some time and I for one would like to see it put to rest, along with probably the Minister. So I would like to ask the Minister, could you get back to us as soon as you hear something on this matter so that the community and I can get a better understanding of how to get this thing completed?

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

Further Return To Question 321-14(6): Location Of Aklavik Health Centre

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am advised that Municipal and Community Affairs was scheduled to go into Aklavik on June 9th to hold their capital planning consultation. It would have been at that time that the community would identify this as a capital priority and, therefore, they would put it in the business plan in that way. I do not have the information right now when the region will be reviewing all the applications under the special initiatives. So as soon as I have this back I will advise the Member and the community. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 322-14(6): Letter Outlining Obstetricians' Concerns

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. It is in regards to the letter dated June 5th that we already have talked about. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the latest letter puts different facts into this, but there is one section in this letter that talks about the long-term consequences. I have tabled this document, Mr. Speaker, so it is available for the House. It is the concern raised by the obstetrics doctors and it says, "...although the above is very serious the long-term effects of the specialists resignations are even more grave. What we have now is a well-functioning team of specialists. If a major part of this group departs we can see two consequences. First, those of us who remain will also be looking to move on as we will not be able to carry on our current model of practice. Secondly, it will take many years and exceptional people committed to the North to recreate this team. Do we have the time? Where will those people be found?" So my question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister is, what is his answer to those two questions? Do we have the time and where will those people be found? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 322-14(6): Letter Outlining Obstetricians' Concerns

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is making an assumption, an assumption that all the specialists are leaving July 1st and that subsequent to the contingency plan there will be nothing. It is an assumption that I do not share. We will make an arrangement with the specialists for special services and we will do it in a timely way. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 322-14(6): Letter Outlining Obstetricians' Concerns

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I do not believe this is my assumption or my view. Mr. Speaker, it is professionals giving a professional opinion. They have put it on paper and they have put their names down and they say, "...those who remain will..." This is not an assumption or hypothetical. "...will also be looking to move on...". Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the government that this is something the government has to look at in the cost and benefit analysis. Has the Minister done that and what are his findings?

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

Further Return To Question 322-14(6): Letter Outlining Obstetricians' Concerns

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a broad process of coming to an agreement with the Department of Health and Social Services or the government and the specialists. There are a lot of forces at play, but at the end of the day there is a commitment I believe by both parties to reach a satisfactory agreement, which we intend to do. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 322-14(6): Letter Outlining Obstetricians' Concerns

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to hear what the Minister is intending to do to come to a satisfactory resolution. That is the kind of thing I want to hear. So does that mean, Mr. Speaker, that he is going to contact the Northwest Territories Medical Association and get back into negotiations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 322-14(6): Letter Outlining Obstetricians' Concerns

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it means that we will come to an agreement with the specialists and we will do that in a timely way. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 322-14(6): Letter Outlining Obstetricians' Concerns

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The latest thing that the Minister has said is that the doctors have turned down the final offer by the government and turned down arbitration. So how does this get started so it can come to a resolution? Does it not require the government to give a counter proposal? Somebody has to give a counter proposal to get this thing restarted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 322-14(6): Letter Outlining Obstetricians' Concerns

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker the Northwest Territories Medical Association is meeting today, as I have been saying. My expectation is that they are going to be looking at a whole host of issues. I am sure one of the very big issues is going to be the current situation that we are in now in terms of reaching a satisfactory agreement with the specialists and all the attendant issues that have arisen out of that particular process. I look forward to hearing the outcome of their meetings and we will adjust accordingly. But we still intend to reach an agreement with the specialists. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 323-14(6): Responsibility For Hay River Airport Maintenance

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Joe Handley. Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago Hay River experienced some very high water and ice conditions. As a result of that, there was some damage done in different areas of Hay River. One of them was at our Hay River airport. As most Members are aware, Hay River had the unfortunate situation of having some scheduled flights cut down to four days a week. It was brought to my attention yesterday that a constituent was coming in on a regularly scheduled flight, and when they got to Fort Smith there was an announcement that the plane would not be landing in Hay River, and the passengers had to go from Fort Smith to Hay River by bus. The reason for that was the damage that was done by the flood in Hay River. I would like to ask the Minister, who is in charge of equipment around the airport as far as planes landing, whether it is landing lights, ILS or whatever? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 323-14(6): Responsibility For Hay River Airport Maintenance

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for the navigation system and particularly for the ILS system is with NavCanada. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 323-14(6): Responsibility For Hay River Airport Maintenance

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that Transportation looked after our airports. So his department has nothing to do with getting repairs to the ILS system in Hay River? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 323-14(6): Responsibility For Hay River Airport Maintenance

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that our department is in charge of the operation of the airport itself. That is, all the systems at the airport, with exception of the navigation system. The ILS is the part of the navigation system that gives directional support to aircraft that are landing. That is the responsibility of NavCanada.

As the operator of the airport we do monitor the whole system. So we are very aware of the damage that was done and our people are monitoring all the time the progress on repairing or replacing that unit and what the alternatives would be. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 323-14(6): Responsibility For Hay River Airport Maintenance

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the department is the one that monitors the damages to the equipment at the airport if they are operating it. Would the Minister commit to looking into the situation at Hay River, the operation and look into having that ILS fixed in Hay River so we can get regular flights again? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 323-14(6): Responsibility For Hay River Airport Maintenance

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information we have is that the ILS antenna has been damaged pretty severely. In fact, it will have to be replaced. NavCanada has told us that it will be sometime in July, probably the latter part of July, before they would be able to do that. In the meantime, they are connecting up the VOR/BME system. That is the old system and that should be connected very shortly. I do not have a precise day of when it will be in place, but the intention is to go back to the VOR/BME system until they get the ILS replaced. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 323-14(6): Responsibility For Hay River Airport Maintenance

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear the department is working on it. I would just ask if the Minister would check again with his department and his staff to make

sure that this is being addressed in as timely a manner as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 323-14(6): Responsibility For Hay River Airport Maintenance

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we realize it is important to Hay River and to aircraft that are flying in there. I will check into it and as soon as we have a specific time I will let the Member know. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 324-14(6): Status Of Fort McPherson Community Services Board

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I raised this issue in the House before regarding the number of children who are under protected status, who have either been apprehended or are finding their way through the child and family services legislation that we have in place. I have been working with the Minister and the community of Fort McPherson, trying to get a key component of our legislation to be implemented, and that is the establishment of a community services board. I would like to ask the Minister, could you give me an update on the status of that process to see if we have moved anywhere with that since the last time it was raised in this House?

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

Return To Question 324-14(6): Status Of Fort McPherson Community Services Board

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that department officials from headquarters have been working with the Inuvik regional health and social services board and the people and staff in Fort McPherson to get a meeting together to in fact set up the family and children's services board that would oversee the placement committees that are struck on an individual basis to deal with children in care. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 324-14(6): Status Of Fort McPherson Community Services Board

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I for one am alarmed at the number of children that are in care. The last information I received in November, shows that at that time the number of children that were receiving services from this government under the child protection services was some 37 in Fort McPherson, 18 in Aklavik and three in Tsiigehtchic. I would just like to ask the Minister, do we have any updated numbers in on children that are still in care and has that number come down or has it gone up?

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

Further Return To Question 324-14(6): Status Of Fort McPherson Community Services Board

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are updated numbers being worked on. There is a request that I believe came from the Member's office and we are seeking to comply with that. But the sad reality is that the numbers have not come down. The one piece of good news is that we are entering into more and more arrangements with the family, so there is a joint plan of care committee that allows us to provide resources but still keep the family engaged. But it is an area where we do not see a diminishment in terms of the need for the service. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 324-14(6): Status Of Fort McPherson Community Services Board

MR. KRUTKO: Could the Minister give me some numbers so I have a rough idea of what we are talking about here? Does the Minister know the number of children that are in care who have been sent outside the region, outside the community to other communities, either to Inuvik, Yellowknife or wherever? Do you have an idea of the number of children that have been taken out of the communities and are now in care in other areas of the Northwest Territories or down south?

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

Further Return To Question 324-14(6): Status Of Fort McPherson Community Services Board

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two pages of statistics that I would be happy to share with the Member in regards to the children in care in his constituency. There are 24 as of March 31, 2003 in Aklavik, 24 in Fort McPherson, eight in Tsiigehtchic for a total of 56. Mr. Speaker, if I may, in Aklavik seven are under voluntary support agreements, one is under a support services agreement, 12 that are under plan of care and two are under apprehension and two are in permanent custody. In Fort McPherson there is one under a voluntary support agreement, five under plan of care, ten on an interim custody order, one on temporary custody and seven under permanent custody. In Tsiigehtchic there are four under voluntary support agreements, one under a support service agreement and three under plan of care. Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to share these numbers with my colleague.

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

Supplementary To Question 324-14(6): Status Of Fort McPherson Community Services Board

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to getting that information from the Minister. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister have a breakdown of what it is costing this government to have that number of children in care and what is the cost to this government to keep those children in care?

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

Further Return To Question 324-14(6): Status Of Fort McPherson Community Services Board

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a host of issues that relate and cause the need for these kind of services. There are conditions that may be set with a particular family in terms of alcohol, lack of employment. There are a number of issues related to abuse. There may be issues related to the community being under tremendous pressure because there is a major resource development and the whole lifestyle is changing. There are the individual family factors. If it is a single mother and it is a broken home. There are a whole host of reasons why a family and children at any given time may require services.

Mr. Speaker, we spend millions of dollars every year dealing with children and child welfare issues. We will in all probability continue to bring those kinds of resources to this very important area of dealing with our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 325-14(6): Negotiations With Specialist Physicians

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services and I just want to clarify what I think I heard, Mr. Speaker. On the basis of what he said to my last question, am I to understand that if there is some kind of a proposal that comes out of the Northwest Territories Medical Association's meeting today that the government and the Minister are prepared to consider and entertain that package? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 325-14(6): Negotiations With Specialist Physicians

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we tabled with the specialists a 27 percent wage increase and a final offer for arbitration. The arbitration offer was rejected and two dates, the 28th and 29th, were put forward as the dates when they could next be ready to meet. We have heard nothing other than the rejection of the arbitration offer. So, Mr. Speaker, we are a government committed to providing services. This is a very important part of our healthcare system. We have been committed all along to working with the specialists for a successful resolution. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 325-14(6): Negotiations With Specialist Physicians

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So maybe I did not hear what I thought I heard. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the last time the two parties met, the government offered their package and the offer for arbitration and the doctors rejected it. So I think the argument can be made that the government can make a new offer as well, or entertain any packages that the doctors are going to submit. So would the Minister commit to either one of those? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 325-14(6): Negotiations With Specialist Physicians

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit, as I have done from the start, to working through this process and reaching a successful arrangement with the specialists. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 325-14(6): Negotiations With Specialist Physicians

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have heard that I understand that is what his intentions are, but I need more details, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister consider any proposal, counter proposal or offer that comes from the Northwest Territories Medical Association following their meeting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return To Question 325-14(6): Negotiations With Specialist Physicians

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my previous answers I am waiting for the outcome of the meeting of the doctors, the medical association. If the specialists have something to offer, of course we are going to be looking at whatever that may be. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Your final supplementary, Ms. Lee. No supplementary. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 326-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Services In Aklavik

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services concerning drug addiction services in the Beaufort Sea/Mackenzie Delta region. One of the things that we are finding with all the oil and gas development and the drug and alcohol testing that is now required under the new rules put in place by the industry is that we are still seeing a very high failure rate in regards to the number of people that are looking for employment. Yet, Mr. Speaker, on the service side of this government we have seen, if anything, a decline in programs and services. One example is that we do not have alcohol and drug services being provided in the community of Aklavik, nor do we have any treatment facilities presently operating in the region. So I would like to ask the Minister, exactly what are we doing as a government? This government has done strategy after strategy, yet we do not seem to see any implementation of any of these efforts. I would like to ask the Minister how soon we can see something happen to improve this problem of people unable to work because of not having the services in the region?

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

Return To Question 326-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Services In Aklavik

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there has been a significant amount of work done on the alcohol and drug strategy. The strategy was done. There were 25 recommendations made and put forward. Through last year's business planning process we, for the current fiscal year, obtained funding to implement the first four. The upcoming business plan will have additional requests in there to move on the other remaining recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, the immediate focus put forward that was identified in the strategies and the reports done on the alcohol and drug service currently available was the need to address the issue of the current staff in the communities, the alcohol and drug services, that have been underpaid and basically neglected or overlooked in that part of the overall system for many years, working at very, very low wages. We are working to reclassify their jobs. We are going to bring them under the board so they can get paid benefits. We are going to increase their pay based on their experience and qualifications. We are going to develop a training program that will be on-going so that all alcohol and drug workers will soon be called community prevention workers. We will have those training requirements met.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are doing that as well as looking at hiring some more mental health workers and some clinical supervisors. The upcoming year's business plan will in fact reflect the rest of the recommendations. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 326-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Services In Aklavik

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been waiting for some time to see some of these programs being implemented. We are working on a lot of issues, but I would just like to know, when will these dollars actually be expended or these programs being delivered? How soon can we see these programs up and running in our communities ensuring we have alcohol and drug programs and services in our communities and in the Beaufort-Delta region?

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

Further Return To Question 326-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Services In Aklavik

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the recommendations and items I just laid out in my last answer speak to services currently there which we are trying to improve, recognizing the need to better coordinate, to recognize more effectively through remuneration of pay and benefits that alcohol and drug workers should receive, but have not been over the years. The need for training. The other recommendations we will work on. So those are currently services that are there that we are looking to improve. Thank you.

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

Supplementary To Question 326-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Services In Aklavik

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the biggest challenge we have with the addiction programs and services is the lack of actual programs to deliver that service. I would like to ask the Minister, exactly what is this department doing to implement a program in the region to assist people who have been refused work because they have not passed the alcohol and drug tests? Can they go to a program in the region so that they can try to get back in the workforce?

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

Further Return To Question 326-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Services In Aklavik

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at present we have arrangements with Nats' Ejee K'eh in Hay River as our main alcohol and drug treatment facility. We also have arrangements with the Salvation Army in Yellowknife for some services, as well, which are being expanded. But, Mr. Speaker, there are no facilities or institutional alcohol and drug treatment programs outside of that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. The final question for question period, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 326-14(6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Services In Aklavik

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at one time we did have a program under the Tl'oondih Healing Program in Fort McPherson, but because of lack of funding it was closed. The Tl'oondih Healing Society is still working at trying to get programs up and running. So I would like to ask the Minister, if he has been requesting proposal after proposal, they have put proposals in, but they have not got an answer back. So there is an effort from the region to try and get something going. I would like to ask the Minister, knowing that these proposals have been submitted to your office, how soon will you take action either to implement those proposals or let the clients out there know that they don't have any hope of getting any money from this government. Let's do something rather than keeping them waiting for you to make a decision.

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

Further Return To Question 326-14 (6): Alcohol And Drug Treatment Services In Aklavik

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am assuming that the Member is referring to the funding that's out there and the request for proposals that was made for the social agenda pilot projects. That date has been moved ahead a couple of weeks to allow the communities more time to submit their proposals, but we still plan to review and have the pilot project funding allocated in July.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. The time for question period has ended. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

ITEM 8: WRITTEN QUESTIONS**Written Question 8-14(6): Business Incentive Policy**

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

1. Could the Minister please provide information stating the number of businesses that are registered under the business incentive policy?
2. Could the Minister please provide information regarding the ownership of BIP businesses. Specifically, how many BIP businesses are truly northern-owned, that is, not a subsidiary of another southern company, and how many are subsidiaries of a southern corporation?
3. Could the Minister please provide detail of how much government money is used to finance the business incentive policy?
4. Could the Minister please provide detail of how much BIP money is directed to companies that are subsidiaries of southern-owned corporations?
5. Could the Minister please provide information regarding the average number of employees registered to BIP businesses?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Written Question 9-14(6): Child Protection Services

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services with regard to child protection services.

1. Can the Minister list the number of children receiving services in the Mackenzie Delta region?
2. Can the Minister give me the status of children in care, placement of children and the number of children who hold apprehension status?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Any further written questions? Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Opening Address. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta.

ITEM 10: REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS**Mr. Krutko's Reply**

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one thing I have noticed in my two terms in this Legislature is that we've seen the bureaucracy of this government continue to grow. The latest numbers we've had is almost 25 percent growth in the government. Yet, Mr. Speaker, people in small communities have seen programs and services decline in our communities.

We've seen frontline agencies such as alcohol and drug positions disappearing from our communities. We've had more closures of our health centres because of pressures on our nurses. Mr. Speaker, the whole area of deficit recovery is upon us again.

Going into the 13th Assembly, as Members, we had to cut over \$100 million with regard to the budget and the deficit we are in. The first place those cuts hit was community capital projects and programs and services. Through the amalgamation of health and social services into one central agency, the delivery mechanisms of health and social services in our communities have been affected. The area that I mentioned earlier about alcohol and drug programs in the Northwest Territories is a failure to the point where we only have one alcohol and drug treatment facility in the whole Northwest Territories to serve the residents of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, we see activities happening around us where this government has spent millions of dollars on strategies, studies, report after report. Yet, from a community perspective, we never see these studies, reports or strategies. We haven't seen an improvement of programs and services in our communities. We haven't really seen a system of government that reflects the needs of the people it serves, especially the people in our smaller communities.

For everything that we get in our small communities, we either have to fight, beg, steal, borrow, do whatever you have to do to get something because that's the only way you are going to get it. The government of the day is not doing what it is intended to. The bureaucracy continues to grow, the government continues to get bigger and fatter, but when it comes to programs and services. That is the biggest challenge we face as communities.

We face challenges in dealing with day-to-day programs and services, such as the question of children who are in care in the Mackenzie Delta region. We have 58 children in the Mackenzie Delta region who are in care. That is the next generation. They are the next leaders. They are the next generation who are going to be leaders in our communities. For me to see children and their families broken up because of economics, because of depression, because of alcohol and drug abuse, when we as a government can't even provide frontline services, where are they supposed to go in our communities? We don't have people delivering alcohol and drug programs. We don't have mental health workers or counselling services. We have a lot of people who are overworked trying to cope with the day-to-day stuff of maintaining our communities.

The problem we see in the NWT and in the small communities is the lack of capacity. Capacity, in the sense of having the people and the resources to ensure that the program services we say we deliver to the communities are realistically funded so that they can run a program knowing the infrastructure and resources are there to take on that responsibility. As a government and as a community, there seems to be two different frames of mind.

We've seen the government grow by some 25 percent since division. Everybody assumed with division, we were going to become a smaller territory with a smaller bureaucracy with better services, but it definitely went the other way. The level of government didn't decline. If anything, it increased by 25 percent. The cost of operating the government has increased, the cost of service has decreased. So if you tell me that division was going to make us better off than we were prior to division, I say what we got from division is more sub-committees, more departments looking at new strategies, energy strategies, non-renewable resource strategies, hydro strategies and the list goes on and on. As a government, was that a stalling tactic? We find ourselves in a position where we have to go back to the community after three years in this

legislature and tell our people that we have expended ourselves into a deficit situation, so we are now going to cut programs and services again to your communities, after we already did that in the 13th Assembly.

I am totally dismayed when I hear about the situation in most communities. It doesn't dawn on the government that we have this number of people living in unhealthy communities because we are not providing basic services.

We talk about doctors, nurses, frontline workers, teachers, the people who make the services grow. It's the service itself that has been affected. We've been fighting to ensure we have enough dollars to pay our teachers, pay the nurses, pay the doctors, but I think on the other hand because we put so much focus on the human resource side, we forgot about the human side and the effect on the programs to the people we are providing the service to. We have definitely not seen a decline in the number of people who require more services, who require medical attention and more income support assistance, health and social services assistance and medical assistance. If we had provided the services at the front end, we wouldn't be paying that amount of money at the back end.

I believe that this government has to do more to ensure that we track the dollars expended by this government right from the top, all the way to the bottom, from the service providers to the service itself. The government can see a lot of where these dollars are expended. We come to this House, we look at the budgets, look at the supplementary appropriations and see the enormous amount of money we are spending on capital infrastructure. We are spending some \$50 million to build a jail here in Yellowknife. We've spent millions of dollars building facilities such as young offenders' facilities, women's facilities and the list goes on. Now we find out we have a facility in Inuvik which we spent almost \$7 million on, and it doesn't even have a client in it. Yet, we have 15 people working there at a cost of \$1 million a year to run it, but we say we don't have money for programs and services.

I have had a hard time trying to explain to the people back home what this government is really here for and who they are here for. People point their fingers at us and say you guys from government. That means me, I presume, being perceived as being government because I sit in this Legislative Assembly working with my colleagues on the other side, the government, the Cabinet and us on this side. They think we make decisions on everything we try to do together and work together, it seems like we are one big happy family, but realistically I am frustrated knowing that everything I say, anything I try to do, either someone on that side of the House doesn't listen to it or someone in the bureaucracy doesn't want to do anything about it.

I think this government has been dictated to by the bureaucracy to a point where the decisions made on that side of the House aren't really made by individuals on that side of the House. It's made by someone sitting in a back room at a typewriter developing policies and procedures saying, I am in charge, this is the policy and you have to follow the policy. Who makes the policies? It's this Legislative Assembly who makes the legislation, implements the guidelines so we can make good regulations and policies, so we implement what we pass in this House.

We develop a policy or legislation and bring it into the House and say this is what the intent was, then someone turns it around and their version of our intention is totally the opposite. This government passes regulations or policies so complicated

and cumbersome for the people in the Northwest Territories because there are so many hoops and loops and scoops you have to go through to receive services. It's so cumbersome to get anything out of this government that people are frustrated to the point where they don't even want to talk to the government. It's true.

For our seniors to get a fuel subsidy or deal with their property tax exemption, every year they must go in and fill out an application, prove to the government that they should get it, and they find out later because a grandchild or nephew or a family member stayed with them for a period of time to keep them company, they don't qualify. That's not fair.

It's been quite sometime since we really took a close look at where we have gone since division. Division was supposed to give us a chance to not only have an opportunity to start over, but also to really take a good look at how we can improve government in the Northwest Territories. Improve it, not just continue at the pace the government worked before, but change the system for the better. I think that's a step we forgot about after division. We kept on rolling full speed ahead. Nothing has changed. We will just keep doing what we are doing. We found ourselves coming in from the 13th Assembly having to deal with a deficit before division, and now after division we find ourselves having to deal with a deficit again.

We are a population of 40,000 people getting some \$900 million and we can't run a government on \$900 million? There is something wrong with this picture. When you figure that out on a per capita distribution compared to other jurisdictions in Canada ... When I got to meet with senators and people in parliament, the MPs, and said we need more money in the Northwest Territories, they took a good look at me and said, what size is your population, 40,000 people? I have 500,000 people in my riding. I represent this many people and my budget is nothing close to what you are getting. We have to realistically look at where that money is really going.

When we have 4,500 employees, and we've seen an increase of 25 percent in the last three-and-a-half years, that tells me where the money is going, but is it being spent in the right place? We've seen a decline in the programs and services with regard to doctors and mental health workers and alcohol group workers. I think it's important to really look at where we've gotten in the last three years and where we are going. Just sitting down the last couple of days with the Minister of Finance and going through the cuts that are taking place, the cuts seem to be again focussed at the service end of programs and services. We see a decline in services such as ferry operation services. We see a decline in services by way of programs and services. There are cuts to programs that are essential to improving the services we already have.

I don't believe as a government we should be cutting essential services such as transportation services or alcohol and drug programs and education programs. Those services are the lifeline that keeps us going in the Northwest Territories. Yet, we see large amounts of money being expended in the area of government studies.

One thing that we seem to have forgotten about is the whole idea of where the money is going. We have some 30-odd communities in the Northwest Territories. Out of that, 27 communities are non-tax-based communities. Those communities have seen a major decline in government program responsibility through the practice of offloading programs to the communities.

In the last number of days in the House, we talked about the Public Service Act. We passed the human rights legislation in this House to improve the rights of people in the Northwest Territories by ensuring that we have similar rights for men and women, but also we have the right to ensure that every person has the right to programs and services, and also to ensure that they receive the fundamental, basic rights as every other Canadians. Yet in our communities we have programs and service delivery agencies employing mental health workers, income support workers or economic development workers under government contract and paying them less than the government when they were doing it themselves. I feel that that is a total injustice, contrary to the fundamental principle that programs and services will be consistent throughout government and that the service that is provided will be adequately funded. We see income support workers receiving some \$30,000 compared to a government person in the bureaucracy receiving some \$50,000 odd, or a mental health worker who has taken the training and is a certified qualified mental health worker, receiving a lump sum of \$50,000 not only for salary but to run the program. Anywhere else it would be \$85,000 in the government. Yet communities are told that's what we're giving you so that's the money you get to run your service.

The pressure on these frontline workers in our communities and the mental health workers, and worst of all is the income support workers, the amount of pressure that is on these people just to provide the basic services and the pressures that are put on them from the people who are requesting that service is enormous.

The health and wellbeing of the people in our communities has to be seriously considered. The people in those small communities don't have the essentials of being able to pick up a phone, make an appointment and walk to the doctor's office that afternoon. You get to see a doctor once a month. You have to put your name on a list to go see a doctor once a month. If you want to see a specialist or go to a hospital, you either have to get flown to Inuvik or get your own ride to Inuvik to get that service. You're lucky to see a dentist once a year when he does his tours in communities. The quality of service that this government provides has declined in the communities. I feel that that is not just.

The capital allocation process again has come to light. We hear from the Minister there is a committee going around talking to communities about what we can do to deal with your capital allocation. The song they were singing a couple of years ago hasn't changed. They're still going into our communities saying we're hear to listen to you on what capital allocations you need, but before you ask, we're going to tell you you have to follow three criteria. The criteria are protection of assets, protection of people, and protection of infrastructure for the government. Who owns the infrastructure? The government. Who has the biggest assets in the communities? The government. They own the schools, they own the health centres. Yet when the community wants a simple thing to improve the lives and conditions of the community and children, a simple thing such as an outdoor skating rink, this government can't find the resources to provide and improve the quality of life in our communities.

We tell the government our water systems are contaminated by parasites, and we need a letter filed by a doctor saying that, to pinpoint the problem, there must be studies done on the residents of that community to ensure that the parasite that he's looking for is actually there. Where's it coming from? It

has to come from somewhere. But again, a letter has been issued, it's gone to the health board, it's gone to the Minister of Health, it's gone to the government, yet no money is made available for a study. Yet the Minister stands up in the House and files a report saying everything is great, all your water problems were taken care of. One of the biggest causes of death in our community is cancer, and everybody is pointing their fingers at the water sources. In order to pinpoint the problem we have to do a study, but this government has no money to do studies to ensure that the lives of the people in our communities are taken care of. Yet when we want to do a study for an energy strategy, we spend some \$2 million setting up a little office for a boys' club and tell them, okay, travel around the Northwest Territories and tell everybody some of these great ideas on energy that you have in the back of your head. We can spend \$2 million to do an energy strategy that isn't worth the paper it's written on, yet we don't have any money to ensure the health and wellbeing of the people of the Northwest Territories by pinpointing the problem of cancer cases in our communities.

I think it's time that this government took a real close look at... What are we doing on this side of the House that realistically gets through to the people on that side of the House? We stand here time after time after time and ask the same questions over and over and over and get the same answers which are so fluff that you can't even figure out did he answer my question or did he give me just a little area of saying we'll look at it, we'll look at it, we'll deal with it later, I have to do a study, we have to go back and get more information, or we have to have a department look at it. This government can find money that's not even in the budget or the main estimates that are brought to this House every year and are voted on through the supplementary process. We have capital items in the supplementary appropriation that have not even seen the light of day in the main estimates. We have capital projects that this government has approved that never even went through the business planning process, that didn't even show up in the main estimates. We're talking millions of dollars.

If you look at this with a microscope and look deep down and figure out who made that decision, it's the people on that side of the House that made the decision in a Cabinet meeting to approve expenditures which have not been previously authorized, yet it comes in by way of a supplementary which we on this side of the House can't do anything about because the money has already been spent. Even if we wanted to pull the budget item out of the supplementary, realistically the approval has already been made by Cabinet to spend the money. I think that's the type of message that should get out there to the public so they can see exactly how public money is being expended and who's expending it.

I find it awfully frustrating that communities have to struggle and have to be accountable for the public funds to run programs and services, yet we still have some communities that continue to run deficit after deficit year after year and get bailed out by this government. Or else they find some fund that just got pulled out of the sky, saying let's reclassify it as extraordinary funding or give it some fancy name and we'll sneak it through by way of a supplementary and we'll give you funding that no one else is going to get. It's only going to one or two communities, but what about the other 30-odd communities out there that are struggling just to maintain the finances they have?

I think as a government we have to implement deficit recovery legislation. With the deficit situation that we're in, we cannot

continue with the attitude we'll spend our way out of a deficit. For me, that's bad business management when dealing with public funds. We have to improve the rules under the Financial Administration Act so that no supplementary expenditures can be made except those that have been previously authorized through the main estimate process in this House, so there's no way of having dollars scrutinized after they come through a supplementary. As a Minister or as a government you can just shrug your shoulders and say they can't do anything to me because I've already spent the money, so excuse me. I think establishment of legislation that deals with deficits and government spending would tighten things up so that this government cannot continue to use supplementary appropriation unfairly, unjustly and for their personal gain for personal use by a Minister in his particular riding because he knows he has the power to do so.

Mr. Speaker, when we came into office we established a whole bunch of vision statements to improve the vision of the Northwest Territories and focus on improving the lives of the people and the services we deliver. As a government we would grow with development, conclude the negotiation of land claims and the implementation of self-government. Yet, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we participate in committees such as AOC or GED or Social Programs, and time and time again we offer advice to the other side of the table, submit reports in this House trying to find ways of improving programs and services in the government, and making the government accountable. But what we've seen is that we probably have more strikes than we have checks in accomplishing things that we started off to do. We came in with great plans, but as we go to election I think we've failed badly in implementing the agenda that we set for ourselves at the start of the 14th Assembly.

One of the most important aspects of the Northwest Territories is the people. We have people in the Northwest Territories living in poverty, yet we have diamond mines. We talk about pipelines, while having a major housing crisis, a major healthcare crisis, and a deficit. Somehow we have to either change the way we do things or find a new system of government. This government has served the people in the Northwest Territories well. But like anything that we work through or work under, we need to also evolve. That change means changing for the better or changing to improve the government as we know it.

We are probably the envy of most jurisdictions in Canada because we have diamond mines. They know we have oil and gas potential. They know we have a renewable resource that's spectacular, more vibrant and larger than most jurisdictions in the country, yet everything we do seems to flow south. The diamonds are being pulled out of the ground as we speak, and flown to Antwerp. In 20 or 30 years, they're gone. They're not coming back.

Through the Norman Wells pipeline some 33,000 barrels of oil flow every day to the south. Using the rough estimate of \$25 a barrel, that's about \$300 million a year flowing to the south. Yet we as a government are struggling to provide basic services to the communities and the people in the Northwest Territories such as proper housing, proper programs and services. For a government to have a deficit despite this much wealth tells me that we have to change the arrangement we have with Ottawa and make them aware that we require it through whatever means. We talk about the resource revenue sharing negotiations. One of the ideas that was raised in the 13th Assembly which caught a lot of people's attention was taxation, taxing those resources that are leaving the Territories and will not make their way back, but at least once they leave

we'll get something out of it. Right now we are not getting anything because the royalties are going directly to the federal government, and corporate taxes are making their way directly to the federal government. I feel as a government we have to quit being the nice guy and demand that our resources and those dollars stay in the Northwest Territories. If that means consideration of new tax regimes or mineral taxes, we should consider it. It's a source of generating revenues. You can't expect to get any more tax revenues out of 40,000 people. I think as a government we have to do more to ensure that that happens.

Mr. Speaker, one thing about this government that disappoints me is the implementation of land claims. We had the Inuvialuit claim which was negotiated back in 1994. We have the Gwich'in land claim agreement which was negotiated in 1992, and the Sahtu agreement which was negotiated in 1995, yet none of the legal authorities that this government is responsible for have been implemented.

The Wildlife Act amendments and the Wildlife Act provisions which will bring those land claims into effect through legislation will not going to see the light of day in this government. We spent a lot of money on public consultations and negotiations, yet we don't even have draft legislation in place yet. The last time any legislation was brought to this House was in 1994, as amendments for the Inuvialuit final agreement to enact their wildlife provisions. Nothing has been done to ensure that this government implements those sections of the legislation that we are responsible for enforcing. We as a government are responsible for wildlife management, municipal lands and also looking at the economic measures, the chapters of the different agreements, and also the participation sections of the Inuvialuit agreement. Those sections are there because they were supposed to improve the lives of the claimant groups to make them more self-sufficient, and also offer them the ability to implement their land claims, manage the lands and resources, the wildlife so that when pipeline developments or mining development comes through either submission of a pipeline application for a mineral lease or a claim to develop a particular area, those bodies and those arrangements that are spelled out in the agreement will have the legislative authority presently in the hands of the government's Ministers. The land claims provide for the passage of regulations so that these boards and bodies and agencies can have a meaningful role in the development that takes place in their jurisdictions through the environmental assessment process, through the regulatory process, and also through the establishment of those bodies so that they have the full effect and authority that comes through legislation.

This government has a lot of responsibilities in the different land claim agreements. It says "the government shall". It doesn't say they may or they might, it says they shall do these things in the land claim agreements. To me, that says they have to do something. But when you go to the government with the different land claim agreements and say okay, look, there's a chapter in here that says the Government of the Northwest Territories shall carry out a particular responsibility, they say it's the federal government's responsibility. Well, the federal government isn't the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Government of the Northwest Territories is. The federal government also has responsibilities in these different agreements.

We've heard a lot in regard to the Gwich'in MOU which was signed between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Gwich'in Tribal Council. We've heard from a lot of groups out there that don't agree with it. Well, excuse me,

welcome to the 20th Century, there's such a thing in place now called land claims. The next thing you're going to see coming on the horizon is self-government agreements, which will give the regional authorities self-government agreements, the authority to govern themselves, run their own programs and services, and deliver programs and services on behalf of the people they represent. I feel that the economic measures chapters of the different agreements, regardless of whether it's the Inuvialuit protection section or the economic measures sections of the Gwich'in and Sahtu agreements, are clear that, in carrying out activities in the settlement region which give rise to employment or economic opportunities, that the government elects to go into negotiations or contracts with the respective native organizations. It's in the land claim agreements. Yet for some reason, people out there assume that their rights are being trampled on because they're not going to be able to negotiate on a contract, or basically feel that they have the rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms under the Canadian Constitution. The land claim agreements comes under the Constitution, but it comes under a different section which is section 35 which recognizes the inherent aboriginal rights by way of legislating land claim agreements and also which will legislate self-government agreements in the future.

One thing that I'd just like to say in regard to negotiated contracts, which I know we've heard a lot about in the papers and the press, I have seen the positive side of negotiated contracts. I've seen a lot of young people who probably wouldn't have had the opportunity to become a journeyman carpenter, or mechanic, or a truck driver or an operator of heavy equipment. These people all started out with possibly this being their first job as a flagman or as a labourer, and made the choice that this is something I want to do. This is something that I feel I can make a living on, so that I can stay at home and feed my children and my family, and basically have the resources and the ability to house myself and not depend on government handouts. I can be an essential part of the community or an essential part of the Canadian or the Northwest Territories economy by getting certification through training programs, or job training, or go out of their way to go to southern Canada or elsewhere to get their journeyman tickets and be able to prove that they do have inter-provincial status by certification of licences, and also have the licences in place so that when development happens and when activities happen in our region and around our communities, they're able to take advantage of it. For me, that is the positive side of negotiated contracts.

Negotiated contracts have ensured that people of the Mackenzie Delta and the people in my riding can take home a paycheque to feed their families, can have the resources to maintain a home, and have the capability to take on other job opportunities, regardless of whether it's in their region or outside their region, because they are certified, qualified, and they have the ability to do the job, not because of who they are or where they're from.

Mr. Speaker, one area that I'd like to close on is the area in regard to the cultural and wellbeing of the people in our communities, and ensuring that the people in our communities have a say on the developments that are happening around us. One thing that I'm afraid of is that, with all these major developments that are going to happen and that are happening, that we don't lose the uniqueness of the Northwest Territories by way of our cultures, our identities and our communities. Our communities have histories that go back over 100 years, and even longer. Our communities have a lot of unique aspects to each one of them, regardless of whether it

was because of the whaling industry, the fur trade, the pioneers, and also the developments that have come with it. But I think it's important that we preserve not only the community identity, but the identity of the people who live in those communities. We have a lot of people in our communities that have provided knowledge and experience on how things have changed in the North for the last 50 or 80 years, which is unique. Those people have a lot to offer to the rest of our Northerners who are newcomers to the North, with their understanding of how the Northwest Territories has evolved over time after the first contact with the Europeans and how they were able to help them survive in the Arctic environment by providing them with clothing and the survival skills to get them through the Northwest Territories and northern Canada.

We should sit back and realize the importance of not only our culture and our languages, but the uniqueness of the clothing and the different cultures and understand the uniqueness of our music and the entertainment and talent we have in the Northwest Territories. We share that with the rest of Canada and the world through the different drum dances, through the fiddle music, as well as the long history of how people were able to survive without government in the Northwest Territories and how it's affected their lives after the government came to be.

An area that concerns me is the proposed pipeline in the Mackenzie Valley and the development of our non-renewable resources and the impacts that will have on our renewable resources and the people who depend on them for their day-to-day food, the caribou, moose, ducks, muskrat, beaver, you name it. For them, that's their deep freeze. That's what sustains them in the small communities and as people in the Northwest Territories.

We have to seriously look at these developments in the context of the social and economic and environmental liabilities of these projects and ensure as a government that we provide the tools to the people in our communities to have meaningful involvement in these activities, so that we can have a say in where our burial sites are, where our culturally-protected areas are, where our harvesting areas are, and where our fishing, spawning and calving grounds are located. We must ensure that we protect our renewable resources while exploiting our non-renewable resources in the Northwest Territories.

So far we've heard a lot about discussions with the pipeline groups and industry, yet we hear very little discussion on what the communities think of this development. In particular, there is the little community of Tsiigehtchic who are very concerned about whether the pipeline is going to happen near Travaillant Lake. Travaillant Lake has sustained the Gwich'in people for thousands of years. That area, through the claims negotiations process, has been protected through surface and subsurface land allocation. The community has made it clear to industry it should take a different route and do more studies to see the migration patterns of the fish in that area and look at the sensitive ecosystems we have in northern Canada. What effect will this have on our permafrost? What effect will it have on our migrating caribou species? What effect will it have on the migration of our fish species? As a government, we must not put all our energy and emphasis on the non-renewable resources. There should be more emphasis on the renewable resources segment of our Northwest Territories economy and development of that relationship with the people of the Northwest Territories to ensure that we have everyone on board and that everyone has a meaningful part in the dialogue.

We don't have lawyers in our communities. We don't have researchers at the tip of our fingers. Yet we have knowledge and history in the people of our communities that can be useful in the dialogue with any major pipeline developments or mining developments about the socio-economic impacts of the people of the Northwest Territories.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for your patience. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Krutko. Item 10, replies to the Opening Address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 68-14(6): June 11, 2003, Letter

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a letter dated June 11th signed by six family doctors addressed to Mr. Woods, but cc'd to territorial MLAs.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Tabled Document 69-14(6): CBC News Release "Don't Come North NWT Colleagues Tell Docs" And E-mail

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a press release that was just released today from CBC North. Also I would like to table an e-mail that I received from a resident of Yellowknife.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Tabled Document 70-14(6): Public Accounts Of The GNWT, Interim Report – Year Ended March 31, 2003

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Interim Report of the Public Accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabled Document 71-14(6): June 11, 2003, Letter

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the documents I referred to in this House and committed to table at the appropriate time.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for the Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

Tabled Document 72-14(6): Status Of Women Council Of NWT Annual Report 2001-2002

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories Annual Report 2001-2002. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Kakfwi.

Tabled Document 73-14(6): Support Manufacturing

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Minister Antoine, I wish to table the following document entitled Supporting Manufacturing and Value Added Industries in the Northwest Territories: A Report by the Northwest Territories Business Advisory Panel, December, 2002. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 18: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 18 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 18: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 18 has had second reading and, accordingly, the bill stands referred to Committee of the Whole for today. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 13, Bill 14, Bill 18 and, by the authority given to the Speaker by Motion 4-14(6), Committee of the Whole is authorized to sit beyond the time of adjournment until the committee is prepared to report, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I call the committee to order. We have Bill 13, Bill 14 and Bill 18. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to propose that we continue consideration of Bill 14 first, followed by Bill 13 and then Bill 18.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, I will, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that he bring in his witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Bill 13: An Act To Amend The Public Service Act

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses in? I would like to ask if the Minister would like to continue, as your witness has not arrived? We were under general comments. Would you like to continue or wait for your witnesses?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am okay to continue if they are on their way.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Okay. We will continue. General comments on Bill 14. Ms. Lee.

General Comments

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, while the Minister is waiting for his witnesses, I am wondering if I could have permission of the House to go upstairs and get my files because I didn't know we weren't going to take a break and I have been here all afternoon, but I do want to make a comment on general comments, but I don't have my notes with me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): What is the wish of the committee? Do you want to continue, take a short break or wait for the witnesses? General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, I have to go by memory because I was raising some questions yesterday. I had a question about the concerns that the Union of Northern Workers had about the provisions in this act that they wanted to see addressed but they couldn't. Then I had a question about the implication of section 66, that we were wanting remain exempt because of the fact that we needed to have that exemption under the Human Rights Act. I do believe, Mr. Chairman, that there were a number of other questions that were raised, not only in the public hearing process, but also in the Accountability and Oversight committee. I believe one of the issues that was raised was about the fact that the government is proposing that there be a separate office created for the Public Service Act, rather than using the office that the government is proposing to

create under the Human Rights Act that has already been passed. We are aware that implementation plans are being worked on. So I would like to ask the Minister what was the government's reasoning in going with the option of creating a separate office? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the skills, training, and expertise of an equal pay commissioner are very specialized and probably quite different than the set of skills you would have with a human rights commissioner or members of the human rights board. These are not two functions that would easily be combined into one in our view. It's two different functions that we are dealing with here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I have the Minister indicate exactly what the different functions are, and does he have any information he could provide to the House as to what kind of a review was done and what are the findings of the report that made the justification for the government to go this route? I would like to know the details of the qualifications of these two offices that the government has found and on what basis the decision was made to do so.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as we have discussed in committee, the skills and expertise of an equal pay commissioner are very specialized in terms of the equal pay provisions, whether it's for equal pay for work of equal value or whether it's for equal pay for similar or the same work. We don't know that a human rights commissioner would have the same set of skills, but we do know for the equal pay commissioner, it is very specialized and a very complex field, as you will have noticed from the discussions we've had yesterday, we, as in committee, and that you have heard, I am sure, through the public hearing process. So there is no way that upfront, without knowing what the human rights commission skills would be, that we could roll them both together. These are two different functions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, I believe everyone is aware that the information that we are provided with in committee is for the benefit and discussion and knowledge of the committee discussions and committee Members and it is not available to the public. Those documents that we were given are not necessarily before this House. I would like to have the Minister provide me and this House with more detailed information that indicates or shows us the complexity and specialization of the both the offices of the human rights commissioner versus the Public Service Act commissioner, because I am assuming that the government has done this work and that they have some information to base their decision to go with the option of creating a separate office. So I believe that in the interest of the public who is hearing this for the first time, that I have the right and obligation to ask that question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley, before you answer that question could you introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Mark Aitken, director of the legislation division in the Department of

Justice. As well to my right is Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board Secretariat, and Shaleen Woodward, manager of equal pay for the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman, I will ask Ms. Woodward to provide more detail on the differences between the human rights commission directors and commissioner and the equal pay commissioner. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Just a reminder to the Minister to use the full name, not the first name when you... Ms. Woodward.

MS. WOODWARD: Thank you. There are three considerations that we looked at as part of the analysis to determine whether or not the functions could be done by the same person. The first one was that due to the very technical requirements of equal pay for work of equal value, it does require knowledge and expertise in statistics, job evaluation, compensation theory. The three of those are very specialized areas and as a result the technical requirements for the jobs are quite different. The second is that the specialized skills that you often find in equal pay for equal value are different from some of the skills you will find in the more general human rights field. Because of those differences again it was felt that there would be too many challenges in having them within the same person with the equal pay commissioner being able to remain current in the field, especially given how quickly the field of equal pay for work of equal value is changing. The third focuses on their need to remain current and remain dynamic in the equal pay for work of equal value environment. That means working on a regular basis on equal pay for work of equal value complaints and issues and that would be something that an individual who was working for the Human Rights Commission on a full-time basis would not be able to do. For those three reasons we felt it was more appropriate that the equal pay commissioner be a stand-alone position. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Further questions. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the answers as to the different qualities of work or expertise, but I am still not hearing anything that would justify the creation of a completely different office. I mean, they are in a similar field. I mean, if we could have Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development doing renewable resources and wildlife and environment and everything else that they do, I cannot imagine that it would be that difficult for these experts. While their work might be separate and unique, you know, I think there are more similarities between these two offices than many that we could find in government offices. Another thing I guess I have not heard is the importance of not duplicating an administrative structure. So you could have the human rights commissioner and the equal pay commissioner and maybe, I do not know, others, if you have offices like this you could be sharing administrative services and structures that could be a time and money saving measure, but not interfere with and in any kind of way detract from these two different experts with different sets of skills and qualifications to do their work.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for the public service.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, let me clarify first of all that the equal pay commissioner is not necessarily a full-time person who occupies a government office all the time and so on. The intention is that someone with the expertise needed will be hired on a retainer and will be used as required and will

be paid accordingly. They will also be provided with office space and whatever support is necessary when they need to deal with equal pay issues. The other point, Mr. Chairman, is that because equal pay issues have to be dealt with as expeditiously as possible, we need someone who is able to drop whatever it is they are doing and focus their full attention on the equal pay issue in front of them. There is no assurance that anyone in the Human Rights Commission would be able to have that kind of flexibility. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have further questions in the same area because I am sure there are lots of offices in government where, as important as these two commissioners' offices might be, where part-timers could share offices with each other. I guess it is not just about the physical settings of the office by layperson. I think by the analysis that the Accountability and Oversight committee Members were looking at and it was pointed out in the committee's report in response to this legislation that something like that should have been given more consideration. I believe I asked this question and that is whether or not the government and the Minister had conducted any kind of cost-benefit analysis, because from all the answers I have been given I do not see that different offices are required on the basis of their work. Even if that is the case then I would still like to know from the Minister whether or not he and his department's officials had given serious consideration to the concerns raised by the Accountability and Oversight committee Members about this and that the Minister should be looking at creating this office together. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, we did and we wrote back to the committee chair on May 6th. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the interest of those who are listening to our debate, but have not had a chance to review that letter, could the Minister for the record state what his response was in that letter? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, Ms. Woodward has already explained the grounds on which we have decided that this has to be a separate position from the Human Rights Commission, so I would just be repeating myself. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: So does that mean that the government's decision is based mostly, if not solely, on the basis of the work, that is the union characteristics and professional requirements of the work because that is all I heard from what the witness gave us earlier and it was not based on any financial analysis of the cost implications. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I do not like repeating myself too much, but we are doing it as cost-effectively as possible by hiring someone on a retainer who will be paid for the days they put in this position. We will provide an office space and the support that is necessary for them as they carry out the job. We do not know whether it will be one day this

month and six days next month and then nothing for two months. That is all pretty hard to predict at this point. In terms of the other reasons, of course, there is the technical nature of equal pay, as Ms. Woodward has said, the specialized skills that are not usually found in the general human rights staffing and commissioners, and then of course the changing and dynamic environment that this person has to work in and keep up with the changing information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Just to notify the Members, if we can have some order in the House and for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to quit throwing his pencil around as he might injure his colleague next to Minister Allen. So if we could have some order. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: I believe the Minister had his hand up to give more information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley, you have something to add?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I was just going to add that we recognize, of course, that it is going to be the Speaker's decision of exactly how this will be structured, but this is clearly our proposal of hiring someone on a retainer and using them as necessary, as cost-effectively as possible. Thank you.

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Clause by clause. Clause 1. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before clause 1 there is a principle provision here and may I ask the Minister, for the information of the general public that is listening to this and for the record, to read what it says and why it is there? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Minister Handley. Clarification. The rule of the House is that the preamble is dealt with after we have gone through clause by clause. So that is the point in time when the question can be asked to elaborate on the preamble. Clause 1. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that ruling. May I then ask the Minister to read for the record clause 1 and say, I guess it is quite self-explanatory, but in the interest of the public who is listening to the debate of this House may I have him read clause 1 into record? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): That is page 1, clause 1. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: The Public Service Act as amended by this act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Understanding that Members have had quite a bit of time reviewing this and other legislation right from the legislative proposal stage to the committee reviewing it, but I do believe that we pass a lot of

laws here and often it is not clearly stated as to what it is that we are passing. So I will be asking these questions on every clause. So with that, I would like the Minister to read section 2 and explain what that section is purporting to amend in the Public Service Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley, could you elaborate on clause 2?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Subsection 1(1) is amended by:

(a) striking off the period at the end of the definition "Staffing Appeals Committee" and by substituting a semi-colon; and

(b) adding the following definitions in alphabetical order:

"employees' association" means an association of public service employees incorporated by an act empowering it to bargain collectively;

"teacher" means a teacher as defined in the Education Act who is an employee.

These definitions currently exist in section 41(1) of the Public Service Act, but apply only to that part of the statute that deals with the collective agreements. Moving them to the general definition section allows them to apply to the whole statute, including the proposed equal pay sections. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that information. So am I to understand that...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me for that, Ms. Lee. You have the floor.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that answer and the Minister indicated that currently this section is in section 41 something of the Public Service Act and he is moving this into section 1 of it. So subsection 1 that we are talking about here is the Public Service Act as it stands now. Is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So we are adding a new definition, well, we are adding a new category there of "employees' association". Is that something completely new in this clause or is this something that was in another section of the act that we are simply bringing into the general section of definitions under section 1? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for... Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These are not new definitions. They are definitions that currently exist in the existing Public Service Act. The reason for this amendment is so these definitions will apply to the act in its entirety instead of just to one section, which is the way it is currently structured in the act. That is the reason for this change.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then why is it we are only moving these definitions and not other ones that might be there and what other definitions are there that he is moving these definitions from?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, these are the only two that are used in the new provisions, so they are the only ones that we use here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. Thank you for the answer. I now realize that I am learning a lot more than I was aware of. So does that mean then, that equal pay for work of equal value applies to employees and teachers only? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Woodward.

MS. WOODWARD: No, that is not the case. It is that the provisions of the equal pay for work of equal value apply not only to teachers, but also to other members of the public service. It was simply a matter that the teachers definition occurred later in the Public Service Act and in order to ensure that it applied to all of the equal pay provisions it needed to be moved to the front of the Public Service Act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Then may I be advised as to what categories of employees will be included other than the two mentioned here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, all public servants. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, my comments are not specifically related to clause 2, but when I go through the procedure that we are engaged in right now, where Ms. Lee has signaled that she is going to demand that the Minister read through and explain each and every clause, that is a very unusual process for Committee of the Whole to engage in. I do not recall us ever having done this before. Ms. Lee was quite right in remarks that she made a few minutes ago that committee -- and this was the Accountability and Oversight committee -- took a lot of time in considering this and in...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me. We are going clause by clause. Every Member has the right to speak to that clause and that is how we are going clause by clause. So could you speak to clause 2? We have a question or general comment under clause 2. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: No, Mr. Chairman, I do not have a question related to clause 2. It is related to the process that we are engaged in right now and I do not know if I have a Point of Order, but I want to indicate to committee my displeasure...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me. Mr. Braden, are you making a Point of Order?

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, I am not making a Point of Order.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2. General comments. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Sorry. I thought we were on...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a process that we do, but we are passing legislation that would affect the people of the Northwest Territories. I guess especially the public servants. I think the people need to know what it is that we are passing and what the sections are going to say. So, Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister to read section 3 and it is quite a lengthy section, so he could go subsection by subsection and explain what the implication of this is. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, following the discussions with the committee, I have a number of amendments to propose for clause 3 and it might be more useful to go through the amendments first rather than reading the clause as it is and then going back and amending it after. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any commonsensical, rational-thinking person would show that you have to have a clear wording of the proposed clause first and then you can talk about how you want to amend it. Because we have a bill in front of us and it has a huge, long section, section 3, I would like to have the Minister reading section 3 that he is asking us to consider and vote on.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me, Ms. Lee, could you be more precise on what section of clause 3 are you aiming at? You are talking in general terms. Could you direct your question to the section of the clause that you want to have the general comment on? Could you be more specific on the section you want to talk about?

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be very pleased to. I am just saying that I made a request to the Minister to read section 3 because I would like to know what it is that he is asking me to consider and vote on in this House on behalf of my constituents, and he suggested that maybe we should deal with the amendments first, but I am saying it would be in more proper order to read in the section that he is asking us to consider before the amendments are introduced and debated.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the Minister agree to or would like to bring your amendments now to clause 3? Could you read clause 3 as it sits for Ms. Lee?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, clause 3 reads as follows:

The following is added after section 39:

40. In this section and in sections 40.1 to 40.7:

"complaint" means a complaint of discrimination in contravention of section 40.1;

"party" means an employee who files a complaint under subsection 40.4(1), the employer of the employee who filed the complaint, and any employees' association that is a party to a collective agreement that provides for the pay that is the subject of the complaint;

"pay" means for any form of payment made by an employer for work performed by an employee and includes salary, commission, vacation pay, severance pay, pay in lieu of notice of termination, bonuses, the value of any board, rent or housing provided, contributions to a disability plan or pension plan and any other advantage received directly or indirectly by the employee.

40.1 (1) Where employees employed in the same establishment perform work of equal value for an employer, no employer shall, on the basis of sex, discriminate against such employee by paying the employee at a rate of pay less than the rate paid to other such employees.

(2) For greater certainty, it is not a contravention of subsection (1) if a difference in rate of pay is attributable to a system or factor that is not based on sex, such as

- (a) a seniority system;
- (b) a merit system;
- (c) a system that measures earnings by quantity or quality of production or performance;
- (d) a compensation or hiring system that recognizes the existence of a labour shortage in respect of that field of work;
- (e) a compensation or hiring system that recognizes regional differences in cost of living;
- (f) a downgrading, reclassification or demotion process or system;
- (g) the existence of a temporary rehabilitation or training program.

(3) No employer shall reduce the rate of pay of an employee in order to comply with subsection (1).

(4) For the purposes of this section, each of the following groups of employees is a separate establishment:

- (a) employees of the public service other than employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation or teachers;
- (b) employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation;
- (c) teachers.

(5) For the purposes of this section, the work that one employee performs and the work that another employee performs is work of equal value if, in respect of the work of each employee, the composite skill, effort and responsibility required in performance of the work and the conditions under which the work is performed is equal.

40.2 (1) The Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, shall appoint an equal pay commissioner to exercise the powers and perform the duties set out in this act.

(2) A person is eligible to be appointed as equal pay commissioner if he or she

- (a) as expertise in the study and application of the right to equal pay for work of equal value; and
- (b) is not a member of the public service.

(3) Subject to subsections (5) to (7), the equal pay commissioner holds office during good behaviour for a term of four years.

(4) A person holding office as equal pay commissioner continues to hold office after the expiry of his or her term of office until he or she is reappointed, a successor is appointed or a period of six months has expired, whichever first occurs.

(5) The equal pay commissioner shall resign at any time by notifying the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in writing or, if the Speaker is absent or unable to act or the office of the Speaker is vacant, by so notifying the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

(6) The Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, may, for a cause or incapacity, suspend or remove from office the equal pay commissioner.

(7) If the Legislative Assembly is not sitting, the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Board of Management or the Legislative Assembly, may suspend the equal pay commissioner for cause or incapacity.

(8) The Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Board of Management or the Legislative Assembly, may appoint an eligible person, as described in subsection (2), as acting equal pay commissioner when

- (a) the equal pay commissioner is temporarily unable to act because of illness or for another reason,
- (b) the office of equal pay commissioner becomes vacant when the Legislative Assembly is not sitting,
- (c) the equal pay commissioner is suspended when the Legislative Assembly is not sitting; or

(d) the equal pay commissioner is removed or the office of the equal pay commissioner becomes vacant when the Legislative Assembly is sitting, but no recommendation is made by the Legislative Assembly under subsection (1) before the end of the sitting.

(9) An acting equal pay commissioner holds office until

(a) the equal pay commissioner returns to office after a temporary absence,

(b) the suspension of the equal pay commissioner ends, or

(c) a person is appointed under subsection (1).

(10) If, for any reason the equal pay commissioner determines that he or she should not act in respect to any particular matter under this act, the Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Board of Management of the Legislative Assembly may appoint an eligible person as described in subsection (2) as a special equal pay commissioner to act in the place of the equal pay commissioner in respect of that matter.

(11) A special equal pay commissioner holds office until the conclusion of the matter in respect of which he or she has been appointed.

40.21. The equal pay commissioner, and where applicable an acting equal pay commissioner, or a special equal pay commissioner, shall

(a) be paid

(i) the prescribed honorarium

(ii) at the prescribed hourly rate in respect to the performance of functions described in subsections 40.2(1); and

(b) be reimbursed for the reasonable travel and other expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of functions described in subsection 40.22(1).

40.22 (1) The equal pay commissioner shall

(a) receive complaints, conduct investigations, assist parties to resolve complaints and prepare investigation reports in accordance with section 40.4;

(b) promote awareness and understanding of the right to equal pay for work of equal value.

(2) The equal pay commissioner may engage the services of experts or other persons necessary to assist in carrying out the functions of the equal pay commissioner.

40.23 (1) The equal pay commissioner shall, by July 1, of each year, prepare and submit to the Speaker a report of the activities of the equal pay commissioner and the discharge of his or her duties under this act during the preceding year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me, Mr. Handley. Your 10 minutes is up. I would like to ask if there are any general comments from any other Members dealing with clause 3? Any other Members have specific questions on clause 3? Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee, to the item in clause 3.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize that the Minister ran out of time although he was doing a very good job reading it. I want to know what the official record will be because while he has been doing a good job, he has misread some of the words. We will have the official rule of the... We don't want to change the law just because he's not reading it right.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Point of order. Mr. Dent.

Point Of Order

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the rules of the House state that a Member has 10 minutes on an item before the House. I believe that on clause 3, Ms. Lee has had her 10 minutes now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent, to your Point of Order, the rules read that a Member has 10 minutes to ask a question on any particular clause. Once the 10 minutes is up, I have to offer the other Members who may want to ask a question. At that point, if no one else wants to ask a question, the Member does have the prerogative to ask another question as long as the item is with regard to the item that's being discussed, which is clause 3. So it's the chair's discretion to allow a Member to have more than 10 minutes. So you do not have a Point of Order.

Clause 3, Ms. Lee, could you be more specific to the clause itself, so you can point out where you would like to some clarification? Clause 3.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a very long clause, so long the Minister couldn't read it into the record. On the one that he read, Mr. Chairman, I do have a specific question. Subsection 40.22(1) where it speaks about the functions of the equal pay commissioner, one of the things that this equal pay commissioner will be allowed to do and, in fact, has to do because it says "the equal pay commissioner shall..." and subsection (b) says promote awareness and understanding of the right to equal pay for work of equal value. That is of interest to me because as you are well aware, there have been some discussions about different statutory officers. There are questions raised sometimes about the limit of this kind of duty and how we articulate the intention of the Assembly when we pass legislation like that because we may mean what we think we mean, but when it gets translated into real life, the holders of these various offices have a different understanding of what that is. I would like to ask the Minister for information about what the knowledge is across the country about the kind of work in terms of promoting awareness and understanding by the comparable equal pay commissioners in other jurisdictions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Ms. Woodward to respond to this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Woodward.

MS. WOODWARD: The awareness promotion varies across the country. There are organizations like the Canadian Human Rights Commission who are quite aggressive in attempting to promote awareness. They have a variety of publications. They work actively with unions as well as employers in an attempt to have them better understand the legislation, their rights and responsibilities. Similarly in Ontario, the Ontario pay equity legislation, there is an Ontario Pay Equity Commission that, again, plays a fairly broad role in not only creating publications that explain the nature of the right, how exactly the right is to be implemented and what the steps are, but also to be actively working with employers, as well as employees' associations and individual employees to assist them in ensuring that they have appropriate compensation systems in place. In other jurisdictions certainly there is not that same kind of structure, the same kind of promotion and awareness that there is a wide variety of options that are available and there are models in other jurisdictions that could be followed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on section 41(2) where it talks that it is not a contravention of this section or section 1 based on equality if the discrimination is not based on sex, but on other things like seniority, merit, a system that measures earning. Could I ask the Minister as to what the intent and purpose of this section is? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I will ask Ms. Woodward again to respond.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Woodward.

MS. WOODWARD: Thank you. Most frameworks for equal pay for work of equal value and pay equity also want to ensure that a variety of systems that exist between employers and employees are put into place for good reason and are not considered to be discriminatory. This list is similar to what you would find within the Canadian Human Rights Act in the equal wages guidelines. The purpose is that most employers have a seniority system where, as employees become more experienced in the work that they do, they progress from one step to another. It may be in an organization that at a particular period of time you may have more men in an organization that are, for example, at step five and more women at step three and the goal is to ensure that in a seniority system such as that, where the progression and the idea of having a seniority system where over time you get more experience and are paid more, the system is available to everybody and it's not discriminatory in the way that it works, that it will not be considered discriminatory that in the course of that seniority system, men and women receive different compensation.

Similarly, if you look at something like compensation based on regional differences and cost of living, it's also common for employers to look at issues like cost of living and provide additional compensation, for example, in some of our remote communities where the cost of living is higher. Again, if it happens that there are more men living in a higher cost community and more women living in a lower cost community, that the differences between their wages, because they reflect differences, a cost of living would not be discriminatory. These are common in terms of the defences or different reasons for differences between compensation for men and women and it is also important to understand that when a complaint is made,

these factors may still be reviewed but these are the most common reasons that you wouldn't find a system to be discriminatory. Thank you.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree that that is an important exemption to this equality. Mr. Chairman, I guess I am wondering about some of the characteristics in trades that are excluded here that might warrant a similar situation for equality. For example, discrimination of pay based on disability or something like that. I can see seniority and merit and education. We are allowed to discriminate on that basis because some people do have more education than others and some people may bring more qualifications in other areas. But what if a trade like disability... I can't think of some other things that might be something that a person has that is immutable, but one that should be protected from the provision for equal pay of work for equal value. So may I ask the Minister about what is the understanding in the equal pay field about some other immutable grounds that are not laid out here? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Woodward.

MS. WOODWARD: There is a proposed amendment to this particular section that will change the language slightly to limit the exemptions that are available to the list that is here. The current language references "such as" and provides these as examples only.

The proposed amendment is to change that so that these are the only defences available in the case of a human rights and equal pay for work of equal value complaint.

It's also important to understand that the equal pay for work of equal value provisions are aimed at discrimination based on sex and right now, the protection does not go any further than that. It is important to remember that equal pay for work of equal value is based on systemic discrimination between groups and the importance of having a large enough group in order to be able to identify systemic discrimination. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that is an important point to understand because I know there were concerns raised by other Members about the fact that the protection provided here under this section was more limited than Members would like to have seen. My time is up, but I do have another question on 40.1(4).

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope this is a short question. May I ask the Minister why we are establishing two separate groups of employees of the public service? There are public service employees, Power Corporation employees, and what's the best justification for that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Woodward.

MS. WOODWARD: Within the human rights framework, it's traditional to look at the concept of establishment. You often look at bargaining units. You look at different groups of employees who have different terms and conditions of employment. It is not a requirement that every bargaining unit and every establishment have to have the same terms and conditions of employment. It's important to realize that different establishments may exist. In other legislation that's applied to a larger group of employers, the definition is usually generic. In

our case, because it is applied to a single employer only, we are able to identify specifically what the three establishments are. These are groups of individuals who have very different terms and conditions of employment, different collective agreements and, as a result, are appropriately different establishments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for that answer. There was a section later on talking about the legislative power to remove the equal pay commissioner. I believe it said something for cause or incapacity. Mr. Chairman, what is the expert's knowledge of that? The definition of cause or incapacity, to suspend or remove the commissioner.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Aitken.

MR. AITKEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reference to removal for cause and incapacity is a fairly standard provision. You will see it in respect of the other commissioners that would be appointed by the Legislative Assembly. Removed for cause means there has to be some misconduct on the part of the person that would lead a court to determine that there has been cause for the Legislative Assembly to have removed that person from office. Incapacity would be some kind of impairment that prevents the equal pay commissioner from carrying out his or her functions in an effective manner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Aitken mentioned that the court would find the substance for cause or incapacity. Am I to understand that it is the court that would remove this office or would it be the legislature? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Aitken.

MR. AITKEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I probably didn't give a very good explanation of that point. What I meant to say was that, in assessing whether or not a body has cause to dismiss an equal pay commissioner, they would have to consider whether or not the misconduct of the equal pay commissioner was such that it would give a court cause to say that there was, in fact, justification for removing that officer from the position. So they would have to consider the nature of the misconduct and that it was of such a nature as to warrant the removal of the officer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

Committee Motion 118-14(6) To Amend Clause 3 Subsection 40.1(1) Of Bill 14, Carried

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have several amendments to clause 3. Mr. Chairman, I move that clause 3 of Bill 14 be amended by deleting the proposed subsection 40.1(1) and by substituting the following:

40.1(1) No employer shall establish or maintain differences in the rate of pay between male and female

employees who perform work of equal value in the same establishment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Could you wait until we circulate the amendment? The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Question is being called. However, I don't recognize a quorum so I will ring the bell.

---Ringing of Bells

We have a quorum. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I ask the Minister to read in, for the record, this motion and advise this House what it is this motion is trying to achieve? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I already read it into the record, but if you wish, I will do it again. I move that clause 3 of Bill 14 be amended by deleting the proposed subsection 40.1(1)...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me. Everyone has received a copy of the motion as amended. Everyone has access to reading it. I don't think it's appropriate that the Minister has to read it out. We have copies. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe I had a second part of the question. Could the Minister advise us why this motion... What is he trying to change in Bill 14, clause 3, subsection 40.1?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the change in wording in this section makes it clear that the comparison is between groups, male and female employees, or in other words patterns of pay discrimination which is what systemic discrimination is about.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, I am reading the original wording of 40.1(1) and it's quite different from this new motion being proposed. So I would like the Minister to explain... Obviously it just came about since he introduced the bill into the House. What is the substantive difference here between the two clauses?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Ms. Woodward to provide further clarification. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 3, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have another motion. I move that clause 3 of Bill 14 be amended by deleting proposed subsection 40.1(5) and by substituting the following:

(5) In assessing the value of work...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley, I believe you have a different number on your motion. You are dealing with clause 40(1). Mr. Handley.

Committee Motion 119-114(6) To Amend Clause 3 Subsection 40.1(2) Of Bill 14, Carried

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that proposed subsection 40.1(2) in clause 3 of Bill 14 be deleted and the following substituted:

(2) It is not a contravention of subsection (1) if a difference in rate of pay is attributable to

- (a) a seniority system,
- (b) a merit system,
- (c) a system that measures earnings by quantity or quality of production or performance,
- (d) a compensation or hiring system that recognizes the existence of a labour shortage in respect of that field of work,
- (e) a compensation or hiring system that recognizes regional differences in the cost of living,
- (f) a downgrading, reclassification or demotion process or system,
- (g) the existence of a temporary rehabilitation or training program,

provided that these systems, processes or programs do not discriminate on the basis of sex.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I followed the Minister's motion very closely here and all I see is we swapped around the first paragraph with the last paragraph. I just want to know why are we putting this justification or exception to this rule at the bottom of it? Why do we need to change this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley, to the motion. There is a motion on the floor. To the motion. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the reason for the change is to ensure that the English and French versions are exactly the same and, second, "such as" was removed because these are the only criteria that can be used. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Question is being called. All those in favour? Excuse me, we don't have a quorum, so we'll ring the bells.

---Ringing of Bells

We have a motion on the floor. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

Committee Motion 120-14(6) To Amend Clause 3 Subsection 40.1(5) Of Bill 14, Carried

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have a further amendment. I move that clause 3 of Bill 14 be amended by deleting proposed subsection 40.1(5) and by substituting the following:

(5) in assessing the value of work performed by employees in the same establishment, the criterion to be applied is the composite of the skill, effort and responsibility required in the performance of work and the conditions under which the work is performed.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for your patience here. Once again, these two clauses are very close, yet the amendment is, I think, a little bit limiting. Rather than saying for the purpose of the section, but rather saying it's how the value of work performed by employees in the same establishment will be assessed. So may I get the Minister to advise as to why this amendment makes it better legislation than the one that he proposed earlier? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley, to the motion.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the change in wording makes it clearer that the four factors are to be considered together, as opposed to separately. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: The one thing that I noticed that's different in the amendment, as opposed to the one that he proposed earlier, is that at the end of the amendment -- I'm sorry, it's hard to talk about this without any incentive -- but the original one says "conditions under which the work performed is equal", but I don't see that here. In the one it says "which the work is performed." So what is the substantive change for removing that wording "work performed is equal"? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the change in the wording that way is to make it clear that the four factors have to be dealt with together. The other wording tended to separate out working conditions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): There is a motion on the floor. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 3, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

Committee Motion 121-14(6): To Amend Clause 3 Subsection 40.3(1) Of Bill 14, Carried

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, another motion. I move that proposed subsection 40.3(1) in clause 3 of Bill 14 be amended by:

- (a) adding "and" at the end of paragraph (b);
- (b) striking out "; and" at the end of paragraph (c) and by substituting a period; and
- (c) deleting paragraph (d).

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously this is an editorial or technical amendment. May I get the confirmation from the Minister as to whether or not there is any substantive change that would result as a result of this motion?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is simply housekeeping, related to an earlier AOC-approved motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 3, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

Committee Motion 122-14(6): To Amend Clause 3 Subsection 40.6(1)(d) Of Bill 14, Carried

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the last amendment to clause 3. I move that clause 3 of Bill 14 be amended by striking out "one year" in proposed paragraph 40.6(1)(d) and by substituting "three years".

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just trying to catch up with the meaning of these amendments here. Section 40.6(1) is one of the long ones, and may I ask the Minister what is this one to three years that we're changing and why these changes have come about? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, because we extended the period for filing a complaint to two years, we have changed this clause from one year to three years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. So what does this clause do? The way I read it, it's about the time limit for paying the arbitrator's award. So does that mean that the arbitrator has three years to pay the award? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this allows retroactivity to go back for three years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 3, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 4. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I read clause 4, and again it appears as though it's a technical, housekeeping cleaning up of the amendment. I guess this is a section that's getting rid of the two definitions that we added earlier. So may I just get confirmation from the Minister as to whether or not there are any other substantive changes other than following up on what we passed earlier? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the reason for the changes, as Ms. Lee outlined, is correct. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 4. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 5. Mr. Handley.

Committee Motion 123-14(6): To Amend Clause 5 Of Bill 13, Carried

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment to this clause. Mr. Chairman, I move that Bill 14 be amended by deleting clause 5 and by substituting the following:

5. the following is added after 49:

49.1 (1) The Commissioner in Executive Council may, after consulting with the equal pay commissioner, make regulations for the purposes of implementing sections 40, 40.1 and 40.3 to 40.(8).

(2) The Commissioner, on the recommendation of the Speaker, may make regulations for the purposes of implementing sections 40.2 to 40.23.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My memory is coming back on the work that we did in AOC. If I remember correctly, this one amendment was something that invited a lot of debate, and I'm not sure if we still have a satisfactory compromise on that. I do believe the question was whether or not... Because the equal pay commissioner's office is like a lot of similar statutory offices, we would like to make sure that when we are passing legislation that there is a degree of independence in the powers and authorities that go with that for the holder of this office to do the job that they need to do and they're required to do, subject to this law. I believe the question was that having the Minister, as was originally intended or worded, make the regulations that would not result in this office being sufficiently independent. But, Mr. Chairman, I still have a concern about this, because the way our system of government words, the Commissioner's office is very much tied to the government as a whole. I think there is a very important point to be made, that in an office like this that we would like the office holder to be as independent as possible. So I'd like to ask if our legal advisor could tell us as to whether or not her research shows that giving the regulatory-making powers to the Commissioner in Executive Council will give this office sufficient independence. I'm sure there's another word that I'm thinking of, I can't think of, independent and self-sufficiency or something like that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I believe that there is agreement on this one, that it achieves what it is that we were discussing with the committee. Regulations may be necessary to address the technical matters in the implementation of the legislation. While there aren't any contemplated, this provision allows it to be made when and if the need arises. Mr. Chairman, once the equal pay commissioner has been appointed, his or her expertise will be an important resource in making any such regulations. These changes ensure that regulations made related to the statutory appointment are done by the Speaker, and any remaining regulations related to equal pay would be made by the Commissioner in Executive Council. This means that the government, as represented by Cabinet, makes the recommendations to the Commissioner. This, Mr. Chairman, is consistent with the provisions elsewhere in the country. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that answer, but also we do know that we have a form of system of government that's quite different than the rest of the country. Our Commissioner's office is very much like a Lieutenant Governor's office, and the Commissioner of the day follows the directions and recommendations of Executive Council. Executive Council is made up of Cabinet Ministers. My question is how can we ensure that by having... Anything that would have to go through Executive Council in order to go to the Commissioner has to go to one of the Cabinet Ministers who would bring it to the council. So how can we be satisfied that any Minister of the day would not be in a position to have a say on what sort of regulatory changes that the Commissioner would recommend in their assessment and their judgment? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the form of our government, it's true, it's different than the provincial governments. But in provinces, it's the Lieutenant Governor in Council; in ours it's the Commissioner in Executive Council. The process is still the same. The Minister would bring the proposed changes to the Executive Council or Cabinet and it would proceed from there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity. We have other statutory officers like the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Official Languages Commissioner or Privacy Commissioner. I can't think of all the details, but a lot of the direction... For many aspects of their job, they report directly to the Legislative Assembly. Why could we not, or did we, consider having the equal pay commissioner come directly to the legislature, rather than going to the Executive Council? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Speaker has the regulation-making authority related to the statutory appointment, the appointment of the equal pay commissioner. All of the other provisions and regulations with regard to the implementation of the Public Service Act and the provisions within it are made by the Executive Council on the advice of our recommendation to the Minister. I think that's pretty standard across government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Motion is on the floor. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: So could I just ask the Minister again, why then didn't we combine these two responsibilities? Why do we separate some aspects of it to the Speaker and some aspects to the Commissioner in Executive Council?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the regulations related to the statutory appointment are made by the Speaker, because this position reports to the Speaker. But the regulations that deal with the implementation of the Public Service Act are made by the Executive Council on the recommendation of the Minister, because it is that Minister who is responsible for the administration of the Public Service Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Motion is on the floor. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 5, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We'll go back to the preamble, page 1. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask this question earlier, but I was told that I had to wait until we had reviewed the bill as a whole. The question I have about the preamble, first of all I think we are aware that a preamble of any legislation is very, very important. It sets out the contacts and the framework and the overarching power of that legislation. It's a statement of the purpose and intent of that legislation, as well as clarifying to the public why it is that the legislature took the action of passing the legislation. May I ask the Minister what this preamble says, and what he is telling the public about the purpose and intent of this act? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister responsible for the bill, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the first paragraph, "Whereas the principle of equal pay for work of equal value has been internationally recognized as a human right," the purpose of that is to explain the policy, the law it intended to achieve. The preamble's clauses can be useful in interpreting the various specific provisions of the statute.

The second paragraph, "Whereas the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to ensuring that male and female persons in the public service continue to be protected against systemic wage discrimination through the recognition and exercise of the right of equal pay for work of equal value." This clause explains that male and female public service employees currently have the right of equal pay for work of equal value in the NWT, and that this protection against systemic discrimination will continue in the future.

In the third paragraph, "Whereas the provision of a right to equal pay for work of equal value in the public service furthers the leadership of the Government of the Northwest Territories on employment equality issues among employers in the Northwest Territories." This clause confirms that employment equality is a matter of concern in the GNWT, and in its capacity as an employer, it's well positioned to set a positive example for other NWT employers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Preamble. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. By virtue of this legislature passing this legislation, we are setting up a regime

that is to implement this legislation and it will need people to do that. So I would like to know from the Minister if he could advise as to what sort of workforce he's looking at that will be established to implement this legislation, especially the person who would... I mean, the Commissioner will do his or her job, but I'm sure he or she will have staff that work under him that would do the technical analysis for what constitutes equal pay for work of equal value. So could the Minister advise as to what the cost of equal pay and workforce numbers are? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley, to the preamble.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in addition to the equal pay commissioner who will be retained on a retainer as required, we expect that there's a requirement for one person who will work in FMBS doing research, monitoring equal pay for work of equal value issues. So, Mr. Chairman, at this point we expect one employee. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the preamble. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, does the Minister have any idea when this legislation will come into force? I guess that depends on how quickly the government can get organized to set up the office to establish that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee, the question that you asked could have been better put under clause 6, but, Mr. Minister, if you would like to answer.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the next step, of course, is for us to get an exemption through section 66 of the Canadian Human Rights Act. Second is that we would have to have our human rights commission in place and operating so that this one coincides with our Human Rights Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): To the preamble.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill as a whole, as amend.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 14 is ready for third reading, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Bill 14 is now ready for third reading, as amended. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses out.

Bill 13: Deh Cho Bridge Act

As we agreed before the break, the next item we were going to continue with is Bill 13, Deh Cho Bridge Act. At this time I would like to ask the Minister if he has any opening comments on Bill 13. Mr. Minister.

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, I have opening comments. Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to appear today before Committee of the Whole to consider Bill 13, Deh Cho Bridge Act.

Almost everyone in the Northwest Territories knows the costs, inefficiencies and inconveniences of having our transportation links cut seasonally for uncertain periods of time. Freeze-up, of course, comes during our Christmas season and can play havoc with our plans for the holidays. Students are caught at break-up trying to return from postsecondary schools in southern Canada. The first motor tourists of the season make the unhappy discovery that spring comes later in the North than it does in the South. Shipments we're counting on are delayed and do not arrive when we need them. The prices of consumer perishables are subject to the added costs of alternative transportation and extra handling. We pay either the direct cost of carrying extra inventories to get us through the interruption, or the indirect cost of doing without items we need because stockpiles are depleted.

The proposed Deh Cho Bridge will eliminate the supply irregularities in the day-to-day operation of our North Slave economies and beyond. Anyone who has been subject to these unpredictable disruptions will recognize the benefits of dependable transportation.

There is no practical way of measuring the economic benefits of reliable transportation exactly. Some people, no doubt, will benefit more or less than others. Some businesses will benefit more or less than others. Some communities might benefit more or less than others. There is no way to calibrate the toll rates so finally as to take into account the precise economic benefits of a permanent bridge crossing.

We want a system of tolls that is simple to administer and that people can easily understand. A more complex system that tried to tie toll charges to measurable economic benefits would have intolerably high administration costs. Suffice it to say that everyone who has been subject to disruptions in the ferry service at Fort Providence will appreciate the big difference a permanent bridge will make. People are willing to accept toll charges that are collected efficiently and go directly to paying down the bridge.

The Deh Cho Bridge Act is the essential enabling legislation that will authorize the Minister of Transportation and the Government of the Northwest Territories to enter into a public/private partnership with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. As set out in the memorandum of agreement of November 15, 2002, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation will obtain the regulatory approvals, raise the financial capital, design, build and operate and maintain a highway bridge over the Mackenzie River at Fort Providence. Under this arrangement, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation is a true partner with government in the construction and operation of this new piece of highway infrastructure. As this is much more than a conventional contractual relationship, the legislative authority is required to give the Minister of Transportation and the Executive Council the authority to complete the partnership arrangement.

Mr. Chairman, I think we should all be pleased with the provisions of Bill 13 that make the disposition of toll revenue clear and transparent for all parties, directly or indirectly affected by the tolls. The proposed Deh Cho Bridge is a large

capital infrastructure commitment for which the government will assume financial obligations that it must carry over the next 35 years. The government will meet its obligations mainly through the collection of tolls. It is in everyone's interest that the collection and disbursement of the toll revenues should be subject to the test of public scrutiny.

Bill 13 establishes a special purpose Deh Cho Bridge fund to enable the close monitoring of the toll revenues in and out of a special fund. In addition, the bill requires the Minister to prepare an annual report on the transactions of the Deh Cho Bridge fund. With these transparency provisions in place, I have every confidence that the management and administration of the toll rates and revenues will be subject to close and open scrutiny. The Assembly, the public at large, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and the trucking industry should all be satisfied that the toll rates in effect at a given time are sufficient to meet the government's obligations, and are directed solely to that purpose. It is in no one's interest that year after year the bridge fund should accumulate either a surplus or a deficit. The government of the day will be anxious to demonstrate that its administration of the toll rates strikes just the right balance between payables and receivables.

In short, Mr. Chairman, Bill 13 has all the mechanisms in place to ensure that the toll rates and revenues are managed soundly.

The Deh Cho Bridge Act is an important piece of legislation that has been carefully drafted for this special purpose of enabling a public/private partnership to build a bridge across the Mackenzie River. I think all of the Members will agree that the proposed Deh Cho Bridge is a worthwhile and long overdue addition to the territorial transportation system. I urge all Members to give their support to the Deh Cho Bridge. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Before I go to the standing committee for comments, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and introduce a gentleman on my right, Mr. Adrian Wright, who the Speaker has appointed as special Law Clerk to review the Deh Cho Bridge Act. I'll call on the standing committee that reviewed Bill 13 for comments. Ms. Lee.

Standing Committee On Governance And Economic Development Comments

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as deputy chair of the Governance and Economic Development committee, I'm pleased to report our committee's report on Deh Cho Bridge Act, Bill 13.

Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development conducted public hearings on Bill 13, the Deh Cho Bridge Act, on April 30, 2003, in Fort Providence; on May 28 in Rae-Edzo; and on April 24, May 16, and June 5 in Yellowknife. The committee would like to thank the witnesses who appeared before us and the Minister and his staff for presenting the bill.

The committee heard broad support for the Deh Cho Bridge from witnesses including representatives of the NWT Motor Transport Association, the Dogrib Rae Band, Dogrib Treaty 11 Council and members of the public, and was made aware of resolutions of support from the NWT Association of Communities, the Dene leadership and the Fort Providence

Combined Council Alliance. The committee is also supportive of the Deh Cho Bridge project, and applauds the work of the government and the Fort Providence Combined Council Alliance to make this project a reality.

Members and witnesses did, however, have a number of questions and concerns about how the bridge will be built, operated and financed.

The bridge is expected to be a \$55 million project that will be amortized over 35 years and financed in large part by tolls on commercial vehicles. The viability of the project, as currently envisioned, depends on there being enough traffic to provide sufficient toll revenues. Members and some witnesses had a number of questions about the government's and Bridge Corporation's traffic projections. The Minister and Bridge Corporation indicated that in their opinion the risk of the bridge losing money over the 35-year period is minimal. The Minister advised that even with half of the current traffic to mines, the project would still be viable.

Committee heard that in spite of the proposed tolls on commercial traffic, the bridge will, for the most part, lower overall freight expenses, in particular by eliminating costly delays caused by break-up and freeze-up, and line-ups at the ferry. For example, information provided by the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation estimates a savings to the Yellowknife Direct Charge Co-op of about \$300,000 per year. However, some Members and witnesses are concerned the tolls will result in increased costs to fly-in communities north and east of Great Slave Lake. The Minister advised committee that the estimated cost increases to fly-in communities are one-third cent per pound of freight, or about \$10,000 total per year for all these communities together. Some Members suggested a subsidy should be put in place to compensate residents of these communities.

The Minister was asked about whether the bridge would foreclose the possibility of government support for other potential routes. The Minister indicated that the GNWT would still be open to other routes if there is good public reason and they can be shown to be viable.

The committee heard that there may be opportunities to use the bridge to carry utilities such as pipelines, power lines or communications cables. The bill is silent on who would decide whether the bridge could be used for these additional purposes. Members would have preferred this issue be addressed in the bill, however, the Minister advised that it is currently being negotiated with the Bridge Corporation and that including provisions in the bill would interfere with the negotiation process. The Minister did indicate that in his view the GNWT should retain final say on what the bridge could be used for.

Mr. Chairman, because the bridge will be the only route for motorists and will be operated by a private corporation, Members had a number of questions about how the public interest will be protected. It is the committee's understanding that regardless of who operates the bridge, it will be considered a highway and, therefore, subject to legislation such as the Motor Vehicles Act. There is also provision in the bill for the GNWT to take over operation of the bridge as a last resort if this is necessary to protect the public interest. Questions were asked about who will be liable for any accidents that might happen on the bridge, or any damage to the bridge. The Minister's staff indicated that as this is a public/private partnership, risk and responsibility will be shared between the

GNWT and Bridge Corporation. Provisions on indemnities and insurance will be negotiated between the parties.

One witness informed the committee he was concerned about how the people currently employed by the ferry operations and ice road construction will be affected by the bridge. The committee was made aware that no GNWT employees will be affected, and that no assistance is planned by the GNWT for contracted employees as it is anticipated there will be a net increase in jobs as a result of the bridge.

The Deh Cho Bridge Corporation was asked what the process would be for awarding work contracts for construction of the bridge. The corporation indicated that the major contract will go to a bondable, reputable contractor, and that because of the specialized nature of the project there are some components of the construction, such as steel fabrication, that no northern company would be able to do independently. The corporation advised that it will try to separate out as many small contracts as possible, such as concrete, fuel, earthworks and camp/catering, so that northern contractors have an opportunity to bid on them.

The Minister and Bridge Corporation advised committee the initial toll will be between \$5 and \$6 per tonne. The NWT Motor Transport Association has suggested the tolls should be on a per axle basis, that vehicles of less than one ton should be exempt, and that fines for failing to pay tolls should be set at five times whatever the toll would have been. The committee does not have any position on these recommendations, but would urge the department to continue its consultations with the association in order to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement.

One member of the public suggested the tolls should apply to passenger vehicles as well as commercial vehicles. The Minister indicated this is not being pursued because the cost of collecting small fees from each passenger vehicle would likely exceed the revenue generated. The majority of committee agreed that passenger vehicles should not be tolled.

The committee had lengthy discussions on who should set the bridge tolls. The bill provides for the tolls to be established in regulation by the Commissioner in Executive Council. Members were not satisfied that the annual reporting requirement in the bill would provide an adequate check on the government raising tolls unfairly. The committee's initial suggestion was that tolls be set by act of this Assembly, or in regulations made on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly as a whole. The Minister advised this would be unworkable as it would create an unacceptable level of uncertainty and risk for the project if the government did not have clear authority to set tolls.

During clause by clause review of the bill, the committee made four motions to amend the bill to protect the public interest by placing conditions on the government's ability to set tolls. One motion would have required tolls to be "fair and reasonable". The Minister did not concur with this motion as there was concern it could open up the door to legal challenges which would undermine the toll system.

The committee and the Minister did agree to two motions to amend the bill which will require toll revenues to be paid into a separate Deh Cho Bridge Fund. These amendments address some of the Members' concerns as they will prevent the government from using tolls to pay for programs or projects other than the bridge.

The committee and Minister also agreed to amend the bill in order to require the government to give 90-days' notice of proposed changes to tolls in the NWT Gazette and newspapers, and to hear representations from any interested parties. Members will be supporting an additional motion today to amend the bill to strengthen this provision so that 90-days' notice of changes to toll rates will be given to representatives of the trucking industry, businesses, aboriginal and municipal governments, and Members of the Legislative Assembly.

A minor technical amendment to the French version of the bill was also agreed to during the clause-by-clause review.

Following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 13, Deh Cho Bridge Act, to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole. This concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 13. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the Minister responsible for Bill 13 wish to bring in any witnesses? Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

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

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with me are Peter Vician, deputy minister of the Department of Transportation, and Mark Aitken, director of the legislation division, Department of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Review of Bill 13, Deh Cho Bridge Act. I'll open the floor for general comments. Mr. McLeod.

General Comments

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as this project is in my riding, the community involved is also in my riding. I guess it's needless to say how I'm going to vote on this bill. This current bill basically gives this government the mandate to negotiate, and also to introduce a toll. I'm certainly supportive of the Combined Council Alliance's desire to design and finance, construct and operate a bridge at the Deh Cho, Fort Providence crossing. In order to make this happen, we need a partnership with this government. We need the industry and investors, and many other players.

But, Mr. Chairman, the general concept is not a new one. This concept that is being introduced is similar to one that has been used on other infrastructure projects in southern Canada. For example, on the bridge that's linking PEI to New Brunswick, and on Highway No. 407 in Toronto. I'm told there are other projects on a smaller scale.

Mr. Chairman, the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation is proposing to raise the equity and obtain the debt financing to design and finance, build and maintain this bridge. In order to do that, there's a need to enter into an agreement with this government for a concession period of 35 years. In order to service the

debt, the government has to introduce a toll, along with some of the cost-saving measures that would be realized from not having to build an ice road and operate the ferry. The revenue would be used to service and retire the debt, to operate and maintain the bridge, and provide a return on shareholder equity. At the end of this concession period of 35 years, the ownership of the bridge will be turned over to this government and the bridge will be paid for and in good condition. At that time, this government could suspend its annual contribution in tolls.

So this project and this proposal would benefit both the government and the users, and also the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. There are many benefits to the Northwest Territories. For business and industry it would mean more reliable service, greater certainty of access and supplies through eliminating the winter disruptions of one to three weeks, and also the spring closure every year when the ice breaks up and we have the ferry shut down for roughly four weeks. This would also mean reduced costs due to the delays for the ferry and the ice bridge. Even when the ferry is operating during the summer months, it still means adding at least 20 minutes minimum to a one-way trip. It also would mean a savings in cost to finance, transport and store inventory in communities north of the river. We believe the cost freight allowance of \$6 a tonne will be more than offset by savings.

To the public it also means reliable service and access for the driving public. It also means reduced risk of storage of goods during the isolation period. There are no fees for the non-commercial traffic.

To the Government of the Northwest Territories the benefits are direct savings from operation and maintenance of the ferry, shore infrastructure, the ice bridge, and the ice bridge access roads. We also believe there will be direct savings in capital, because we'll no longer need to replace or add ferries or invest in support infrastructure. It also supports the strategies of this government, of the 14th Assembly, and we stated that partnership arrangements to help build infrastructure are part of A Better Tomorrow. This is a northern solution with significant economic spin-offs, including direct and indirect fiscal benefits from businesses and employment incomes generated by the construction.

Again, I have to state that at the end of the concession period, the GNWT will acquire the bridge at no cost.

For the Government of Canada, there are again direct and indirect fiscal benefits, from the businesses and employment incomes generated by construction. This project supports the DIAND objectives; the objective to secure First Nations participation in and expand economic benefits from major regional development initiatives in areas such as regional infrastructure projects. This project also supports regional economic development, including the non-renewable resource sector.

Mr. Chairman, the biggest benefit and one of the most important reasons that the community of Fort Providence embarked on this project was for environmental concerns. With this project, we believe that there is a net environmental benefit. There will be reduced risk of spills, reduction in siltation and other disturbance to the river. Several years ago when a truck went through the ice, it really put fear into the hearts of everybody that lived along the Deh Cho. It could have been a major environmental catastrophe.

This project doesn't come without concerns. Most of the communities in the North Slave, especially when it comes to costs, but more so when we talk about any project along the river, the aboriginal people have raised all kinds of concerns. We were wondering what would it mean in terms of migratory birds. Fort Providence and the Mackenzie River are out of the main routes for geese, ducks and shore birds. There has been a lot of concern, especially from our elders, about what this would mean. Would it disturb their route? Would it change their life?

As Mrs. Groenewegen indicated in her Member's statement two days ago, the people are kind of nostalgic about the ferry. We in the community of Fort Providence also look forward to the springtime when the ice doesn't allow us to cross and it's too early for the ferry to cross. We become a fairly isolated community and things really slow down, and it's a real quality time of the year. People go out camping, you don't have to worry about the heavy trucks on the highway, you don't have to worry about a lot of things, and people really look forward to that. With this bridge, of course that will change. Also with the construction of this bridge, we have to be very concerned and it's been stated over and over that there's no damage to the fish habitat.

Mr. Chairman, as the MLA for the community that is embarking on this initiative, I once again want to point out that I am supportive of this project. I have been involved with this project as the MLA representing this community. I'm quite proud that many people have come to the forefront to recognize the benefits of this whole project. People from the community, people from the Northwest Territories, people from within this government, the Department of Transportation including the Minister have really done a lot of work. There is still a lot of work. But without this Bill 13, the project would probably come to a standstill. It's something that's required at this point, and I certainly encourage my colleagues to vote in favour. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. General comments. Mr. Nitah.

MR. NITAH: Mahsi cho, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my constituents and I are in support of the Deh Cho Bridge. This act is also something I support. It enables the government to negotiate with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation.

I have a concern, though, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the concern I have is the method which we will use to pay for the bridge. That decision is not final, but I would like to make my opinion known today so that it could be part of the consideration and possibly negotiations.

The idea right now is to toll trucks that cross the bridge. These are the trucks that deliver goods and supplies to the city of Yellowknife, which it also supplies to the communities of Gameti, Wekweti, Wha Ti and Lutselk'e. I think, Mr. Chairman, that whoever crosses that bridge should pay the toll. Industry should not be targeted. BHP alone will have to pay an extra \$1 million a year if the method of tolling is just on heavy trucks. I don't think that's fair to BHP; I don't think that's fair to Diavik or any other industry that relies on resupply using the bridge. They are already a big contributor to our northern economy, they're the economic backbone of the Northwest Territories right now. If BHP pays an extra \$1 million a year, that means the federal government gets \$1 million less in royalties. That means the land claims groups will get less in benefits, because they get a percentage of all royalties that come out of the

Northwest Territories and I don't think that's fair to the land claims groups.

I've been talking to many people in the Northwest Territories, and people are willing to pay to cross the bridge. It's not anything new, it's being done all over the country, all over the world, Mr. Chairman.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I do support the bridge. Another reason why I say that everybody should pay... In the communities that I mentioned, the majority of people don't own vehicles because there are no roads into those communities, and why should they pay out of their pockets the extra costs they might incur in their stores, in the Co-op in Lutselk'e, the stores in Wha Ti? Why should those people have to pay more for their supplies and service because of the method of how we collect the tolls? The idea now, Mr. Chairman, is in 35 years' time the bridge will be transferred to the GNWT for ownership. That's a territorial bridge, owned by the people of the Northwest Territories and why should that bridge be paid for only by people living north of the river, or the people who depend on the city of Yellowknife for resupply? It's just not fair.

So for the consideration of my colleagues in the House, the Minister responsible and for the people negotiating the Deh Cho Bridge -- the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation -- that should be something that is seriously considered. People don't mind paying a few bucks to cross a bridge. It's nothing new. Maybe, Mr. Chairman, you could reduce the time that we are anticipating for the ownership of the bridge to go into the GNWT's hands. But the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation would pay their investments back.

So, Mr. Chairman, today and tomorrow I will be lobbying for this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a few comments. I've been on record through the life of this bill when it was introduced and second reading and throughout the committee process, I have been on record as supporting this bridge, Mr. Chairman. I must say that when I was elected to office a few years ago, I had no idea that I would actually leave the Assembly with a law that would see a bridge in the very near future. Hopefully, before we leave office or soon thereafter, we will see the turning of the sod in that area. Also, I'm really looking forward to driving over that bridge and knowing that this capital city is connected to the rest of the world and the rest of the country every day of the year, and won't be disconnected for a good length of time each spring and fall. I remember during the campaign in 1999, a number of my constituents said get that bridge over there because you cannot plan Christmas holidays or springtime and so on. I do believe that this could not have been a reality without the partnership idea that we have here. I must thank the work of the Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod, for taking on this project from the beginning, and working step by step, tirelessly to make sure that everybody pays the attention to it that needs to be paid. We hear all the time from Mr. McLeod that there's not enough going to the communities, but boy oh boy he could always point to that bridge not too far from his community and say he had a major part to play in that.

Mr. Chairman, since this legislation was introduced, I've had the occasion to talk to my constituents, especially at Tim Horton's, and I happened to be talking to the truckers who were having coffee there. I learned that there's a premium added to

the work that they do to drive supplies to the North, especially during break-up or when it's close to break-up because they're not able to predict how long the trip will take. So instead of charging by mileage as would be the case in other parts of the country where there is disruption like this, they charge a premium for getting stuff from High Level or Edmonton or wherever the point of departure is of those supplies.

Also, I am pleased to have discovered and to note in our committee report, that in fact the cost of goods will go down and there will be a savings. Yellowknife Co-op is reporting a savings of as large as \$300,000. That, spread out throughout the year, will benefit the membership. The Co-op, in particular, does a lot of work with the communities, so I know that it's a good news item. An operation that big will gain a lot. One could only assume that that would translate the same for other operations like Wal-Mart or anywhere else, and that will translate into the benefit of the residents of Yellowknife.

I know that in our public hearings, constituents had questions about what the impact of this might be to the fly-in communities. Maybe the Minister could shed light on that, because if that is the case -- and I believe that communities around the lake, whether it's Lutselk'e or some of the communities in North, if their supply point is Yellowknife and the Yellowknife businesses are saying that there will be savings -- one would assume that that saving would be spread out to those communities. The Minister's statement indicated that there might be a small increase, but not a big increase. So I guess any potential increase there might be for surrounding communities is the cost of fuel. But I don't see anything different in this equation other than having a bridge. By all accounts, the cost of carrying goods from southern points to here will be less.

So I think that in the end, not only will the cost of goods go down, but we will become a tourist destination for the rubber tire tourist group. I'm sure that there are lots of people who like to get in their RVs and travel all across the country and North America. I am certain that when they look at a map right now and see a dotted line between the remaining parts of Highway No. 3 because it's not paved and it's such a horrible road, and if they see that there's a ferry, when you're competing with every other destination in the country or Alaska or wherever they could go where they don't have to risk damaging their very expensive RVs, I'm sure Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories fall right off the potential designation points. There's no way of telling what we'll be seeing in terms of tourists five, 10, 20 years down the road once the bridge is built.

Also, I support this bridge for many other reasons, one being that I believe it is the role of government to build public infrastructure, and it is a very important role for government to build highways and bridges. Yet I know that if there were no such partnership as this, that we would never be able to get \$55 million to build a bridge. We know that. That is more than what the government has budgeted for an entire year of capital spending. So there is no way we could come up with this money. It was very good of Mr. McLeod and his team in Fort Providence to come up with the idea, and to push it as hard and as far as they have.

Also another thing, I know that there are lots of discussions in this Assembly about the fact that there's such a discrepancy in dollars spent between bigger communities versus small communities. I think it's a very legitimate fact for the area that the Member for Deh Cho comes from. In the Fort Providence area, they have not seen as much direct benefit from some of

the economic and industrial development that's happening with the mines. They might just go as far as Rae-Edzo, but not as far as Fort Providence. So I think we always have to support in this legislature where we are working on a project that would benefit the area that doesn't see such benefits normally. So I really do believe that that is one of the best things about this project.

I do have to state, Mr. Chairman, that there were concerns raised in the community, and that has to do with the ownership of the bridge. There is a little bit of fear out there that the fact that this bridge will be owned by someone else other than the government, that somehow this would not be public property and that public government will not have the control necessary to make sure that the road is accessible and that it's available to every resident living in the North and every visitor who may travel on that bridge. But I do believe that through the work of this committee and listening to the people and making necessary amendments, we've addressed some of those concerns to a large degree. But I am going to have some specific questions, especially sections pertaining to liability and so on, for the Minister and I'm hoping we'll be able to provide those answers to those concerns.

Maybe I should end by asking the question, Mr. Chairman; the Minister stated that the government will own it so that all the pertinent legislation will apply, such as the Motor Vehicles Act, but he also mentioned about the fact that there's a question about liability and insurance. So may I get the Minister to elaborate on what he knows about what the implications are for liabilities and insurance that he's negotiating with the Bridge Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The issue of liability is dealt with in section 2(c) of the legislation. It is being negotiated and will be part of the concession agreement with the corporation where they will have to meet requirements for insurance, performance bonds, labour material bonds and all the others that are necessary in this kind of partnership. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Before we go on to the next Member, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome visitors we have in the gallery who have come to observe the proceedings. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

Mr. Braden, general comments.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The benefits of this project, perceived or tangible, have been well outlined already by the Minister and my colleagues. There are one or two things in here that I would like to underscore. As a Yellowknife MLA and somebody who is, by and large, I could say I have really enjoyed my voyages on the two different ferry boats I have recollection of and the occasional trip over the ice road, and as my colleague, Mr. McLeod, the Member of Deh Cho said, it will change forever. Part of our northern psyche and our sense of isolation, there is an aspect of that as far as our connections by land with our neighbours south of the lake and then to the rest of Canada, that will change.

It is something that we do look forward to, though. In the last few recent years, the city has experienced a number of disruptions, not just due to freeze-up and break-up, but low

water situations, Mr. Chairman, that with climate change, global warming and these kinds of things, seem to be more volatile and will be more of a frequent situation we will have to deal with. Having a bridge will virtually eliminate that kind of concern. As Ms. Lee says, this is also going to impact tourism and, with the combination of a completed surfaced road between here and Rae and the rest of Canada and a bridge, we are indeed going to become a new and a fresh destination for rubber tire traffic in the summer. It will open up avenues of tourism across at least the southern Mackenzie regions and I would even say that would go as far as the Fort Simpson and Liard regions because RV travellers are a pretty mobile, nomadic bunch, Mr. Chairman. They want new destinations and by this new infrastructure, we are going to provide it.

I would offer one flag of warning that has come through in discussion with the business community and that is on the cost of the toll on the commercial traffic. I agree that this is a realistic and fair and viable way of paying for this. The numbers that have been given us so far are estimates. We are told they are very conservative estimates. This information has been transmitted to the business community here and they are, to my understanding, quite accepting of it and trusting it. I think there is going to be a very keen eye, Mr. Chairman, placed on the costs and the amount of the toll that's going to be assessed. We know through working on the bill that we are going to get annual reports that deal with this kind of thing. There are going to be quite adequate provisions for notice of any change that may become necessary or that the Minister may deem required. So there are conditions in here. Of course, nothing is guaranteed but I think the bill does cover the concerns or at least that will allow concerns about any increase in the tolls to be addressed quite forcefully and we will deal with that when it comes, but in the meantime, the benefits of this, the anticipation of it, the impact that it will have on this region and especially for the people of the Deh Cho and Fort Providence is a very welcome one. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have some questions for the Minister. The first one has to do with the Deh Cho Bridge fund. One of the concerns that the people have expressed... Right now the way it is set out, the passenger vehicles would not be charged a toll, it's only for commercial vehicles. People are worried about having to pay a fee if that situation changes. My first question is what sort of transparency is there for the operators of the bridge fund to report to the government or to the public what their revenues are and the rate of tolls they charge? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Clause 7 of the bill makes a provision that the Minister must have prepared and report on the collection of the tolls and the administration of the bridge, the amount of the toll collected, the amount of refunds paid out, if there are any and so on. All the detail is laid out in section 7. So as a government, we have to be very upfront with the public about what the revenues are and how it's being managed. As well, clause 10 of the same bill points out that we will have to gazette any changes and we will also have to give notice of any changes in the toll, so the public will have an opportunity to voice any concerns they may have with regard to tolls. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: I guess a question for the people is whether they are advised or not, whenever they get an increase, they are not going to be happy with that, especially if it's a large increase. I guess it's important for us to get some assurance from the Minister that should something happen -- which I don't know if it could because we are working with numbers that show that the traffic there could sustain this revenue project -- but in the unlikely event that there is just not enough revenue being raised and the Bridge Corporation is not making enough money or they are not able to cover the cost of operating or financing their debt, what kind of assurance is there that government will not go to the people to collect this money, or will the government be responsible for any major negative balance in that fund? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the estimates we have used in arriving at the toll of \$5 to \$6 a tonne are based on very conservative estimates of traffic. So we do not anticipate that there is going to be any need for any increases in tolls unless our economy was to really fall apart. If that were to happen, of course I think we would be in trouble on a lot of fronts, but we have been as conservative as we realistically can be. We don't foresee that there is going to be a need. We've also included factors for inflation and all the other costs that we may be running into with the estimates that we've done. So unless our economy was to fall apart, Mr. Chairman, I am pretty confident that this government or future governments will not have to be imposing larger tolls. In fact, it will probably work the other way because of a growth in our economy and the number of people who have been on a pattern of gradually growing. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next question I have is with regard to the cost implications for the fly-in communities around the lake. The Minister's statement states there will be some increase, a third of a cent per pound of freight or about \$10,000 total per year for all these communities together, which I am assuming is about four or five. I don't understand this figure, Mr. Chairman, because if they are getting supplied from Yellowknife, the information we have is the cost of freight and, therefore, cost of goods will go down. So why is it that the Minister is projecting that some of these communities will see an increase, however small that might be? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in doing our estimates, as I said earlier, we were very conservative in the numbers to make sure we are on the right side of the ledger sheet. In doing the estimates for those communities that are accessible only by ice road or by air, we estimated that 90 percent of their supplies, goods that come in by road will come in directly from the south with only 10 percent coming from Yellowknife. If it happens that they enjoy some of the benefit that would come from the communities on the road, then that could change a bit. Mr. Chairman, we have been very conservative in doing it and I would expect that the \$10,000 figure we have in total is probably on the high side. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have another question about the concern raised by the people we heard from during the public hearing process and one of the concerns was the ability of the bridge to have different uses such as hooking up a

telephone or cable line across the bridge or if it happens that we have a pipeline coming through that bridge or being able to attach a pipeline onto that bridge or something parallel to it, and the Minister has indicated that this is one of the issues that is being discussed in the negotiation with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation. I wonder if the Minister could advise us what the major issues are with regard to that. Why is this issue a difficult one, if it is one? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, when we did our estimates and projections for the bridge, we did it as a bridge with the purpose of carrying vehicular traffic. We have no objection to the bridge being used for other purposes, whether it's carrying a power line or Internet or whatever it may be, as long as it doesn't compromise the basic purpose of the bridge, which is for traffic. Our main concern would be safety and, of course, we don't want to see it shut down at periods of time and so on, because it is there for motor traffic. Those would be the basic concerns, Mr. Chairman. Any such agreement is something we would have to work out with the owners of the bridge. I don't anticipate there would be great difficulty on what we could do as long as it isn't compromising the primary purpose for the bridge. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: I think the conflict or controversy about this bridge is the question of ownership. This sort of thing doesn't happen very often. It's not usual for a public infrastructure to be owned not solely by a government in Canada, although I understand there are other examples, but it is certainly a new thing for the Northwest Territories. We are advised that the bridge will be subject to all of the highway laws because it will be construed as being a highway for that purpose, but at the same time the Minister is indicating to us there will be some negotiations as to who is going to be responsible for any risks or responsibilities that arise out of that. Also, whether one gives permission about what could go on that bridge or what different uses there might be. There is also a question about ownership. Are we to understand that all those provisions are subject to agreement, and what is the mandate the government is taking to this negotiation process from this legislature? Can we know about what the government's position is with regard to these areas, the use of the bridge and the liability question? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Vician to give the detail on that. It's fairly technical.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Provisions of the bill provide for the operation of the bridge as if it were part of the public highway. The ownership of the bridge is with the concessionaire but the act provides for that operation to be conducted as if it were part of the public highway system. Obviously, in the interest of the public, if the Minister felt that there was an intervention required, that piece of highway or that bridge would revert under section 4 to the control of the Minister. So those terms are explicit in the legislation. Similarly, within the agreements that are currently being negotiated, provisions are being included for the operation of the bridge throughout its life to ensure that full public passage is maintained and there are no restrictions outside of the normal

safety parameters that exist under the Public Highways Act and the maintenance procedures we currently use. So, overall, the protection and the interest of this crossing is maintained through this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Vician. The chair will recognize Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with regard to the Deh Cho Bridge Act, I fully support the initiative that is being taken. I think it's about time that we, as the Northwest Territories, took our place with the rest of the country and our neighbours to the west, the Yukon with their bridges at river crossings. They have seen a real increase in their tourism traffic, year-round access in and out of the communities. I think because of the infrastructure they have in the Yukon, they've had an advantage over us when it comes to tourism traffic and bringing down the cost of living in the Yukon for those residents who are on the highway systems.

I feel that we, as a territory, have to take that major step and the Deh Cho Bridge is the start of developing that infrastructure. We do have other crossings in the NWT such as the Liard River crossing, which is a ferry operation, Camsell Bend, which is another section of the Mackenzie, the Tsiigehtchic Mackenzie crossing and the Peel River crossing just to name a few, where the only means of crossing during the summer months is by ferry. I think that to bring down the cost to residents of development in the Northwest Territories, we have to find ways to give industry and the people of the North assurance that they can operate in the North and avoid these high cost operations. When we have to wait to put an ice bridge in, and wait when the ferries go out because of the break-up and freeze-ups, which has a major impact in all our communities where the cost of goods and services are driven up, it's important that we deal with that. So with that I do support this motion and thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I spoke to this bill and to the proposed Deh Cho Bridge in a Member's statement this week, so I don't have a lot to add to that, but I would like to say that the Member for Deh Cho came here with this bridge as a goal and he set himself to see this come to reality within his four-year term. I just want to commend him for his persistence and also his community for bringing this forward. I do think it will be for the betterment of all people in the Northwest Territories. I want to congratulate them and say I will be supporting the bill. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Clause by clause.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ready to go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We are on page 1, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 3, clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 4, clause 7. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thought there would be people wanting to say more about this. Mr. Chairman, as I indicated in other bills that we considered earlier today, it is normal practice for us to agree on the clauses, but we do have a group of people sitting in the gallery and we are passing a law that is doing a good thing for the people. So I would like to ask the Minister if he could read clause 7 for the record? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Before we go on with your question on clause 7, I missed a clause before that, so I am going to go back and call out clause 6.1 on page 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will now go to clause 7. Is the Minister prepared to read clause 7? Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will take direction from the chair, but I really don't see what good purpose this reading the detail in each clause from hereon is going to serve. It's a very technical piece of legislation. I don't understand why we are doing this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Handley, the Member has raised a question to read clause 7. It's up to you whether you want to read it or not. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, I really don't want to read it. I don't think it serves any purpose. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are passing laws here that would affect the people of the Territories. It is a common practice that we don't normally read in all the clauses, but there is nothing to say that we cannot do that. It does not contravene any laws. I think people need to know why it is I am sitting here on their behalf and what it is I am considering in front of me and on what basis I am making those decisions because we are taking a vote on every clause. So if the Minister doesn't want to read it, the way I see it is this section talks... If that's okay with the chair, I would like to have it read into the record.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Order. Ms. Lee, if you wish to read clause 7 in for the record, you may do so.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't mind sharing my job with the Minister.

7 (1) The Minister shall cause to be prepared, in respect of the collection of tolls in administration of the Deh Cho Bridge fund in a fiscal year, a report of

(a) the amount of the tolls collected and paid into the fund;

(b) the amount of the refunds paid out of the fund;

(c) the amount of the tolls collected in respect of each type, class or configuration of vehicle;

(d) the cost of administering the toll collection program;

(e) the amount of payments made to the concessionaire or any other person from the fund; and

(f) such other information as the Minister considers advisable.

(2) The Minister shall lay the report before the Legislative Assembly no later than the first sitting of the Legislative Assembly following the expiry of six months after the end of the fiscal year that is the subject of the report.

I have a question to the Minister. Could the Minister advise how this government is going to determine what is the administrative framework to administer this section of the legislation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am barely sure what the Member's question is, but if she's referring to the administration framework for the Deh Cho Bridge fund, this is a fund that is collected from heavy traffic using the bridge. That's traffic that is subject to the tolls. That money will be collected, it will be administered by the department, it will be accounted for and we will do a report on it. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Has the department or the government... I guess I don't know exactly which department will be responsible for this, but what sort of employees and extra costs will the government require in order to meet the obligation required under this section?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: The department responsible will be the Department of Transportation. There is no anticipated need for additional employees. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure that we could have that much certainty about this. I am saying this because normally when things are being collected for the government it is usually in Finance or some number crunchers or in that collection or that sort of area. So I guess I want to know if there is any current regime in the Department of Transportation that does similar work and if that is not the case then should we be expecting some additional expenditures to accommodate that?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we have a fairly complex system right now of collecting all sorts of charges and fees from heavy traffic. That includes the motor fuel tax, permits, licence fees and other things. This does not require the creation of a whole new regime. There is one in place in the department already. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, while there might be a position there already doing similar work, but they will be taking on new work because we are talking about a bridge, a totally new project, raising enough money to pay for a \$55 million cost over a number of years, so we are adding new duties and responsibilities to whatever is existing. So I would like to ask the Minister whether or not we should be looking at any additional resources that are required to take on this extra task? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we have agreements with common carriers and other traffic. We have a compliance branch. We have accounting people. So there already is a system in place. This is just one more thing that we will be collecting money on. It is not a very onerous load onto whatever we have. It is the number of trucks that are travelling over that bridge are the same ones that we are collecting other fees from. We do not anticipate any additional costs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 5, clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the same purpose that I had stated earlier, I would like to read section 8 because I don't know if the Minister would like to read in the section 8 for the record, so I would, Mr. Chairman. Section 8, subsection (1), the Minister may appoint transport officers to enforce this act and the regulations. Subsection (2), a person appointed by the Minister as a motor vehicles officer under subsection 3.18(1) of the Motor Vehicles Act is by virtue of that office a transport officer under this act. Subsection (3), a Member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is by virtue of that office a transferred officer under this act. I have a question for the Minister. What exactly is the duty and responsibility of transport officers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the duty of the transport officers is inspections and compliance, but if you want more detail I will ask Mr. Vician to give a more detailed description of their job.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Lee, does that answer your question or would you like...

MS. LEE: I would appreciate more details. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Motor vehicles officers are responsible for enforcement on our highway system of the Motor Vehicles Act and the provisions and regulations pursuant to that which include the large vehicle control regulations of particular note. They are similarly responsible for the administration of the administration of the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and related legislation under that area, which is very comprehensive and applies to all of our trucking industry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Should we be expecting to see any need for an increase in our number of transport officers for their duties being expanded as a result of this bridge being in operation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: No, Mr. Chairman. As I said earlier, there is no anticipated need for any additional people. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What are the functions of the transport officers doing now without having the bridge in place?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vician just explained what the duties were, but I will...

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry. I do recall that that question was asked, so another question I have here is on subsection (3). It says that a Royal Canadian Mounted Police could be a transport officer under this act. So I would like to ask the Minister what is the need of this section is and in what circumstances would an RCMP officer be appointed a transport officer?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The RCMP have all the same duties under the Motor Vehicles Act as do our transport officers, so this would be an additional duty for them as well. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Given the purpose and the nature of this legislation, which is to facilitate the building and operation of the Deh Cho Bridge, would we be envisioning an RCMP officer collecting tolls or watching the people going on the bridge? Is that the kind of work that a layperson could envision an RCMP officer doing? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, we would not have an RCMP officer there collecting tolls or anything like that. The RCMP will have the powers to enforce this legislation and other pieces of the Motor Vehicles Act as they do right now. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. But with all due respect, Mr. Chairman, I do believe we are talking about different things here. I mean, of course it is reasonable to assume that the RCMP would be enforcing this legislation like they would any other legislation that we pass that is under their authority, but in this case we are passing this legislation to say that the RCMP is a transport officer for the purpose of this officer and those are very specific duties for transport officers that are separate and apart from what we would normally assume are duties of RCMP. So I believe my question was not whether or not the RCMP would enforce this legislation. I accept that as a fact. But what role would an RCMP officer play in their role as a transport officer under this act as set out in this subsection? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as we all know, the RCMP have appointments as ex-officio officers under a lot of our legislation, whether it is the Motor Vehicles Act, the All-Terrain Vehicles Act and so on. That is an appointment that is there in the event that they have to enforce some violation of the legislation that they have the authority to do that. It is a very common practice. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: But, Mr. Chairman, that still tells me that this is a common practice. It is done in every other legislation. But it does not tell me exactly what the RCMP might be called to do. I

am told that they would not be involved in collecting tolls or something like that, but I am not with the Department of Transportation. I do not run into a transport officer on a daily basis. The description of a transport officer is pretty vague and I am wanting to know what it is that the duties of a transport officer the RCMP might be called upon to do. I think there is a little bit of infusion about whether or not, I guess what the Minister is saying is then, they are putting the RCMP section here that would allow that RCMP or an RCMP officer to become a transport officer for this section just in case they have to do something that a transport officer would do under this act. So that still begs the question, what is it that the... Can I just get an everyday example of what a transport officer does that an RCMP officer might be called upon to do? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, if someone were to choose to violate or not comply with the provisions in this act, then through this appointment the RCMP would have the authority to charge the person or enforce the act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 9. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, clause 9 reads that a person who contravenes this act or the regulations is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000. Could I get the Minister to tell us as to, under the calculations that we have and that we are proposing, under the toll system based on the tonnage of vehicles, what would a regular truck that we know of, because I am not an expert in the trucking industry either and I could not tell you the difference between one truck and another, but I guess I could tell the sizes of them. So could I get the Minister to, for the interest of the public to know, what would be the typical toll of a freight truck? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the toll right now is estimated at \$5 to \$6 a tonne. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are there any other requirements under the law that people could contravene and become subject to a summary conviction other than... I am only envisioning someone who is supposed to pay the toll not paying the toll. Is there any other kind of violation that drivers or any other person might be subject to under this act?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no. This act deals with the toll and there could be other violations that would most likely come under the Motor Vehicles Act and would include things like speeding and so on. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I seem to recall there being some kind of rules about the use of the bridge. Are we envisioning a bridge where not only could the vehicles travel, but people could travel across, as well? Is there -- I am sorry, I don't know if that is related to the section -- but is there going to be any violation on people of the act?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there is no plan right now, I do not believe, to build a walkway on the bridge, but as it is part of the public highway system pedestrians could walk across it and I think in the design of the bridge consideration should be taken for safety. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Clause 9.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 10. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My clock is not renewed yet. We are in a different section. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, section 10 reads:

10 (1) Subject to subsection (2), the Commissioner in Executive Council may make regulations

(a) establishing tolls for vehicular use of the Deh Cho Bridge which tolls may defer in relation to

(i) the type, class or configuration of vehicle using the Deh Cho Bridge,

(ii) the date or time of that use,

(iii) the method of payment of the toll;

(b) describing types, classes and configurations of vehicles for purposes of establishing tolls;

(c) respecting the collection of tolls and enforcement of the collection of tolls;

(d) respecting methods of payment of tolls, including establishing standards for agreements allowing owners of vehicles to remit toll payments on a periodic basis;

(e) respecting the refund of tolls;

(f) exempting types, classes or configurations of vehicles, either generally or in specified circumstances, from requirements to pay tolls;

(g) respecting the assumption by the government of responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the Deh Cho Bridge under section 4, including but not limited to

(i) the provision of notice to the concessionaire,

(ii) the deduction of costs incurred by the government from amounts payable to the concessionaire; and

(iii) the return of responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the Deh Cho Bridge to the concessionaire; and

(g) generally for carrying out the purposes and provisions of this act.

(2) The Minister shall, at least 90 days before the proposed effective date of a regulation that the Commissioner and Executive Council proposes to make under any of paragraphs (1)(a) to (f)

(a) cause the proposed regulation to be published in the Northwest Territories Gazette, and

(b) cause a notice indicating how a copy of the proposed regulation may be obtained to be published in a newspaper broadly circulated in the Northwest Territories,

and a reasonable opportunity shall be afforded to interested persons to make representations with respect to the proposed regulation.

(3) Subsection (2) does not apply in respect of a proposed regulation that

(a) has previously been published has been the subject of a notice published in accordance with subsection (2), whether or not the proposed regulation has been changed as a result of representations made by interested persons as provided in that subsection; or

(b) makes no material substantive change in an existing regulation.

Mr. Chairman, I was trying to understand this while I was reading it. Mr. Chairman, one of the things that the government does is make regulations in this regard, I mean, regulations of any types that arise out of any legislation. But with respect to this specific set of regulations that the government will have powers to do, what kind of process is he going to set up to determine all these details of regulations? How is that normally done? How is that done by the Minister? Does he do consultations or is there something that in this case the government will speak to the concessionaire or the Bridge Corporation about? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the extent of these regulations will be largely determined by the agreement with the concessionaire. Once the regulations are in place, then we would follow the normal process of developing regulations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Clause 10. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know there was a question about this section and I don't know if there is any amendment coming, but there was a question and a serious

concern raised by committee Members that we should have some level of say and influence about how the tolls are charged and we suggested that maybe there should be a standard about whether or not it is fair and reasonable and such. So I would like to know from the Minister, how would the interest of the public be protected in the way these tolls and regulations are set up? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, once Ms. Lee has asked her questions I do have an amendment that I would like to propose, but if you want I will wait until Ms. Lee is finished.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Minister Handley, I think maybe the amendment may clarify some of the questions that Ms. Lee is asking. So, Ms. Lee, would it be appropriate for the Minister to move his amendment now? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: That will be fine with me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Minister Handley, if you want to move your amendment.

Committee Motion 124-14(6) To Amend Clause 10 of Bill 13, Carried

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I move that clause 10 of Bill 13 be amended by

- (a) deleting subclause 10(2) and by substituting the following:
 - (2) the Minister shall, at least 90 days before the proposed effective date of a regulation that the Commissioner in Executive Council proposes to make under any of the paragraphs (1)(a) to (f)
 - (a) cause the proposed regulation to be published in the Northwest Territories Gazette,
 - (b) cause a notice, including a copy of the proposed regulation, to be provided to
 - (i) Members of the Legislative Assembly,
 - (ii) aboriginal governments whose interest may be affected by the enactment of the proposed regulation,
 - (iii) municipal corporations whose interest may be affected by the enactment of the proposed regulation,
 - (iv) an organization representing the interests of the commercial transport industry in the Northwest Territories, and
 - (v) an organization representing the interests of the business community in the Northwest Territories, and
- (c) cause a notice indicating how a copy of the proposed regulation may be obtained to be published in a newspaper broadly circulated in the Northwest Territories,

and a reasonable opportunity shall be afforded to interested persons to make representation with respect to the proposed regulation.

- (b) by striking out "notice published" in paragraph 10(3)(a) and by substituting "notice provided or published".

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Just a question I have in regard to that reasonable opportunity shall be afforded to interested persons to make a presentation with respect to the proposed regulation. What is the process that you plan to use? Is it going to be a public process where we are going to have public meetings or are there going to be just that they can have written submissions or are there actually going to be a public hearing process that we will hear from the public on these regulations that are changed?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the intention would be to offer public meetings and if people want to put in written submissions that is fine, and, of course, we use the media. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. Ms. Lee, to the motion.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I support this project and therefore this legislation that would allow the project to proceed, but I don't think I can support this motion because it does not address the concerns that the Members expressed. One is a concern expressed by the public as well, because the public understands that we are going to have a bridge that will be tolled. It is the first of its kind in the Territories and the public wants to be assured that there will be some kind of control over how much the level of toll will be.

The suggestion that the committee made was that there should be some section in there that says the toll should be fair and reasonable. While the definition and interpretation of what might constitute what is fair and reasonable for a toll, I do believe that that is a commonly used language in law and that over time there will be judicial decisions on that if asked, and any judicial interpretation will take into consideration the cost of operating and the reasonable profit for the corporation; cost of financing their mortgage and other types of things that would be seen to be reasonable and fair.

Also, the government will have the power to set out different sections in there that would speak to what is reasonable and fair. But the position of the government has been that that would be too restricting and they don't want to be subject to too much court challenge on that basis. Even when the committee Members suggested that we will more clearly define what might constitute reasonable and fair -- and that that includes three things -- we were very specific about that, but the Minister was not prepared to go with that and that is a concern to me because this motion as it reads basically says that it is really up to the government and the corporation as to how the tolls will be set. The only thing they have to do is to make sure that it is public and that it is in a Gazette or it is in newspapers, and I

suppose letters will be sent out to various governments and MLAs that the tolls will go up. The notice has to be given 90 days prior. But if I were an MLA sitting in my office and I get this notice and the people hear about it through the papers and they say these rates are unreasonable, I am not going to be able to do anything about that, nor will the government need to do anything about that because the only obligation under this motion if passed and made into law is that they simply have to give a notice of it and if they meet the requirement for 90 days notice that is all they have to do.

So I would like to ask the Minister why it is not acceptable for the government to have a clause there that states that the tolls have to be not only advertised to let the public know as to what the level is, but that it should be fair and reasonable? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think we have been around this one in the committee already, but let me point out first of all that there is a memorandum of agreement in place that has been posted. There have been meetings. So that determines the arrangement that we have with the owner of the bridge. As well, Mr. Chairman, as Ms. Lee knows, you have to read the bill as a whole, and clause 6(3) spells it very clearly that the tolls have to be used only for specific purposes. That is to pay the toll on the bridge and any of the costs that are associated with operating that bridge and paying down the amortization on it. So it is very clear that that is the only thing the tolls can be used for. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: But other than having this information, we are just basically going to be told what the toll is and that we will be told 90 days in advance where there will be any increase. This motion says here on section 2(c) that notice of copy of the proposed regulation and assuming that it is no notify of an increase that there will be a reasonable opportunity... Well, it says here, a reasonable opportunity shall be afforded to interested persons to make representation. So we are saying in this legislation that people can make their presentations and say their piece, but there is nothing in this legislation that gives anybody any power to have a say on exactly what the rate of that toll is. So it is, in a way, an empty power because people could be notified and people could call and say they don't like it, but nothing is going to come out of that.

So I really do believe that it is not complete. It is weak. I do not see the justification for not allowing some kind of a standard to be put there because the sections that the Minister mentioned says, you know, a reasonable... The corporation has the right to make profit and cover the costs. But how can anybody know what reasonable revenue is? What is a corporation allowed to make? I don't want to create any impression that the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation will be out there to gouge the people or anything like that or businesses, but I think the important point here is that this is a public infrastructure. It is going to be funded by a toll and I think it is the responsible thing to do for the government to have a provision there that would give an assurance to the people that the tolls being charged are reasonable and fair.

So I understand that some of these issues were brought up in the committee, but I state once again that the proceedings and

the work that we do in committees are behind closed doors. It is between the Members and the Minister, and the rule of the game is that it is not something that is for public consumption. So this is a public law, it is legislation that is going to affect the people and I do believe that the Minister has an obligation to explain why, in doing a cost-benefit analysis of having that clause in there, why it is not desirable on the part of the government to have that. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, again I want to emphasize that this is the Deh Cho Bridge fund act. The legislation sets out very carefully and very clearly the purposes how that fund is collected and the purposes for which it can be spent. As I said before, those purposes are laid out in a memorandum of understanding that sets the terms. This act is very explicit in what the funds can be used for and the government is responsible for its regulations, both legally and politically. We have set up, gone much further than any other legislation I can think of in a public process for letting people know if there is going to be a change in the tolls and providing opportunity for input. If people feel that we are verging on going outside of the provisions in the act or have something that is unfair, there is already a process in there. So adding in other words, in my view, Mr. Chairman, is redundant. The act is very clear of what we can spend this money on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Handley. I would also remind Members that although our committee process may be behind closed doors, we did have public hearings on this bill and any issues could have been brought up in public at the public hearings. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I accept your ruling there and I just want to correct the Minister that this is the Deh Cho Bridge Act not the Deh Cho Bridge fund act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 10, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The bill as a whole, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that Bill 13 is ready for third reading as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill 13 is now ready for third reading as amended. I would like to thank the Minister and witnesses for appearing.

---Applause

Before we go into the next item on the agenda, the chair is going to call a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. As previously agreed, we'll deal with Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Bill 18: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the Minister have any opening comments? Mr. Handley.

Minister's Opening Comments

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, requests authority for a reduction to operations expenditure appropriations of \$627,200 and for additional appropriations of \$35.038 million for capital investment expenditures.

Major items included in the request for additional operations expenditures are as follows:

1. \$1.9 million for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to fund communities for increases to insurance premiums.
2. \$1.9 million for the Department of Health and Social Services for additional expenses to be incurred as a result of the new agreements with general practitioners operating under standardized physician contracts and fee-for-service positions.
3. \$1.8 million for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for the additional expenses to be incurred as a result of the finalization of the collective agreement between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association.
4. \$1.3 million for the Department of Justice for additional resources for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The operations funding requests are within the reduced 2003-2004 supplementary funding reserve of \$10 million. The reserve was reduced as part of the economizing measures introduced in light of current fiscal uncertainty.

Supplementary Appropriation, No. 1 also includes \$10.6 million in operations expenditure reductions from the internal restraint measures being implemented by departments. The major request for capital investment expenditures is \$34 million, and capital carryovers from the 2002-2003 fiscal year. The funding was approved and lapsed in 2002-2003.

Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared to review the details of the supplementary appropriation document.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): At this time, I'd like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, I will, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree the Minister brings in witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

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

For the record, Mr. Handley, could you introduce your witness.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with me is Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome, witness. Before I allow for general comments, I just want to remind the Members that under section 79, the rules of the House in regard to Committee of the Whole:

1. No Member shall speak for more than 10 minutes at any one time in Committee of the Whole.
2. Subject to the discretion of the chair, a Member may speak more than once on a matter under discussion, but not until every Member wishing to speak has spoken.

I just want to assure that we allow for other Members, and to allow fairness in the House. So I will be reminding you if this rule does apply. I will be enforcing it if I have to. General comments, Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act. General comments. Ms. Lee.

General Comments

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to offer a few general comments. I understand that a supplementary appropriation is sort of a mini budget, where after a main budget is passed in the spring session, the government comes back with additional items that the legislature is supposed to approve. I understand that the Minister is requesting upwards of \$10 million of cuts. I think it is really important, and, Mr. Chairman, you made a statement earlier today about the fact that we have a population of 40,000 people but a budget of about \$900 million or more. With that amount of money for this relatively small figure in comparison to other jurisdictions in Canada, we should be doing much better with the money we have. Mr. Chairman, you gave an example of various studies that the government has engaged in, some of them with better results than others. We have spent millions and millions of dollars either reviewing a policy or in some other ways. I think this should be a concern for everyone, that we will be engaged in major cuts here because we're going to be cutting \$10 million from what was already approved.

Another thing I noticed in our review of the supplementary budget in our committee, was the lack of information that we had on each item. I believe almost all of the line items had a very brief explanation as to what the expenditure request or reduction requests constituted, and many of them were economizing measures, without giving us any idea what sort of exercise was followed in determining those reductions and what sort of criteria was followed, and was it a case of the government is short of money so the government sends out a

message to all the departments and issues an order that every department should come up with that money.

Mr. Chairman, while I understand that government is in a difficult situation and that it needs to look at spending cuts, a problem with that sort of direction is that we may be cutting things where things are working, but not cutting enough where things should be cut.

Another thing I think a lot of Members expressed in our review, was that in many of the cutting items, there would be a budget of \$900,000 cut here or \$100,000 cut there or \$200,000 cut there, and the indication from the Minister is that the impact of those kinds of cuts will be low or medium. The questions that come to mind when you're looking at things like that is that we spend hours and hours arguing for \$50,000 there or a \$100,000 project in my community, or whatever. It's just such an uphill battle to get any kind of budget item in the budget. For Mildred Hall School, for example, they're having to do a real patching job in their renovation of a school building that is as old as the city -- well, not quite, about half as old as the city -- and we're not able to do anything more to that building other than basic renovations to meet safety and fire regulations.

Yet when you are faced with a budget proposal in a supplementary appropriation like this one that says \$200,000 or \$300,000 could be cut with low or medium impact, then one has to ask why it was in there in the first place. So I do believe it was the frustration on the part of lots of Members that we do not have as much say and control over how the government spends its \$900 million budget, and the fact that we see three months later we're faced with having to cut \$10 million and to be given very minimal information as to how that came about, how it was determined who was going to get cut by how much, and a lack of detailed analysis as to what the real impact of that might be. So I think that is something that lots of Members addressed.

Mr. Chairman, I know that one of the things that the Minister is asking for here is \$1.9 million in additional expenses for the contracts for general practitioners. As we are aware, there has been lots of discussion about the negotiations going on for other medical practitioners. So as we move along I am going to be asking more detailed questions about that.

Another thing that I remember from our discussions was I think there's upwards of about \$900,000 being cut in one section of Education, Culture and Employment. I realize and I appreciate that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is one of the biggest spending departments we have, probably right up there with the Department of Health and Social Services. But that is one area, for example, where it's not the whole department, but just one section. I think it's the continuing education and adult education where we've been asked to cut a lot of money.

Mr. Chairman, I guess the Minister will say -- and I'm not going to put words in his mouth, but it's something that I've heard lots of time -- we have different spending pressures and the major grievances that we have, is the fact that we don't have a very good financial arrangement with the federal government and we're not getting our fair share, not only in our arguments about the number of people who actually live here as a result of the census -- and everybody who lives here brings us a transfer payment in the amount of somewhere between \$16,000 to \$18,000, the numbers change all the time -- but also the fact that we are not getting enough of a share of our resources from economic and industrial development. I believe that is one

area of pursuit that government has to be engaged in, and every successive government has gone to Ottawa and said all of our grievances and claims about what we are entitled to.

But as you stated earlier, Mr. Chairman, I do believe that we have a responsibility to do our spending wisely. I must tell you, I'm in a committee that reviews finance budgets, and to understand the financial forecast of departments is almost impossible. It is so difficult to understand on what assumptions we come up with in our budget, because so much of our state of deficit or debt depends on what our projection of revenue was and what our projection of the total budget was, and how we spend on that basis. It seems that for the first three years we were doing really well, we had lots of money for everything. Every time a Minister came and talked to us, we found extra money here and extra money there and we're getting some money from the federal government and so on. Then all of a sudden we're in complete dire straits and we may be hitting the debt wall of \$300 million a lot faster than we could. So that's another area of frustration that I have experienced as a Member in examining the budget that is forwarded by the government and the Minister. Now we're talking about a supplementary budget, and we're also having to enquire and get information about how government justifies its spending and so on.

I have a question that I asked the Minister in my line of questions about the specialists' negotiation. One of the things I said was that if the worst possible scenario happens...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee, your 10 minutes is up. General comments.

---Applause

Excuse me, could we have some order in the House. We're dealing with Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act. General comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

Detail

Legislative Assembly

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Detail. Could we go to page 5. Legislative Assembly operations expense, office of the Clerk, negative \$139,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I have the government give a breakdown of the operational expense? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee, your question wasn't clear. Could you elaborate a little more on exactly what type of detail you're looking for?

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we're on page 5, and we're on operations budget. I would like to know the breakdown of the \$139,000 not previously authorized. Is that the item we're on? May I just get clarification as to exactly what item we're on?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are on page 5, Legislative Assembly, operations expense, office of the Clerk, negative \$139,000. Mr. Handley, could we get clarification on the negative \$139,000?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is a reduction. It's made up of three items: the Clerk's office, a reduction in travel of \$8,000; a deputy clerk's office, a reduction in language services, \$67,000; and a reduction in committees' activities resulting in prioritization of the Assembly essential business, \$64,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Office of the Clerk, negative \$139,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're talking about a reduction in travel of \$8,000 and \$67,000 in languages, which I assume is the money required to provide interpreter services or provide publications that arise out of the Legislative Assembly in different official languages. So I would like to know, first of all, what sort of criteria and standard was applied in coming up with this reduction. As we are aware, as we spend lots of time in this building here, there are lots of things going on in this building. So I'd like to know from the Minister what sort of exercise was engaged in coming up with this reduction of \$139,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley, could we get a breakdown of the \$139,000?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, each department in government was given a target of 10 percent of their discretionary money to achieve as part of the reduction measure. The reduction measure, of course, is to keep our costs in line. With the particular item that I talked about and reducing travel of \$8,000, that's simply doing a little less travelling over the current fiscal year.

A reduction in language services; that is money that I understand is surplus to our needs. We don't need to do as much translation as anticipated, and it's largely surplus money.

On the other reduction in committee activities, that is money that the Speaker's office felt could be reduced, given the anticipated workload. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Office of the Clerk, negative \$139,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I've heard a number of times in this Assembly from many Members that there's not enough translation work being done to translate not only what is spoken here into official languages, but the documents that arise out of this committee. So I'm finding it hard to believe that a cut of \$67,000 in the language budget is not really a big deal. Apparently it's not usually spent to the limit. So I'd like to know what is the total budget to start with for the languages program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I understand that the language services budget is \$167,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, negative \$139,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I just get a more detailed breakdown on how that \$167,000 was supposed to be spent in the first place? Now we're reducing it by \$67,000 so now we only have \$100,000 for languages in the Legislative Assembly. So may I get information as to how that money was supposed to be spent, in more detail? Am I right in thinking it's for interpretation and translation of documents?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: That's correct, Mr. Chairman. It's been for interpretation and translating documents. So that's the only category for this amount of money.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question about the \$64,000 reduction for committees. I've been a chair of a special committee, and my understanding was that there was no budget allocated for a special committee, but that you sort of have the permission to ask for a budget to conduct our duties. We hire research services, or legal services, or we travel to communities for public hearings on an issue or a bill or something like that. So could I get information on what is the budget for the committees to start with, then how would this \$64,000 reduction impact on the work of the committees?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the budget for the committees is something that is determined by the Board of Management. I don't know what their total budget is. I'm assuming that, depending on committee workloads, that amount can vary from year to year. The amount that has been identified here -- \$64,000 -- is a number, is an amount that the Board of Management told us they have some flexibility with and they felt they could offer it up as part of the economizing measures. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 5, Legislative Assembly, operations expense, office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, negative \$139,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We know that through the course of the work of this Assembly in this session thus far, we've been sitting for about five working days, and I know that we've passed a lot of... Not a lot by our normal standards, but a great deal of legislation that would require us to engage in public hearings and it would require us to travel to communities. There is a possibility where even though we're going to do a 10 percent cut here, or whatever the percentage is, we will see a case where we may be going back for more money if it happens that our work gets overloaded and we're going to need more services and we need to travel more and so on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The question is sort of hard to read, because your assumption is that if this happens or that happens. We don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, and I don't think the Minister is privy to what will happen, so I rule that question out of order. Legislative Assembly, operations expense, office of the Clerk, negative \$139,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize that the Minister of Finance can only do so much. He sent out the directive to different departments, and the Board of Management is in charge of budget items for the Legislative Assembly and it has suggested that these are the areas where they could meet the need for economizing their budget and meet the guideline for 10 percent. If I am being hypothetical, then I'll rephrase that question. Is it a normal case that a section of a department, especially in the Legislative Assembly, where you have a certain budget, that something takes on a life of its own, it could be the Official Languages Act, or we have legislation, the Nursing Profession Act that's going to allow midwifery? Sorry, that's been passed. No, the Nursing Profession Act has been

passed, but not the Midwifery Profession Act. We have lots of other legislation that's...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me, Ms. Lee. We are dealing with the item which is the office of the Clerk. We are talking about an item that's not previously authorized, negative \$139,000. So could you stick to that subject? Thank you.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just saying that based on what we know about what we do, I would like to know, in any section of any government department, what do people do when they run out of money and there are extraordinary circumstances where they have to spend more money? Do they go back to Finance?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chair, committee chairpersons, like any heads of departments or divisions are all responsible for managing within their budget, and we expect that they will be able to do that. If there are some unforeseen circumstances, or something arises that's beyond their control, then there is a process for them to apply for supplementary money. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 5, Legislative Assembly, operations expense, office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, negative \$139,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Office of the Speaker, negative \$20,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, may I get the breakdown of the \$20,000 reduction that the Minister is asking us to vote on?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, my information from the Board of Management is that this is a single item, and the amount out of the cultural enhancement program that is being reduced is \$20,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Bell, are you making a point or are you going to ask a question? Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know we received much of this detail in committee...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee has the floor, so I will put you on the list and I'll come to you.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, \$20,000 will be cut out of the cultural enhancement program. We have been getting correspondence from within this building to think of ways to make this place of people more reflective of the cultures of the Northwest Territories, and it's something that has been asked by many Members of this House. So I would like to know from the Minister what was the amount of money budgeted in the first place for the cultural enhancement program so I could know what is the percentage of the reduction in that program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't know what the total amount is that the Board of Management has set for the cultural enhancement program. I could ask the Clerk to give us some breakdown, if he has the information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Hamilton.

MR. HAMILTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The amount that was included in the office of the Speaker for the cultural enhancement program; there was \$55,000 in the Speaker's budget last year to develop an implementation plan for a cultural enhancement program for the Legislative Assembly building and the surrounding capital site. That was in last year's budget.

What was contained in this current budget in the Speaker's office was this \$20,000, which was to begin the implementation of the cultural enhancement program. The consultant's report, when it was received by the Board of Management, indicated that if we are to do an effective job for cultural enhancement in this building and the grounds, the \$20,000 would not be sufficient to do that. So it was the view of the Board of Management that it wouldn't be in the best interest to spend \$20,000 this year, so this money has been reduced out of the budget of the office of the Speaker until the board can review the implementation plan and then decide on its course of action. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Am I to understand that this program has, in effect, come to an end? There is really no further progress to be made there, other than... I just want to make sure there are no other studies being done to do anything further. This has ended on this, even though this legislature, for some reason, approves a whole whack of money.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'll refer that to the Clerk.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Hamilton.

MR. HAMILTON: Mr. Chairman, I think the best way to describe it is with taking the \$20,000 of this current fiscal year there will be no expenditures made on the program, because the Board of Management have not yet adopted what would be the cultural enhancement program for this building and grounds.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Office of the Speaker, not previously authorized, negative \$20,000. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Mr. Chairman, we've received much of the detailed breakdown that goes with this bill in committee, and I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance if he would be prepared to table or distribute that detail to us so that we don't have to ask him for detail on every section that comes up. If we can have that information in front of it and refer to it, that would be helpful. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, certainly, we'd be willing to distribute the information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you. Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, negative \$20,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, officer, not previously authorized, negative \$9000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think Mr. Bell was present when I stated earlier that it is a common practice in this House that a lot of work gets done behind the scenes during committee, because that's necessary for the smooth running of the business. But we are introducing this in this House, in the public forum, for the first time. It is a completely...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee, I would like to remind you we are dealing with the Legislative Assembly, office of the Chief Electoral Officer, negative \$9000. It has nothing to do with what other people think, see or do. We are dealing with the item in front of us, so could you speak to the item that's in front of us. Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, negative \$9000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we all know that this is election year. We have an election coming up on November 24th. It takes only common sense to realize that this place will be very busy -- the office of the Chief Electoral Officer -- and I would like to know what this \$9000 is coming out of in that budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it will be achieved through reduced attendance at annual conferences.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, is it possible for me to get information as to what sort of conference that could have been?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm able to keep track of information in my head, but I really don't know which conferences the Chief Electoral Officer is going to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I was in Nigeria observing an election. I have gained a great respect for smooth functioning of the office of the Chief Electoral Officer. I know that the work they do is important. If we approved a budget for \$9000 in the first place, I'm sure that there's a very good reason for these conferences. So now we're asking them to withdraw \$9000, and I think it's incumbent on me as a legislator to know what conferences these are and what kind of impact this would have on the professional growth or ability of the Chief Electoral Officer or whoever is in that office that was supposed to go to conferences. Or maybe this was just budget cuts set aside, but something that they chose not to use. I will tell you, I have gained new respect for Chief Electoral Officers. They travel all around the world, informing other people. So I'd like to know, I'd like to have that information, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'll refer that question to the Clerk.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Hamilton.

MR. HAMILTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reduction was a decision of the Chief Electoral Officer for attendance for two individuals to go to the annual conference of chief electoral officials, which was scheduled to be held in Newfoundland this year. The second one was for attendance of the Chief Electoral Officer at the annual meeting of the advisory board for the national register for Canada, of which the Chief Electoral Officer is a member of that board. It was felt that the professional development of the individuals who would attend this conference wouldn't suffer if they did not attend this year, and also because of the fact that this is an election year in the Northwest Territories, the attendance of those officials is required to be in the Territories, not travelling to Newfoundland. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, not previously authorized, negative \$9000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that was very good information. We know that the Chief Electoral Officer we have is one of the most experienced, so he may not suffer from not having that, but I'm sure the people who will be at that conference will miss his service. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): That's more a comment than a question. Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, not previously authorized, negative \$9000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Commissioner of Official Languages, not previously authorized, negative \$100,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me, Ms. Lee. We already passed that item. I didn't see your hand up. Legislative Assembly, operations expense, total department, not previously authorized, \$268,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the total budget for the Legislative Assembly, the amount being asked here not previously authorized is \$268,000 and \$100,000 of that will come from the Commissioner of Official Languages, which is 20 percent of the total budget of that office. So I would like to know what the impact of that cut is. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: The advice I have received is that it will have a minimal impact.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Legislative Assembly, operations expense, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$268,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, may I get a breakdown of that \$100,000? I don't think my clock renewed when I got into this item. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, again, this is information that will be provided to all Members as soon as it's copied. There's a \$5000 reduction in procurement of materials

and supplies, \$35,000 through implementation of a cost-sharing opportunity with the advisory board meetings, a \$10,000 reduction in legal services and other contract spending, and there is \$50,000 from a delay in staffing a research officer position until November 2003.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't get all of what was said there, but \$35,000 for implementation cost-sharing. I would like to know what that is, and what the impact of that will be. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Languages Commissioner has indicated that this would have minimal impact. I'm assuming by cost-sharing opportunities for the advisory board meetings means that there would be some coordination of those meetings with other events that the Languages Commissioner is managing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total department, Legislative Assembly, operations expense, not previously authorized, negative \$268,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Executive

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Executive offices, executive, operations expense, Commissioner's office, not previously authorized, negative \$6000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, may I get information as to what the \$6000 reduction is in the Commissioner's office? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is a reduction of \$6000 in travel. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are all aware that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories represents the people of the Territories, and one of the important functions that she performs is to travel and to meet the people. So I would like to know whether or not there is any information from the office as to what the impact of this budget cut will be. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Minister of FMBS, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I agree the Commissioner's office is important to the people of the Northwest Territories but, again, when money is tight, it doesn't hurt any of us to take a look at our travel expenses and find ways of economizing. So the Commissioner has agreed to do that through her office as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Commissioner's office, not previously authorized, negative \$6000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ministers' offices, not previously authorized, negative \$88,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ministers' offices, not previously authorized, negative \$88,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The detailed information that Mr. Minister so generously provided tells me that \$50,000 out of this \$88,000 will come from the cut in travel expenses for Ministers' offices. Once again, Ministers' offices perform a similar function as the Commissioner's. I know all the Members, especially the ones outside of Yellowknife, always want to see the Ministers travelling to their communities. We also know that Ministers travel to other federal/provincial meetings to discuss with other Ministers and to advance our agenda. So I'd like to know what is the total budget of the Ministers' travel in the first place, and what percentage this would constitute. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't have a total figure for Ministers' travel. I could tell you that the total budget for the operating budget for the Executive is \$7.523 million, but how it's broken down I don't have that detail. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ministers' offices, not previously authorized, negative \$88,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$38,000 remaining out of \$88,000 is the travel budget for the Premier. I'm understanding that this is a cut coming out of the fiscal year 2003-2004. We know that the Premier travels extensively to do his work. One way to know the impact of reduction is to know what the original budget was. So \$38,000 out of \$100,000 is almost 40 percent, whereas \$38,000 out of \$250,000 is a different figure altogether. So may I get the information from the Minister as to what is the total budget of travel for the Premier?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as I said before, I don't have the budget for the Premier's travel with me, so I don't know what the total budget is right now. I can tell you what the total budget is for the Executive, but not for each item. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It appears that the detailed information we got handed out to us is not detailed enough after all. I have a question, Mr. Chairman. We know the Premier is one person, and we have six Ministers. The Premier's office will get a cut of \$38,000 for one person, but six Ministers will share the cut of \$50,000. So what kind of criteria was applied to come up with the dollar figure?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the secretary to Cabinet would be the person who would have done the identification of the 10 percent of discretionary funding. In doing this, then I expect that she has spoken to the Premier and looked very carefully at what other areas may be affected. This item is

basically made up of salaries and travel money, then the amount that was targeted had to be taken from the travel side. How she arrived at how much from the Premier's office and the Ministers' offices is, I would expect, related to Ministers' and Premier's official duties. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ministers' offices, not previously authorized, negative \$88,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Cabinet Secretariat, not previously authorized, negative \$337,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I realize the total budget for the Cabinet Secretariat before this reduction is \$10.176 million, but \$337,000 will be cut this year. All 100 percent of that will come out of the maximizing northern employment program, which also has a program for the interns and summer students. The details the Minister has provided states that the number of available internship positions and summer student employment opportunities will have to be reduced. Refusal of the employment interested applicants could result in negative public reaction. So, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to know why is it that the entire reduction requirement, 100 percent of the reduction requirement under this secretariat, out of \$10 million, came out of one of the most popular programs that this government put in in the whole entire Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the intern budget makes up almost half of the Cabinet Secretariat budget. The intern program is a program where there is some discretion on how many positions would be identified to that program. As we said, when we provided the targets, we wanted to ensure that there was minimal impact on the permanent staff in the government. So rather than doing things that would have impact on staff who are indeterminate, the decision by the Cabinet Secretariat was to reduce by a small amount the budget for the intern program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The amount of \$337,000 is a lot of money for students and interns. Just the other day, I watched a TV add on CBC promoting and talking about, under the maximizing northern employment program, young people could get a job, and internship is a great opportunity for new graduates out of university to get their first job experience. Summer jobs for students are their lifeline. Anybody who has studied in postsecondary education knows that they couldn't possibly make their spending needs during the school year without a summer job. We know that summer jobs with the government is the cream of the crop. I would say, without doing any calculations or any analysis, that \$337,000 could be as much as 100 jobs; sorry, 10 jobs. I don't know how much students make. I guess they'll make \$5000 to \$10,000, I think. My summer students in my office will make about \$5000, so this is a lot of money. I think there should be a lot more comments and reactions in this House about this potential reduction. Mr. Chairman, does this mean that the summer student employment that is already underway has been impacted? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the total budget for interns and summer students is something over \$4 million. So when we look at it in relation to the total amount that's spent on hiring interns and summer students, this is a fairly small amount of money. The hiring of summer students and interns is still continuing. The impact has been minimal. I think this will be something that isn't going to cause a great wave. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on the internship program, has this reduction already come into effect? Are there any figures as to how many jobs we are looking to be reduced as a result of this reduction?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, these reductions don't come into effect until this bill is approved. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is he saying that there are no government departments where they might not have taken... Is it safe to assume, Mr. Chairman, that departments have already engaged in some sort of reduction, because they are expecting to cut their budget and, obviously, the decision has been made already that one of the ones that will be cut is the summer student program? I'm assuming while the Cabinet Secretariat may have the budget in their books, it is different positions in different departments that these summer students or interns will be employed. Mr. Chairman, has it not been undertaken already?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we're dealing with the Cabinet Secretariat, and the Cabinet Secretariat is proposing to reduce the intern and summer student budget by \$337,000. I can't speak about other departments, it's beyond this item for sure. I would expect that in any case, deputies and their staff are managing their money very well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Cabinet Secretariat, negative \$337,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Public Utilities Board, negative \$21,000, not previously authorized. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the impact statement here states that a high number of rate reviews in a given year could put a strain on PUB's ability to operate within budget. So there is an impact on this cut of \$21,000 out of a \$361,000 budget. Does the Minister have information directly from the board administration as to what sort of impact in more detail that this cut would have? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't have a crystal ball, nor does the Public Utilities Board. Again, as the detail says, we don't know how many rate reviews there will be for sure. If something unusual happens, then, yes, it could put a

strain on it and they would have to manage within that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Public Utilities Board, negative \$21,000, not previously authorized.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total Executive offices, not previously authorized, negative \$452,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Sorry, I agree with that. Sorry, I was on the next page.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total Executive offices, not previously authorized, negative \$452,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Financial Management Board Secretariat

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll move on to page 7. Financial Management Board Secretariat, Executive, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$12,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The information that I was provided to give me detail has no information on it at all about this cut. It says minimal impact, minimal impact, minimal impact for a \$12,000 reduction under directorate. So may I ask the Minister as to where this cut is coming from for \$12,000 out of the directorate? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'll ask the secretary to the Financial Management Board, since he is sitting here with me. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We intend to take this out of our information management unit, \$2000 out of materials and supplies, so we'll stretch our supplies more, we'll buy Bics instead of other pens. We're also looking at saving \$10,000 by changing our habits with provision of training material in some of our training sessions. We'll be using photocopy material. We'll be using clips instead of binders. We'll just do things to economize in the production of training material, which is a significant part of this budget. The material will still be effective, we'll just use more cost-effective ways of producing it.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of questions. One is this reduction is \$12,000 out of \$5.9 million. So I guess a good, commonsense observation could be made that they probably could do without this \$12,000. So my basic

question is to why in the program that I mentioned earlier, you're cutting out \$334,000 or something for student employment, but you're cutting only \$12,000 out of almost \$6 million? How do you explain that?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the direction that was given to departments was to identify 10 percent savings as discretionary money. The amount of discretionary money in each department and agency is very different. So in the case of the FMB Secretariat, a lot of the money, the \$5 million that Ms. Lee refers to, is fixed costs. There is no room, there is no discretion on that. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: The Minister mentioned that a lot of that \$5.9 million is fixed cost. Could I get information as to what fixed cost means?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley, you're indicating Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A lot of that would be salaries and wages for permanent staff. It would be our computer chargeback costs for the services we get from Public Works and Services and from the technical services centre. It would be the residual budget we have on staff housing, which would include our fixed leases and other arrangements we have for the residual inventory we have of housing, it would be our participation in the self-government negotiating process. So it's a cost of that nature, most of them being contractual obligations or salaries and wages.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Directorate, negative \$12,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Labour relations and compensation services, not previously authorized, negative \$269,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under this item of labour relations, the detailed information I have in front of me says that the impact of this will be that the staffing of a labour relations officer planned in the Fort Smith region would not go ahead, and there are different items of \$79,000, \$10,000, \$1000 and \$15,000 associated with that, which my quick calculation here amounts to \$105,000. So I'd like to know, we hear a lot in this House about the fact that we need to expand our regional operations, that everything is being done in Yellowknife. Is this an existing position that was already there, or was this something that was new this year but it came under the axe to meet the economizing measures? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is a new position this year, and the decision has been made by FMBS not to proceed with it. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Were there any other positions of this kind under this department, under this line, labour relations? Were there any positions planned in any other region of the Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, there are no other labour relations officer positions in any region.

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

MS. LEE: Then may I get the information as to what is the substantive information that the government went with in the first place to create this position? Was it an increased workload in labour relations in Fort Smith? Could I get information on that, please?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: As the Member may recall during business planning budget discussions for 2003-04, this was a pilot position that we were going to try to see if it would result in better labour relations services in the regions. But with the economizing measures, the decision was made that we should not proceed with it. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next item under that section, labour relations for a reduction of \$269,000, the detailed information that I've been provided says that there will be a \$20,000 cut in the management of arbitration. Could I get information about what this is about? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, through FMBS we do all of the arbitrations for all across the government, and this is just a case of economizing our work. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: So I gather from that, that this is for personnel or labour relations issues within the government that makes its way up to the arbitration process, and we are reducing that budget by \$20,000. So may I ask the Minister as to what is the extent of the backlog of arbitration that we have now? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there are always some arbitrations, so there will be some going on right now, but there is no backlog.

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

MS. LEE: I could appreciate it if the Minister doesn't have this information in the back of his mind, but maybe Mr. Voytilla would. What is the average length for arbitration and what is the cost of that usually? Do we have any idea about that?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there's no typical arbitration. It can vary greatly, so there's no way of us saying that there is some average cost. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that note, could I get information as to what would be a typical shortest arbitration and what is the length of some of the long arbitrations that the government has?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll ask Mr. Voytilla to provide that. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have two basic types of arbitration. We have one category we call expedited arbitration, which is for simpler cases where we try to group a number of arbitration cases together and have them held expeditiously by a single arbitrator. Then there are full arbitration cases which are usually the more complex ones. They vary quite substantially, from ones that we can get done in a few hours to ones that will take several days to work through. So there is no real norm, it really depends on the facts of the case.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you very much. The detailed information that I have here has \$20,000, \$10,000 and a \$5,000 reduction out of the \$269,000 that we're discussing, and it has to do with LR&CS management under labour relations. I have no idea what that is, so may I ask the Minister as to what that is? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, that's labour relations and compensation services.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It says that the supply spending will be cut by \$20,000 and contract spending will be cut by \$10,000 and purchase services will be cut by \$5,000 for a total of \$35,000. Could I ask the Minister as to what sort of supplies or contracts or purchase services we're talking about here that this section in this division in this department would typically be spending? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the supplies would be typical office supplies. The contract services would be things like hiring experts in the pay equity issues, job evaluation issues and so on. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This says here that we're going to be cutting \$10,000 out of supplies, so I have to ask how much do they have budgeted in the first place for supplies, and how would a cut of \$10,000 to buy supplies have no impact? Are we going to have people not having pencils, pens and paper to work on?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, when there is a shortage of money, we have to ask all people to practice restraint, and the labour relations and compensation services

section is no different than others. So they have chosen to find their money out of their supplies budget. They have a supplies budget probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$100,000.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you. It's very good to know... Lots of staff here; I'm sorry. Mr. Chairman, the next item in this budget, the detailed information says equal pay section of the labour relations will have a reduction in travel for equal pay matters and legal contracting spending for \$20,000 total, I think. We know that just earlier this evening we passed legislation having to do with the Public Service Act amendment for equal pay for work of equal value. What kind of impact would this have? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chair, the expectation is that the equal pay section will be able to handle this and that it should have minimal impact.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Labour relations and compensation services, not previously authorized, negative \$269,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Government accounting, not previously authorized, negative \$27,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The information I have under government accounting does not... Sorry, I was reading the wrong line here. We're cutting \$27,000 out of GA management. Could I ask the Minister as to what GA management is? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: On the information Ms. Lee will have, on the left-hand side it should say government accounting. GA stands for government accounting. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Government accounting, negative \$27,000, not previously authorized. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you very much. I'm sorry about that, I wasn't matching two and two together. Here under that GA management, it says that there will be a cancellation of a trip to the Association of Financial Administrators' meeting and a comptrollers' conference in PEI. It will reduce the replacement of equipment and of software upgrades. Mr. Chairman, as you're aware, we've had lots of discussions in and out of this House and in committees about the expenditures on computer equipment and software upgrades. There were suggestions made by some Members that maybe we should be upgrading the software, or even hardware less often in order to save more money, or maybe some of that equipment could be sent to communities. I do believe that we have been told many times that because of the requirements of the licensing of the software products, that we have to do the upgrades in a timely manner. So, Mr. Chairman, how would this impact the operation of GA management? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the government accounting section will manage very well. They indicate that they can do this and still maintain equipment that is capable of meeting their needs in the short term with basically little or no impact. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm looking at the next section in the detailed analysis, talking about reporting and collections. I must say that this is pretty detailed information. One of the items for a \$1000 cut says no longer provides 75 printed copies of the OAG report. We are right down to the number of copies here. But it does say that the impact of this will be that some of these reports will only be available online. So may I ask the Minister as to what are these reports, who uses them, what information does that convey, so I could access as to what the impact of that may be? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there are small items, but if we don't watch our \$1000 items, then it's very difficult to manage the big ones, as well. There are two kinds of reports here. The office of the Auditor General's reports, there are 75 copies of contract reports which are provided to departments, but they're also available online. Rather than duplicating, then departments can access the reports online. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Government accounting, not previously authorized, negative \$27,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Budgeting and evaluation, not previously authorized, negative \$93,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under budgeting and evaluation, the reduction of \$93,000, there is no information in the detailed report about that item. May I get a breakdown on that reduction? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley is indicating Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$93,000 is made up of \$37,000 in legal fee savings. There's another \$8000 that we'll save in travel, and \$48,000 will be saved in managing our vacancy rate.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. May I ask a question as to what sort of legal services this section normally obtains? Thank you.

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We normally retain legal assistance in working out loan guarantee arrangements with diamond manufacturers where they're looking for line of credit guarantees. We don't anticipate that we will have the volume that we have had in past years, so we don't see where this \$37,000 reduction will impact our services.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would this section be responsible for negotiating the financial arrangements necessary under the Deh Cho Bridge Act? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: No, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I ask what is the total budget of legal services under this section in the first place?

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

MR. VOYTILLA: It was \$67,000 for this year. We are giving \$37,000 back and keeping \$30,000.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Voytilla provided a breakdown earlier of the \$93,000, and \$48,000 of that I didn't quite hear, Mr. Chairman. My apologies. May I have that information again? Thank you.

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have two current vacant positions in that unit, and we're going to hold them vacant for a few more months until later in the year, and that will allow us to save \$48,000.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So what do those people that would normally be doing the work of these vacant positions do?

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These would be, as you can see the budgeting and evaluation unit, they would be Financial Management Board analysts or the support staff in the unit. So it would just require us to share the workload for a couple of months around the staff that are currently on strength.

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

MS. LEE: How long have these positions been vacant, and how many people are in that office that do similar work? Thank you.

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are about 12 people in that unit, so this is about a 15 percent impact for a couple of months. How long these positions have been vacant is not that long. I think one has been vacant a month and the other one has been vacant for a couple of months.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Budgeting and evaluation, not previously authorized, negative \$93,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Audit Bureau, not previously authorized, negative \$11,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I'm not mistaken, I believe this is the part of government that keeps track of... Maybe I should ask this. I'm assuming this is the section where the man who keeps track, the stats man and the man that does the census and such. Am I correct in assuming that? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: No, that's not correct.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then what do the people in the Audit Bureau do and what sort of contract funding are we eliminating in the amount of \$11,000?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Audit Bureau does auditing. They do our internal audits within the government. If there's any possibility of fraud, for example, they would check into that. They have a budget for contracts of about roughly \$60,000, and they feel they can economize by \$11,000 on it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Audit Bureau, not previously authorized, negative \$11,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total Financial Management Board Secretariat, not previously authorized, negative \$412,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Aboriginal Affairs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 8, Executive, operations expenditures, Aboriginal Affairs, not previously authorized, \$191,000 negative. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the things that are listed in the detail statement is the reduction of \$20,000 in travel for the DM, ADM and director of regional operations. Does the Minister have a figure on what the total travel budget is for these three positions?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, I don't have a number on what their total travel budget is. It is substantial, though, because of the nature of the business they're in, and negotiations requires a lot of travel. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Aboriginal Affairs, not previously authorized, negative \$191,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While I appreciate that this is a department that has seen more increases in budget than probably any other government department over the last two or three years, there is also an understanding that it is an

area where its work is becoming more immediate with the settlement of different aboriginal and self-government agreements. We have here, one of the items in the detail is a reduction of \$62,000 for contract services. So while the information I have here is supposed to be detailed, without knowing what the original travel budget was, it's hard to know what the impact of that is. Would the Minister be able to provide me with that now? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't have it with me. All of the Members have that detail already, it's in the budget. It was given to everyone when we approved the budgets for 2003-2004, but I don't have it here, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, I believe, with all due respect, I don't believe that we've gone through this detailed a review of budget in the life of this Assembly, and certainly not in any committee meetings I've attended. Mr. Chairman, the \$62,000 reduction here states, the impact statement is that it will force the ministry to utilize existing personnel to carry out the costing modeling exercise, resulting in an overall lowering of the quality of work performed as staff are spread thinner and thinner. Mr. Chairman, we know that just last Thursday, the Special Committee on the Implementation of Self-Government -- one that both you and I have been involved with, Mr. Chairman -- gave the government a lot more work. So I am interested in knowing what the impact of that implementation side of this government's work might be. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure how to quantify the impact of that. The reduction was put forward by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Clearly, they feel that they can manage with this kind of reduction to help in our economizing efforts. So I would expect that the impact is certainly manageable and likely categorized as minimal.

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

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, it says here that the reduction is in contract services. Could I get information as to what sort of contract services the implementation section of this department engages in? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure of all the issues they would have gone to contracting services for, but certainly the costing modeling exercise they're referring to is one that they would have done with contractors, and instead are doing it with existing personnel. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Costing of implementation of self-government is pretty well about the most important part of the negotiations process, in probably all of the aboriginal self-government agreements. The GNWT itself is in constant argument or discussion or relationships with the federal government as to this element of our budgeting, and it's been stated many, many times in and out of this House that it is really important for us to have good information on costing so that all the important elements of costing and the cost of delivering services or whatever else might come about are

addressed and dealt with in the negotiation process. Just as this work is becoming more important, we are reducing the budget by \$62,000. Without knowing the amount of dollars that was allocated in the first place, I don't really know what the impact might be. So I'm wondering, would the Minister not think that that might be a problem here, given the importance of this exercise in the overall implementation and negotiations?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no doubt that this reduction will be a challenge for Aboriginal Affairs in doing their work, but it's certainly not an impossibility or they wouldn't have put it forward as an economizing measure. So, Mr. Chairman, all I can say is clearly it's their view that this is doable, and they understand what they're doing. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next item speaks about the reduction for \$14,000 for contract services, which is exactly the same as the previous one. Previously under the implementation section, we're reducing \$62,000 in the contract services area. In this next section, the section under IGF, we're reducing \$14,000 in contract services. This again speaks to my inability to know what the impact of this will be, because we're just looking at raw numbers. We're looking at a \$14,000 reduction in one, and \$62,000 in another in the same area of contract services in two different sections, and it's really hard to know how that number came about or what the impact of that might be. So that is a little bit frustrating that I'm working without that information.

Mr. Chairman, I have a question on devolution, which is the next item, for \$10,000. That \$10,000 is a reduction of travel. This again is an area that is at the forefront of this government's agenda. The Premier has just travelled, and he travels extensively in meeting with the federal government and various counterparts, aboriginal governments across the Territories to advance this agenda. Again we're cutting this, and I understand that everybody else is engaged in the same thing, but without knowing what their travel budget on the devolution in this department was in the first place, it's really hard to know if everybody is taking their fair share of cuts and that the impact of those cuts will be evenly spread. So may I ask the Minister if he has any more information about what the travel budget for the devolution section was for this year in the first place? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, each department was asked to identify their controllable and non-controllable expenditures. They each did that. Then they were asked to identify 10 percent of their controllable budget. I don't think that we could be any fairer than that in asking everybody to use the same percentage amount. We pay the managers in each of these departments a lot of good money to be able to manage their departments. So they have to, all across government, tell us where they feel that they could make the cost reduction and still be able to manage their department effectively. So it is difficult for any of us here, since we don't manage those departments, to tell them exactly how they should do their job. I don't know exactly what the budget is. I'm assuming that they wouldn't have given this amount of money if they didn't feel it was manageable, and that's what they're paid to do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Aboriginal Affairs, not previously authorized, negative \$191,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under that item there will be a \$16,000 reduction in wages under the negotiations division, and it will mean a summer student will not be hired. So my first question is, is this on top of the \$300,000 something that was cut out of the Cabinet Secretariat under the Executive?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does he have information as to why under this section, which is in the same department as all the previous ones that I've mentioned under this department, and all of the cuts being proposed had to do with travel or contract services, except in this department, the only cut, and it's in the amount of \$16,000, is to not hire a summer student? So could I get an explanation as to why that exception? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the whole page, all of Aboriginal Affairs is one department, and these are the areas that they, in their wisdom and with their management expertise, have told us that they can cut from their controllable portion of the budget. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question about the \$48,000 cut out of \$191,000 and it comes under the intergovernmental forum. A reduction in salaries for \$48,000. A senior advisor position will not be filled for part of the year. Could the Minister indicate the importance of this impact, given this busy activity that is going on in IGF?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, certainly, the intergovernmental forum process is important. But again, clearly, the deputy minister of this department felt that he can manage the department effectively, while making this reduction. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Aboriginal Affairs, not previously authorized, negative \$191,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move to report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): A motion is on the floor. The chair does not recognize a quorum.

---Ring of Bells

There is a motion on the floor. The motion is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

We're on page 8, Aboriginal Affairs, not previously authorized, \$191,000 negative.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total for Aboriginal Affairs, negative \$191,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, negative \$1.55 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Finance

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 9, Finance, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$32,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The detailed information I have on page 9 of page 32 says travel and contract services for the deputy minister's office will be cut by 10 percent. So now these are good figures, because how we know if \$10,000 is 10 percent, the total budget must be \$100,000 for travel contract services.

---Interjection

MS. LEE: I know, I'm on the ball. It speaks again to the inconsistency, because that's the kind of information that I've been trying to get for all of the questions I asked under Aboriginal Affairs. So I think what people don't realize is how much budget there is for travel in government. Anyway, I know I'm not supposed to make general comments, I'm supposed to speak just on this item.

Mr. Chairman, it says here on the impact statement, possible reduction in attendance at federal/provincial/territorial or self-government meetings. It will also mean reduced capacity for economic analysis or managerial studies. So may I ask the Minister do we pay deputy ministers contract services for managerial studies?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, these would be studies for government purposes, not for the deputy minister's managerial skills. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do believe there is a whole section in the Department of RWED that is probably called economic analysis or business section of that department. So how does this relate to that section of the department? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this group of people in Finance are the people who do the formula negotiations. So they do their own economic analysis as it impacts on our formula and our negotiations of the formula. They work closely

with the economists who are in RWED on issues that are common. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I stated earlier, we have a Department of RWED, and among the many things that the department has a mandate for, one of them is to do economic analysis. The Finance department is a department of the government, and one would think that Finance will do its job and RWED will do its job. So why wouldn't the Department of Finance rely on the information gathered by another department that is mandated to do that work?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there are many types of economic analysis that are done. The economic analysis done in Finance would be around issues related to our formula, it could be with taxation or various other areas that are fiscal. The economic analysis that's done in RWED is different. There are some areas where there is some common purpose and room for the economists to work together. But clearly the economic analysis done in Finance is different than what is done in RWED. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$32,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the next item on the detailed information we have is an \$11,000 reduction under finance and administration, and it says that a furniture expense will be reduced by 100 percent. Computer hardware and software will be reduced by 100 percent, and travel will be reduced by 30 percent. It says here that no furniture or equipment replacement, and possibly reduced services to Hay River. So what is that about? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: The furniture reduction by 100 percent means that there will be no new furniture purchased. The finance and administration section will make due with the furniture and equipment that they have. The possible reduced services to Hay River is a result of the travel reduction. The Liquor Commission is headquartered in Hay River. The finance and administration people do make regular visits there. They will do more of their work by other forms of communication, including telephone and whatever else. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next section under deputy minister's office under the directorate, it says there will be lower student employment with fewer tasks performed, by reducing \$1000. It says it's a wage reduction by 50 percent, so I'm assuming the wage allocated under here is \$2000, and I don't know how you could get a student for \$2000 in the first place, and then you're going to half it by one. So what kind of work was this student supposed to do?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it's not uncommon for government departments, including this one, to hire students on a casual basis, for anywhere from a day or a few days to a

week or two weeks, and that would be the kind of work they would do. The work could range from photocopying to answering telephones to wherever there may be a short-term need.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The next section out of that \$32,000 reduction under directorate, it says a wage reduction by 100 percent and a training reduction by 100 percent. The very last part there says less staff training possibly resulting in employee turnover. Could I ask the Minister as to what that means?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, again, as I've said before, the deputies of each of the departments decide with their staff where they're going to undertake the economizing measures. Economizing measures will always have some impact. In this case, the decision was made to reduce wages for student employment in the finance and administration section by removing that opportunity altogether. The training would be reduced. It means that the finance and administration staff will not do any professional training this year.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under treasury we are looking at a reduction of \$33,000 for basically the same reasons as we've been discussing. It says that the impact of this cut will be reduced staff training and less contact with provincial and federal counterparts, less support from actuaries and brokers. Mr. Chairman, I once again want to state that this whole Department of Finance, by all accounts, and the statements made by the Minister in the House, is that we are engaged in a very long and bitter struggle with the federal government to get them to see our point of view about the lack of, or unfairness, or lopsidedness of our formula financing arrangement with the federal government. As well, another area is that there has been a huge increase in insurance rates, due to some of the losses that we suffered in the government in the Territories ourselves, but also probably from 911 or some of the major disasters in southern Canada. So I would think that this is an area that, if anything, more support might be needed. Again, without knowing the full figure of staff training and support for actuaries and brokers in the first place, I cannot access what the impact, financial and otherwise, might be. So does the Minister have any more detailed information on what that might mean? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the bottom line of this means that we will do less travelling and have less contract services. We have a very experienced, very competent staff in this area. Again, they have made a decision that they can do with the reduction that's outlined. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$32,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Treasury, not previously authorized, negative \$45,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are being asked to pass these budgets, and one of the most important things that MLAs do around here, or MLAs in this legislature and any other legislature, is to pass a budget and pass legislation. But even though the information that I have in front of me is about as detailed as you're going to get, there is a very serious lack of detailed information that would allow you for comparison. Dollar figures mean nothing unless you can compare it with something. You have to be able to come up with a percentage of something, or it's an increase of something, or a decrease of something. But having a figure that says a \$33,000 reduction and a \$12,000 reduction, it doesn't give us enough information to make a judgment about what the impact of that might be.

Another thing, Mr. Chairman, is when we debate and pass the main budget, Ministers and government argue tooth and nail for every cent that they come here for review and passing. But in this case, we are given every line, line by line, for all the reductions and they're going to make due with what they have. So I think it's sort of a contradiction in the presentation and that should be noted.

Mr. Chairman, under fiscal policy, a reduction of \$45,000; out of \$45,000, \$12,000 will be in reduced travel, and that would mean staff training and less contact with federal and provincial counterparts. Once again, this is a section that works on figuring out our budget and talking to the federal government about our tax regime and different calculations and different adjustments. So is the Minister not concerned that this might reduce their capacity to carry out their work? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as I've said several times tonight, certainly this has some impact. It has minimal impact. But, Mr. Chairman, we pay deputy ministers and their staff a lot of money to manage departments, and they're very competent people in being able to do that. We wouldn't normally be doing this kind of micro-managing review here. If they don't have all the information here, then I would suggest go back to the business plan documents, go back to the main estimates we passed this spring, and take that information and compare it to this. You'll have it all there. This is not a new budget, as Ms. Lee is calling it. This is supplementary appropriations; changes, adjustments to the budget that we've already passed. So we can't provide all that same micro-detail on the budget again, we've gone through that process. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Well, I guess the problem is in some sections that information is provided right here, like the one where the deputy minister's office is cutting their travel expenses or contract services by 10 percent, but in other sections they don't give that. So I think it speaks to as much of inconsistency in the way the information is put together, as much as the fact that this is a supplementary budget and it arises out of the main budget that we passed. Also, we know that even in business plans or the main budget, we don't get all that detailed information unless we ask. I mean, the budget document would be five feet tall if we had as much information as the Minister suggests that it does. Sure, you're given a general number, and if anybody wants to know, we are...(inaudible)... But I don't remember ever sitting anywhere and asking line by line every item. I mean, we had reviewed routinely hundreds of thousands of dollars of expenses. So I guess, Mr. Chairman, I have no question there.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there was no question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Treasury, not previously authorized, negative \$45,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Fiscal policy, not previously authorized, negative \$16,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, once again under fiscal policy, the reduction of \$16,000 means delaying the hiring of a staff position, except I don't know how you get anybody for \$16,000, but anyway. The impact is that it will be a reduced or delayed research for formula financing and/or devolution. So I'd like to ask the Minister... I don't believe that fiscal policy section is a very big section of the department, and the Finance department is small to start with. So I'd like to know what is the current complement of staff there, and is this a new vacant position? It says here there will be a delay in hiring of a staff position. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the fiscal policy section has, I believe, five people in it. The \$16,000 savings here is by a delay in hiring one staff position. It's probably a delay of a couple of months. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again here the impact is reduced or delayed research for formula financing and/or devolution. So these are two agenda items for the government. We have to be careful about what we say, because if we say the impact will be minimal, then you have to question why was the... What I'm saying is we know that these are two important areas, so we know it's going to have an impact. So for a contrary argument to say the impact will be minimal, that just doesn't go together because we know that this government and the Ministers have spent months and months and weeks and weeks meeting with the federal Finance Minister, with the Prime Minister, and they've made arguments to them and we are on the verge of renegotiating the formula financing agreement, and we had a business coalition outside of the government to go and lobby on behalf of the government, and we know that the whole agenda of devolution we want to move as fast as possible. It's one that this government has been working really hard to concentrate on. So I'd like to know more detailed information about what this position was meant to do in the first place. What sort of research work on formula financing and/or devolution that we will have to do without or do less of. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it's the deputy minister's assessment that we are keeping pace quite well, on both formula financing and financial issues around devolution, without this expenditure of \$16,000. She feels she can economize. It is important but, as the Member will notice, we are economizing in a lot of important areas. But we are going to manage well in times of restraint. Exactly what this person would have been doing or will be doing when they come on

staff, I'm not sure. They likely will be doing a lot of research on various options we need to consider, and factors we need to consider in negotiating a new formula. Of course, devolution talks are in the early stages, and again we'll see where that one takes us in terms of what research we have to do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Fiscal policy, not previously authorized, negative \$16,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bureau of statistics, not previously authorized, negative \$13,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this is the section I was referring to when I got it mixed up with the Audit Bureau. I believe this is the section that keeps track of the NWT statistics. Again; geez, I didn't realize the Department of Finance did all the interesting work, but anyway. This is the one where the government has big disagreements with the federal government with regard to the census numbers. We are still in argument with the federal government as to their accounting of the population of the NWT, versus our assessment based on the figures we have and the reality that we see around us, which is there seems to be more business happening and more projects happening and so on. So here the impact of this cut will be that there will be a reduced and delayed implementation of social agenda initiatives. So I guess my first question is... It says there will be a delay in hiring of a staff position under this bureau of statistics. Again, I think this is probably smaller than the fiscal policy section, unless I guess you can't really get much smaller than five. What sort of an impact would a delay in hiring a staff position have?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Member is right. Our bureau of statistics does look after our statistics. This position should have no impact on the work we're doing on the census numbers. It has no involvement at all in that. That one is being handled quite well. The position is one that we'll work on the social indicators project. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There have been lots of discussions about the fact that this government has not moved quickly enough with the implementation of the social agenda. So could I get information as to exactly what aspect of the social agenda this division was handling, and what sort of delay we're talking about? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this task collects a lot of good information on the social wellbeing of our population in the Northwest Territories. We already collect a lot of that information. This was an enhancement to the work we're doing. So it covers all areas of social wellbeing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Bureau of statistics, not previously authorized, negative \$13,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, negative \$106,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Municipal And Community Affairs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 10, Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$115,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under the reduction of \$115,000 under the directorate, there is a reduction of \$30,000 to reduce fees and payments. May I ask the Minister as to what sort of fees and payments this might involve?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, these fees and payments are within the directorate. They would be for Xerox machines, telephones, whatever other primarily office equipment they would have. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: I just think it's interesting, because I would not have run into fees and payments before. So once again, Mr. Chairman, we're looking at figures without any additional information or any sort of accompanying or parallel information that could allow us to make a proper comparison about what percentage this reduction constitutes in an overall original budget, for at least this spending item. How much money was budgeted for fees and payments and supplies and purchased services and all that in the first place? Could the Minister provide me as to what was originally planned under this section?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, as I've said before, I don't have the detail of what the original budget is for each activity within each department. Members would have to go back to their business plans and main estimates to get that. Again, I'll say that we have the deputy ministers, we pay them well, they're good people, they make decisions for us, we ask them to take their controllable expenditures: five or 10 percent. They make their own decisions on where they can best find the 10 percent and staff manage the department effectively. So you won't find it in exactly the same category for each department. Each deputy will do it in a way that best fits their department and their priorities. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to point out once again that we are making a reduction of \$115,000 out of the directorate. This is a reduction. If this is 10 percent of something, that's \$1 million in a budget out of the directorate. It's hard to imagine that we might be talking about such a big number in one section out of one government department, such as we could reduce \$115,000 with minimal impact. Can I get the Minister... We're on the directorate. I don't have further questions on that item until the next one. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there was no question there that the Member indicated to that item.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$115,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Community financial services, not previously authorized, negative \$55,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this reduction is for the amount of \$55,000 and it just simply says reduced contracts, and it's under community financial services. I don't know what this section does, and there's no information here as to the possible impact of this reduction. So could I ask the Minister to indicate that, please?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'll refer that to the Minister of MACA.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is a reduction in contracts to people that would assist MACA by going into communities and supplying financial assistance to them, advice and what not.

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

MS. LEE: So is the Minister not concerned about cutting out \$55,000 for these services and the impact that it might have on the communities to be on top of their financial services, public accounting or bookkeeping or any of the number of expert advice that they need in order to run their community affairs?

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, this would make, obviously, more workload on the regional offices, but they figure they can handle it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Minister Steen. Community financial services, not previously authorized, negative \$55,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Emergency services, not previously authorized, negative \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Community governance, not previously authorized, negative \$20,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, may I get the information as to what the community governance section does under MACA?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I believe that this is the school of community governance. They would provide training and support to community government.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think the Minister has that right, because the school of community governance comes after this one.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley, do you have anything to add?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't know for sure what the community governance activity is responsible for. I would expect that it provides support to community governments. The Minister of MACA may have more to add.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Minister Steen, did you have anything to add to that?

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, community governance includes what the Minister referred to in relation to the school of community governance. It involves the training of the local SAOs and the councils.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It says here for the impact of this cut, it says reduction in purchase services and supplies will require visual and monitoring of the use of office equipment and supplies. So I would like to ask the Minister of Finance or the Minister of MACA who and how does this visual and monitoring of the use of office equipment and supplies take place?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, that would be the deputy minister and that person's staff. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Community governance, not previously authorized, negative \$20,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Lands administration, not previously authorized, \$186,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Regional operations, not previously authorized, \$3.004 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Mr. Chairman, I had my hand up under school of community governance. Oh, okay, sorry. I will ask a question when we are in that section. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Regional operations, not previously authorized, \$3.004 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the regional operations, there's an item that has come up several times through supplementary appropriation that's in regard to the hamlet road, Tuktoyaktuk, \$123,000. My understanding is that there was \$1.3 million given to the community of Tuktoyaktuk

through a supplementary last year about this time. At that time, the argument was that the money was needed immediately if the hamlet wanted to take advantage of the winter months hauling period and that the tender had to go so the project would be completed by this time last year. I would like to ask the Minister exactly why is it that this supplementary continues to be carried over? At the time the argument was that this was an emergency. It came by way of a special warrant, and it was needed because the damage to the road in the community was not there. So I would like to ask the Minister why is it that this project did not show up through the main estimates, and it's again on the supplementary appropriation table and there's no public record of this expenditure being made through the main estimates or through any public documentation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll refer that to the Minister of MACA.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, at the time all this was presented to the Assembly in the last session and at the time this was being dealt with in the supplementary, it was thought that all this work could be completed by April 1st. However, it turned out that finalizing the laying of the top layer on the road would not be completed until after the road thawed out again.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, my concern is that the whole reason for special warrants is either it has to fall within the classification of being an essential emergency or basically that a building is falling over or the road has been washed out by a flood. It fits within a classification of an emergency. But in this case, I can't see where the emergency was. Yet we're here again and there's still money showing up through a supplementary, which in no way, shape or form was this item even addressed in the main estimates that we approved here in the House two months ago. I would just like to know how is it that a project of this size does not show up on paper in the main estimates for \$1.3 million? Yet it comes up by way of a supplementary to extend the project where there are still dollars being expended on this project to the tune of \$123,000. I'd just like to know where there's the fairness to the other communities that have to go through the five-year capital planning process, and also looking at the process that we all have to follow, where we have people go into our communities, sitting down, looking at the five-year capital plan, determining what's an essential capital item that's going to go into your community. In this case, \$1.3 million did not even go through that process or require scrutiny from a committee of this legislature when we go through our business plan. So for me the question is exactly where is the accountability when FMBS approves \$1.3 million and hides it in regard to a piece of paper that says it's a special warrant?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, as we explained when we went through the supplementary on the special warrant for \$1.3 million, we informed the Legislative Assembly that it would not be possible to haul this gravel after the main estimates were approved. It wouldn't have been possible to do this work this year. Without the ability to do the work this year, the road

would not have... What's wrong? Mr. Chairman, maybe you should call for some order, because I don't know what's going on in here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): You're right, Mr. Steen. Could we have some order in here? Mr. Steen, you do have the floor.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to explain that without the ability for the hamlet to do that work this year after the main estimates were approved, the road would not have made it through another summer. That was the reason for the emergency. That was the justification for the emergency. The hamlet went through the whole process of hauling the gravel that they needed, including what they borrowed from Transportation. What's left is \$123,000 worth of work that has to be done now that the road is thawing out. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Regional operations, not previously authorized, \$3.4 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The detailed information I have here on the regional operations shows a reduction mostly in travel, of \$230,000. There is \$45,000 for North Slave; \$40,000 for South Slave; \$40,000 for Deh Cho; \$10,000 for Sahtu; \$40,000 for Inuvik. That has to mean a lot in communities, and I don't believe we've seen this big a number of reduction in travel in any other section, other than Ministers who we know travel a lot, the Premier and some of the deputy ministers and different departments. We've not seen this kind of reduction on travel. One has to ask -- which is one that I've been asking all night long -- is what percentage is \$230,000 of the total budget? You have to beg the question if it's 10 percent of something, that's \$2.3 million in travel. Also, I guess you can't really make a judgment about the value of travel, it depends on what's required of work. But I can't help but notice that the reduction here is bigger than I've seen anywhere else, and why is it that we're getting it all out of the regional operations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, regional operations in MACA, because of the nature of its work, would have a fairly large travel budget. So the amounts that they've put forward are things that they feel they can manage. As the impact statement says, they make more effective use of teleconference and videoconferencing, which many sections of the government are doing now. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. But does anybody not see the preliminary sense of inequity here? There's some inequity about the distribution of cuts, unless the information that I've seen thus far just happens to be sections where this was not applicable. Maybe it just speaks to lack of regional presence or something, but I just can't imagine that an operation... You know, this is not even the whole department. It's just one section out of a department where \$230,000 will be cut in travel. So you have to beg another question about... Obviously travelling is an important part of this operation, otherwise they would not have had a big enough travel budget from which you would cut \$230,000. So I need to know from the Minister what is their normal travel budget for regional operations.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't know what their total regional budget would be for travel, but clearly the deputy minister and staff have determined that by using other forms of communication, they can do their job effectively with the communities. I would expect that the budget is fairly large, given the responsibilities that MACA has to work with community governments. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Does anybody not see the logical, rationale, commonsense question that should arise from that, which is that if they could get the job done effectively by teleconference and videoconferencing, then why do you give them such a big travel budget from which you could cut \$230,000 in one year and still expect them to carry on their operation as normal?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think economizing measures and asking people to try to do things in a more cost-effective way has lots of good results. It's very possible that next year we'll find that there's an increased use of videoconferencing and teleconferences, and less need for travel money. This may become a permanent way of reducing the amount of travel we have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Regional operations, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Is there any way for the Minister to provide me with what the original travel budget of these regional operations are?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't have it with me. The only way I could suggest the Member could get that if she wants it, is to look back at her business plan and budget information.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't believe it's unusual in our budget discussions, and it has happened many times where Members ask for information and we hold down that item until the Minister provides that information.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. I think the Minister has said before that this is part of a budget that we've already gone through with the information. We're dealing with a supplementary appropriation, which is part of a budget that we've already looked at. I'll ask the Minister if he wants to comment. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, all I can say again is all of the Members have had a chance to go through business plans and to go through budgets and opportunity to get that information. We don't have it here tonight. I would suggest the Member get it from the documents from when we went through the business plan main estimates. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: I would suggest that that is the first time in the history of this Assembly that the Minister of Finance will say, in reply to a question from a Member about the detail about a budget item, that she should go over somewhere and look it up herself.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Lee, the information, as the Minister says, has been provided to committee before under the general budget. This is dealing with the supplementary appropriation. Regional operations, not previously authorized, \$3.004 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to know if he has a record that he could show me that we, either in committee or somewhere else, discussed this very item, because you know, and everybody in this Assembly knows, that the main budget items have huge numbers under operational expense. Some of them are upwards of millions. We approve budget items, whether they are \$300,000, \$500,000 or \$1 million, and out of that comes travel, supplies and contract services. There is no way that anybody could reasonably say that this information was provided before under our discussion of the budget or business plans. Those items just don't come up, Mr. Chairman. So I would like to know if the Minister has a record of a committee meeting or anything else in previous budget debates in this House that suggests that this kind of information was provided previously.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, when we do our business plans and our main estimates, every Member has an opportunity to get all the detailed information they need on the main estimates. What we're dealing with here today is a supplementary appropriation. I don't have a list of every piece of information that is given to the committees and to individual MLAs during the review of the business plans and the main estimates. So I don't have that with me. I don't know if it was asked during committee meetings, but the opportunity was there. I would need that five foot pile of paper here to be able to provide all of the background on the budget. Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I think we should deal with the supplementary appropriation, not review the whole budget all over again. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We are dealing with the supplementary appropriations and the figures that deal with the supp. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I understand that he cannot walk in here with a truck full of documents so that he's prepared for every possible question. At the same time, Mr. Chairman, I have the right, as a Member, to ask a reasonable question, and this is a reasonable question. I am not asking for the sun and the moon. I am being asked here to pass a cut in a travel budget of one section of one department in the amount of \$230,000. That is not a small amount. If that is a small amount, I think we have a problem with the travel budget.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Order. I would like to take this opportunity to remind individuals in the gallery that you are not allowed to show any response to part of a debate that's ongoing in the House. That's disallowed in the Assembly here. So that's just a reminder. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to state again that we are engaged in passing a budget. I am being asked to exercise my right and privilege to cast my vote on a budget item. I understand that there is a limit to how much information you could ask. I don't believe that I have been unreasonable in the information that I've been asking, the only thing that this may be is this is not the kind of detailed item by

item that we've been engaged in. But I have every right to do that. The information after information that is being given to me...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Lee, do you have a question on the line item that we're on? This is a supplementary appropriation, not a total budget. Do you have a question on the line item? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to raise a Point of Order.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Please state your Point of Order, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am trying to do my job as we are asked to do. As I have stated many times, one of the most important things that a legislator does is passing a budget. I'm not asking some broad, general, hard, difficult questions. But I'm asking a question that I need to make a judgment about this item. So I feel that I'm not able to do my job as a Member...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ms. Lee, what is your Point of Order?

Point Of Order

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do believe there's a rule in the House that tells you you have a Point of Order where any activities or inactivities -- I don't have the rule number here -- a Point of Order, or it could be a Point of Privilege, and I'm sure the Clerk and the chair will take that under advisement. But I know there is a rule that says that if a Member feels that her ability to do her job in the legislature, or represent his or her people, has the right to ask that that activity or inactivity be stopped. So I'd like to make that request, and I'd like the chair to make a ruling on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Lee. The chair is going to call a short break and work on this Point of Order. We'll take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

Chairman's Ruling

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I'll call Committee of the Whole back to order. I'll now provide my ruling on the Point of Order raised by Ms. Lee. I find that what Ms. Lee attempted to claim as a Point of Order should have been presented as a Point of Privilege. Ms. Lee contended that her rights and privileges in the House were being infringed upon, as she was not being allowed to ask questions and speak to the issues.

However, in calling on Ms. Lee to confirm her comments and questions to the line item under consideration, the chair is merely applying our rules and procedures for debate in Committee of the Whole. Given the events in Committee of the Whole today, the chair finds it impossible to find that Ms. Lee has a prima facie case of privilege. Therefore, the Member for Range Lake does not have a Point of Order or a Point of Privilege.

We'll go back to page 10 and continue on with Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$3.004 million. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in regard to my earlier discussions in regard to the hamlet road, Tuktoyaktuk, \$123,000, I still have concerns to how this amount of money was expended and how we are finding there was a lapse in these expenditures. So I would just like to ask the Minister exactly how many other communities have taken advantage of using special warrants to fix or repair roads in their communities? Has there been any other requests for special warrant to be issued for approval by the FMBS for these types of conditions where industrial development, regardless of whether it's oil and gas or mining activity that has taken place... I'll use an example of the community of Tsiigehtchic which has had oil and gas activity over the last number of years, where a lot of traffic has rolled in and out of that community by way of movement of oil rigs and heavy equipment, and they have been trying to request funding to work on a bypass road, but with very little support from this government. So what does it take for a community to access funds through a special warrant, using a similar argument that was used in regard to the Tuk hamlet access road, and which one of the issues raised at the time was because of the impact by way of oil and gas development and that there has been major reconstruction of this road because of the activity of those developments. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance exactly what does it take for another community to access these funds, and if you can tell me if there has been any requests made by other communities to seek these types of funding through special warrants?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, for any community project to be eligible for a special warrant, as was the case in Tuk on this project, the need would have to be urgent. It would have to be of public interest, and there would have to be insufficient appropriation within that department's budget. To answer the question of how many communities have asked for special warrants for road projects, I don't recall any others that have made that request during the life of this government. I can't think of any offhand. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll use another example of community requesting resources from this government. I asked a question earlier this afternoon to the Minister of MACA with regard to the ball diamond for the community of Aklavik. They built a new community health centre on the ball diamond that was used by the residents of Aklavik, to accommodate the Department of Health and Social Services for a health centre for the community. The community is now trying to re-establish a new ball diamond for the children of Aklavik to have something to play on this summer, rather than playing ball in the street. To me, that's an essential service in regard to a priority of a community. We've been requesting funds from this government. There were commitments made for \$250,000, yet we managed to get \$50,000 out of the Department of Health. In this case, in which a community was able to get \$1.3 million for a six-kilometre road, yet we can't even get enough dirt to put on a ball diamond. So I would like to ask the Minister exactly what does it take to see some fairness here that we distribute the wealth of this government fairly and across the board? I would like to ask the Minister exactly was this project scrutinized in the understanding that there are also other needs in other communities that could have used the same argument in

regard to this special warrant in regard to repairing of roads that have been affected by development? We have development in the Sahtu region, we have development in the community of Tsiigehtchic, we have development in the Cameron Hills area and in the area of Fort Liard. So if every community came to us with this argument, will they get the same support of this government?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, any community that comes forward with the same kind of request with the same level of urgency and public interest and inadequate appropriation, would get exactly the same treatment. Just for clarification, in this case the urgency was certainly that we had to maintain access to the solid waste dump and the sewage dump. The public interest was certainly that in this case there was... Sorry, the other part of the urgency, of course, is we can only haul gravel into Tuk in the winter on the ice roads. That had to be done then. The public interest part is that the road was worn out through the industrial use and other community use, to the point where we were going to lose the base of the road and have to do a much more expensive upgrading of that road if we didn't do it quickly. Then, of course, the department didn't have the appropriation or the money in their budget to be able to handle it. So any community that has the same level of criteria to meet those three standards we have would also qualify.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 10, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in regard to the \$123,000, also part of the requirement of that fund that there was some 6000 cubic meters of gravel given to the community from the Department of Transportation. I would just like to know from the Minister if the communities are able to access other gravel supplies in other communities from the Department of Transportation, either airports or highways transportation, to a similar arrangement where communities can simply drive up to Transportation's yard and haul away 6000 cubic meters and basically say I'll replace it next year, or the next year after or three years from now. Is that offer available to other communities, or is it just this special circumstance where they're able to do that? I would also like to know has that 6000 cubic metres been replaced and what was the cost of replacing that gravel?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. chairman, yes. If the Department of Transportation has a stockpile of gravel that is surplus to its needs within a given timeframe, then we would make it available to the community or another department. Usually it's on the condition that they will replace it. If it's surplus to our needs altogether, we've finished the project, then there may be some other arrangement made, because one government department wants to work with the others in doing that.

The 6000 yards that was borrowed from the Department of Transportation is either being fully replaced or is in the process of being replaced right now. I'm not sure if we've got a full 6000 back or whatever the amount was. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Page 10, regional operations. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister provide the information, because it's not clear in your answer if that actually has been replaced or it's going to be replaced. If you're telling us that there is \$123,000 left through the carryover to expend, from my understanding the replacement value of that gravel was some \$380,000. So can you give me the information on exactly how much money has been expended and what's the cost of replacing 6000 cubic metres of gravel that was borrowed from the Department of Transportation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I believe the full 6000 cubic yards, or whatever the amount that was taken has been replaced. But out of the total project, which is budgeted at \$1.3 million, there's \$123,000 that was carried over. So that \$123,000 is probably either to finish up the crushing or to finish the road, and I'm not sure of the exact breakdown. But the agreement is that all of the gravel that was borrowed from DOT will be replaced before that crusher leaves Tuk this summer.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. The chair will recognize Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I would like to pursue the line of questioning Mr. Krutko is asking with regard to Tuktoyaktuk and the money that is being allocated for the road and the hamlet. I'm quite concerned. It seems like we have a double standard when it comes to roads in the Minister's riding and roads in the other Members' ridings. I have roads that are of concern in my riding. The community of Fort Providence spent a lot of money out of their own coffers and out of their own general revenues. Although I raised the issue with MACA many times that the road was deteriorated because the stockpile was never replenished because there was nobody in the region to fill the vacant positions, therefore, it never made it on the capital plan because the capital plan was never updated for three years. There were a whole series of events that lead to this. The road started to cave in throughout the community. My request fell on deaf ears. But I see when a road in Tuk has a problem, there is money available.

So I'd like to ask the Minister if he could explain to this House what the criteria is that's used to obtain some money for roads, which may be deemed as emergencies. I know in our case it was an emergency. I've never seen the Tuk road, so I don't know what the condition was. But what is the criteria used to determine who gets on as a special warrant or on the supplementary appropriation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the criteria that FMB uses in determining whether or not to provide money through a special warrant or a supp is urgency. If there's an urgent need to do it now before it can be fit into the business plans. Second is it has to be in the public interest. There has to be some good public reason in terms of public money that we have to do this now. The third one has to be that the department does not have sufficient money in its appropriation to handle this. But I'm not familiar with the particular project Mr. McLeod is referring to, so I'm not sure what the problems were there. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, in the case of Fort Providence, I believe the community would have met all the criteria that was required. It concerns me, and I don't want to criticize Tuk because I'm not in a position to judge, but it seems like we've paid a lot of attention to this community in terms of roads. I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell us what is the total amount that we've spent on Tuk roads through supplementary appropriations in the last three or four years.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I believe that this is the only project we've had during the life of this government in Tuk is the \$1.3 million. That's the only one.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if my memory has served me correct, but I understand that we spent a lot of money stockpiling gravel to fix this road. We're looking at more projects for paving, we're going to road widening. I'm not sure, but I don't know why this one qualifies as an emergency. We knew the road was deteriorating, at least the department knew the road was deteriorating for some time now. Why does it come in under a supplementary appropriation and is considered an emergency when the condition of the road must have been, I'm sure because we've been dealing with the Tuk road for some time now. So maybe we could get some clarification on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, last September, September 2002, there was a request for a special warrant from MACA for the \$1.3 million for the road. The FMB looked at it. The reason it qualified on all three counts were, number one, the road was in terrible shape and they were going to lose the base of the road, the top was worn right off it. Second is that the gravel crusher was in the community, and we could only get gravel on the winter road. The gravel crusher is scheduled to leave the community this summer and I believe go into the Sahtu. To wait would have meant keeping that gravel crusher for an extra year in the community. Second, we probably would have lost that road altogether. So those were the conditions for approving the special warrant last September. Then the gravel was hauled over the winter. The gravel crushing I believe has been largely completed and the road is in the process of being finalized. That's why we have the carryover of the \$123,000 here. So each situation where we are asked to approve a special warrant has a little different circumstance, but we always use the same criteria. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think each special warrant and each allocation that is taking place here for Tuk fits under a different heading and different system of distributing the money, but it's all going to the same place. If you start adding those numbers up, it becomes a huge amount. I, on one hand, have been requesting for roads, for example, on the Hay River Reserve. I've supplied information to this government and showed that we've had five people killed in the last 10 years. I've showed how many accidents we've had within the community along the same stretch of road, and I don't see it in a special warrant. We have

an approach that's kind of hit and miss. If we have a few dollars, we'll put it towards it. But at the rate we're going with that, following the proper procedure through the capital planning system, it's going to take 10 or 15 years before we can address the problem with the Hay River road. But in this case, we're going to crush the gravel, widen the road, upgrade the road and pave it within a year, and it's all under special warrants and supplementary appropriation. I think there's a double standard, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I didn't hear a question there. On page 10, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$3.004 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We'll go back to regional operations for a second. Special warrants, \$192,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): On page 11, Municipal and Community Affairs, regional expenditures, regional operations, not previously authorized, sports, recreation and youth, negative \$10,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): School of community government, negative \$120,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$2.845 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Special warrants, total department, \$192,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Public Works And Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 12, Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$53,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Asset management, negative \$622,000, not previously authorized.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Asset management, special warrants, \$87,500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Systems and communications, not previously authorized, negative \$43,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, special warrants, \$87,500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized, negative \$718,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Health And Social Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 13, Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, ministry and corporate services, not previously authorized, negative \$120,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Program delivery support, not previously authorized, \$1.647 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is a not previously authorized expenditure of \$1.6 million, and I understand that there must be some confidentiality and privacy requirements here, but could I get some more explanation as to this expenditure? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will ask Mr. Voytilla to provide the detail requested. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand the question has to do with the \$1.647 million funding for the funding of the agreement with the general practitioners. There was \$1.671 million for wages and benefits, \$196,000 was for the changes to the fee schedule for fee-for-service physicians, and this was the agreement reached with the general practitioners provided for increases to take the general practitioners' salaries up to a range of \$146,000 to \$234,000, and was concluded and agreed upon this spring.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, could I get a number of how many doctors are involved? What is the number of doctors that fall under the contracts portion of \$1.671 million?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'll ask Mr. Voytilla to provide that detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is based on a budgeted 40 general practitioners and three fee-for-service practitioners.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This being a supplementary budget, this is in addition to what was there before. What is the total budget that is allocated for the physicians' contracts?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't believe that we have the information for the total budget for all of the general practitioners.

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

MS. LEE: The salary range that I heard, the highest number was \$240,000. What other things go on top of that compensation package? Besides the salary, what other things would the physicians under contract be paid for?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, on top of the regular salaries, there are a number of items that are included in the total benefits to the physicians. The transitional bonus, retroactive pay, northern allowance, medical education, professional fees. There is a retirement portion, retention amount, medical texts and some insurance and benefits as well. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Besides the general salary, then doctors on call or on extra services would get extra fees. Am I correct to assume that? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

MS. LEE: I don't know if the Minister could provide this, but can we get any figures as to... No, it's okay. I will not ask that question. May I ask a question on what the economizing measures under \$220,000 is? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the \$220,000 is made up from two areas: early childhood development, a reduction of financial contribution available to authorities targeted for purchased rehabilitation services. That's speech, language and occupational therapy. That amounts to \$200,000. Then there were department-wide reductions in other O and M expenses, and that amounted to \$20,000, making up to \$220,000.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, sorry, I may have been looking at the wrong \$220,000. I think I was lower down in the page. Mr. Chairman, there is \$200,000 that was reduced through a decision to not expand tele-health at this time, and then another \$20,000 that was department-wide reductions in other O and M expenses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Program delivery support, not previously authorized, \$1.647 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Health services programs, not previously authorized, negative \$707,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Supplementary health programs, not previously authorized, negative \$20,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Community health programs, not previously authorized, negative \$220,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$580,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Justice

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 14, Justice, operations expenditures, services to government, not previously authorized, negative \$145,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Law enforcement, not previously authorized, \$1.150 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Public legal services, not previously authorized, negative \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Registries and court services, not previously authorized, \$303,500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 15, community justice and corrections, not previously authorized, negative \$500,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$797,500.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

NWT Housing Corporation

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 16, NWT Housing Corporation, operations expenditures, NWT Housing Corporation, not previously authorized, negative \$279,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$279,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Education, Culture And Employment

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 17, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, directorate and administration, not previously authorized, negative \$170,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Advanced education and careers, not previously authorized, negative \$738,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Education and culture, not previously authorized, \$1.845 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$937,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Transportation

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 18, Transportation, operations expenditures, corporate services, not previously authorized, negative \$179,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Airports, not previously authorized, negative \$370,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Highways, not previously authorized, negative \$1.242 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Ferries, not previously authorized, negative \$270,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have concerns of cutting back on the ferry operations in the Northwest Territories. I feel the ferries are an essential service that is being provided to the public, especially for the movement of people, goods and services. For those months of the year where we only depend on ferry services, I think it's crucial that as a government we should not be cutting back on that public service to the residents of the Northwest Territories. If anything, I think we could probably find the \$270,000 elsewhere within the departments. We've been going through the budget and we're seeing where the departments have been taking 10 percent of the transportation for travel budget to the tune of \$10,000 here or \$38,000 there. I think we could probably dig a little deeper in cutting back on transportation and make use of telephone conferencing and save a lot more than simply 10 percent in travel, to make up this \$270,000. I strongly encourage the Minister to consider reinstating that \$270,000 into our ferry operations so that we can have a stable transportation system that everyone depends on. For most of our communities that depend on road transportation the ferries are essential. From this cut, it will have an effect on the ferries in my riding, which we're looking at about an hour of delays a day because of having to meet these cuts.

So I'd like to ask the Minister would you consider looking at alternatives to that \$270,000, and to not take any money out of the ferries operation because it is an essential service? I suggest that we take instead of 10 percent for travel across the board, let's look at 15. That's where we could make up the \$270,000. When you see the travel budgets of the Premier and the Cabinet Ministers where you're looking at some \$300,000 to \$400,000 in each category, there alone you're only taking \$38,000. If you add another five percent, you're looking at taking out \$45,000. I think if you look at that area as a possibility of where we can save that money and not cut the ferry operations amount of \$270,000. I would like to ask the Minister would he consider looking at alternative ways of getting these dollars out of the ferry operations. I'm not talking about anything else. I'm only talking about the ferry operations so that we can see that we do not affect the service that is being provided and finding that service deteriorating to a point where we're having to cut back on hours or cut back on the ferry operation itself. So I'd like to ask the Minister again, will he consider looking at cutting a little more off the travel budget to make up that difference of the \$270,000?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, following earlier discussions in the committee on this issue, yes, I agree that the ferry operations are important to travelers and to people in the North. I have talked to my deputy minister about this one. I'd like to keep the \$270,000 in here and, as Mr. Krutko says, try to find alternate ways of doing this. So we have started the exercise of looking at where we may be able to make up the amount and not affect the ferry operation so much. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. We're on page 18, Transportation, operations expenditures, ferries, not previously authorized, negative \$270,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Community marine, not previously authorized, negative \$50,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Community access roads, not previously authorized, negative \$100,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The community access road program is a program that is an essential economic boost to the smaller communities who use this program to build up trails and roads. In other words, you're putting \$75,000 into the local economy. I think that this government, without these little programs where the money is being used for an economic boost to our communities, we're spending a lot more than the \$100,000 we're going to save here. I think if you figure out the amounts of money we're expending in social expenditures in our communities where we're going through some of the amounts we've spent in the communities on social services and other dollars by way of income support and other things, that you can see that the \$100,000... This program was basically established to assist communities building small scale infrastructure. We're not talking about \$1.3 million roads in communities, but we're only talking \$75,000 a year, and I feel that this is a program that communities have been fighting for to try to find a program that they know is not a lot of money, but it will give them some economic boost each year to do little projects, such as an access road to a gravel source, or an access road to a particular lake. I think for cutting \$100,000 which is more than 10 percent in the other areas, I think if you look at the cost to government... I'll use an example in regard to the service costs that we spent in the communities. In regard to social assistance in a lot of our communities where we're spending well in excess of \$100,000 in regard to a community like Sachs Harbour. We're talking about communities like Tsiigehtchic where we spent somewhere in the area of \$200,000. But for \$75,000 putting it into that economy will give some people some work, will give them some small scale infrastructure. But for communities, those little projects really make a difference to somebody who is unemployed or is on income support. We as a government should be promoting these programs and offering communities these types of projects to give them that little boost in their economy. So I'd like to ask the Minister again on this one, will you consider looking at an alternative way of ensuring those dollars are there? At the end of the year if this money lapses, well, it's going to lapse, it's going to go back into the general revenues anyway. But at least having the core amount of \$837,000 for the number of projects we got...

Just last year, the committee made a recommendation to this House, through our business plan reviews, increasing that amount which was previously \$50,000 per year to a community for a project, a community access road project. But what we see in looking at the projects that have been allocated, for \$50,000 you can't do much by way of hauling gravel or trying to fix up a road. So we changed the criteria to offer \$75,000 per community for this community access road, up to a maximum of \$450,000. So that's the extent of the project. This will only meet the needs of 10 communities. So for us to take \$100,000 out of the project, which we're really only looking at offering this project to a lot fewer communities who want to access it. So I'd like to ask the Minister could you consider those projects that we have put in place to stimulate our communities remain so that those dollar could be a way of instead of paying social assistance, that this will be a way that people could get off social assistance and give them a little bit of wage employment and looking at the cost of this government to administer a program or offer a program like this. The savings that we as a government will be able, from making social assistance payments and having people go to work, outweighs the \$100,000 you're trying to save here. So I'd just like to ask the Minister would you consider avoiding the \$100,000 cut to this project?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, certainly I'll consider it. The difficulty that we have in Transportation is our money is basically tied up in a lot of projects in the various areas. It's difficult this early in the year to know whether or not we could possibly move some money from one area to another.

We did, Mr. Chairman, increase the base amount for the community access roads by \$250,000, from \$587,000 to \$837,000. So even taking \$100,000 out still leaves us with a \$150,000 increase. Right now, Mr. Chairman, there is still free money in the community access road program that hasn't been applied for. So right now there is no need to go hunting around for more money. We still have a surplus in this pot. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Community access roads, not previously authorized, negative \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Road licensing and safety, not previously authorized, negative \$84,000. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to get some clarification in this area regarding the economizing plans here which were to reduce this section by \$84,000. I would like to ask the Minister, I'm aware that many offices, many contracts have been terminated in the communities for agencies and groups and different people that had contracts to issue licences and registration and all these types of requirements. For example, in my riding of Deh Cho, we have nobody that issues licences and registration or renewals any more for us. For the four communities that I represent, we have to travel to Hay River now or Yellowknife to get a renewal. So I'm assuming that there must be some savings in this whole area already. So I'd like to know if the Minister could give us what kind of savings we had. We've closed up quite a few offices, we've

terminated quite a few contracts. We must have a surplus in this area.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, where we did close down some of the contracts for licensing last year, we've built that savings into the budget. This year, for the current fiscal year, I'm not sure that we have savings. The biggest one we closed down was in Yellowknife and we had to spend a fair bit of money to staff it up again and now operate it through the government. So right now I don't know that there is any free balance in here. I don't believe there is for this year, unless more smaller contractors would be asking to terminate their contract.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, one further question. Given that we have an economizing measure here of \$84,000, then I would ask the Minister whether he could inform me whether any of the communities that had to close down the offices for licences and registration and those things... I'm assuming that we won't see the government stepping in and opening up these offices again, given that we're reducing the department's budget even more.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, we probably won't unless there is no other alternative and we find that's the only way of us doing it. In the case of Yellowknife, we had to do it because the person who had the contract asked to get out of it. We advertised and no one was interested. There was no other option except for us to open up an outlet.

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

MR. MCLEOD: The exact same thing happened in the community of Fort Providence. The company that was providing the service asked to get out of the contract. It was advertised, nobody responded and I didn't see the government stepping in and opening up an office there. Instead, everything was shut down and pulled out of there. Why is there a different treatment for a small community versus, for instance, in Yellowknife?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the issue in Yellowknife is volume. There are many people who are registering vehicles or renewing licences. In the case of Fort Providence, we don't have people in Providence who could readily take over that business within the Department of Transportation unless the grader operator starts selling them. I would really like to see if there is a way to have an existing business become interested in it. The amount we pay to an outlet is only about \$8 a transaction, so it's not much. In a small community, it doesn't attract anybody. I will look at it, Mr. Chairman. If there is a way of doing it in small communities, then we want to have that service available wherever we can, but we would have a pretty bored person if we were just there waiting for someone to come in and get their motor licence or their driver's licence renewed. I will take it to the department and see if there is some other alternative.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I was going to raise the issue of \$8 per transaction, which is what the department is paying. That's the reason the office closed up in Yellowknife. It's the reason it closed up in Fort Providence. It's the reason it's going to close up elsewhere. Nobody is going to spend an hour or more working on a transaction for \$8. Not in this day and age. I would like to ask the Minister if he would look at a couple of options, at least in the case of Fort Providence. We have a transportation clerk there. I am sure the person is very qualified and she would be able to assume some of this responsibility. If the volume is not there, it's not going to be an additional heavy workload. Either that or revisit what they are paying for a transaction in this area. It's far too low and it's just not acceptable. It should be obvious that if offices are closing all over the place, nobody wants to do it. I think the Minister has to take another look at raising the fees or, in the case of Fort Providence, giving the responsibility to one of the transportation clerks.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, those are good suggestions. Certainly I will take a look at it. If we can do it through the transportation clerk, that would be the best solution in my mind. In the meantime, we will also look at the issue of the amount that is being paid. It was never meant as a stand-alone business. I appreciate the suggestions from the Member. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Road licensing and safety, negative \$84,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$2.295 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 19, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, corporate management, not previously authorized, negative \$586,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Environmental protection, not previously authorized, negative \$6,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Resource management and economic development, not previously authorized, negative \$676,200.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Forest management, not previously authorized, negative \$77,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to forest management, there is \$30 million in this capital amount and every year for the last number of years we've seen a decline in the forest expenditures because we haven't had a bad forest fire season. Have we looked at trying to budget for only those amounts that are actually expended and that surplus amount that may be left over at year end goes back to pay down the debt rather than looking at taking out \$77,000? I think we could probably get a few more dollars out of this capital item. Have you considered looking at an alternative knowing we have not expended all the money? I know we just approved a \$20 million sole source water bomber contract. We could probably save some money if we went out to public tender. We hear a lot with regard to trying to find savings in this government. This is one area we can realistically look at where we have an operation which is managed year round.

Realistically, we've seen a decline in the licensing area, the management of the forestry itself. Has the department looked at making deeper cuts than \$77,000? Can we do better than \$77,000 for a budget that is totalling some \$30 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, it's one we can look at. We have been fortunate in the last few years of having good fire seasons. At some point, we may not be that fortunate and we may have to find ourselves adding supplementary funding into here. The figure we have in here is meant to cover the contract expenses, plus the suppression expenses and that's the piece that we don't really know what it would be. If there is money that is lapsed, isn't needed for forest fire suppression, then that does come back to general revenue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we go through these budget amounts and it seems like a number we are picking on is 10 percent. To me, this is not 10 percent of the budget. We talked about a little bit of money for the community access road projects, some \$800,000. In that project, we took \$100,000 out which is more than 10 percent. To be consistent here, let's be consistent across the board and everybody gets cut by 10 percent. What you can see is we can't play the game of pick and choose. Have cuts right across the board. We have a department that has a \$30 million budget and we are taking \$77,000. That's peanuts. That's just having fewer helicopter hours. Instead of using helicopter hours at year end to go out to a lake to go fishing or take a tour to see where the wildlife is, maybe we just hold off on one of those helicopter trips and we will save ourselves \$77,000. I think we can do better than \$77,000 for a forest management item, which is a \$30 million budget item. Come on, let's be fair. You are telling us you can take \$100,000 from an \$800,000 budget item, which is there to assist small communities, but when you have a \$30 million budget, you take \$77,000 out of it.

They are not cutting deep enough. Are you going to go back and cut a little deeper in this portfolio?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, again to clarify, what we did to each department, to be fair, is ask them to identify their controllable expenditures and then take 10 percent of that. So in the case of RWED, as a department, their controllable expenditures were \$17,236,000. They were asked to come up with \$1,724,000, or 10 percent. Then how they chose to divide it up among the activities is up to them. In many ways, Mr. Chairman, I'm glad that they didn't just take it all out of forest fire management because that is just a holding figure. We know full well they could take it out and then in the case of a bad fire season, come and ask us for supplementary money and that wouldn't be fair to the other departments. We don't know each year how much we are going to spend, but we do know if we have a bad fire season, we have to provide the money. In terms of reducing this amount and budgeting differently, I am open to doing that if there is a better way of budgeting for something as unpredictable as forest fires. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this area, I think we can do a lot better by cutting. The weatherman is telling us it's going to be a wet summer, so I think we probably will see a lot of savings in this area. We probably won't see the fire season we have had in the past because it is going to be a wet summer. So we should be able to save some money in this area. If anything, you should put this area under a microscope and make sure they don't have to expend where they don't have to expend and maybe we should leave these choppers and planes grounded until we actually need them, than strictly flying around for the sake of flying around. Will the Minister seriously look at whatever he can do to save in this area? It is a large ticket item, some \$30 million. I think in most seasons, the budget was \$10 million. So it's expanded greatly since then. I would just like to get some reassurance from the Minister that this area be seriously looked at. Like I said, the weatherman did say it was going to be a wet summer and from looking outside, it's a cool one.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I don't know if you can take that to the bank or not. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we will take it seriously and Mr. Voytilla has made a note of that and we will follow up.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, I want to get further clarity and specifics of the \$77,000. I am quite concerned when it comes to forest management. In my opinion we finally got this whole forest timber sector moving. We finally had the government agree that they had to do further studies, more timber analysis. I am hoping that this is not going to be part of it and will derail the plans that we heard this government tell us.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the \$77,000 is made up of two items; one is on forest inventories and replanting trees, which is \$56,000, then there's \$21,000 that the department has

trimmed out of their budget for the purchase of small equipment, boats, skidoos, that kind of thing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: It concerns me, especially when it comes to tree planting. Every summer we have many young men and women from my riding that count on tree planting and it's been ongoing for many years. I would like to ask the Minister how many tree planting projects are going to be cancelled as a result of this economizing measure of \$77,000? I don't know if he knows the specifics, but how many of those are from my area of the Deh Cho region?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there's \$56,000 that is identified here for both forest inventories and silva culture, silva culture being the tree planting side. I don't have information on how many programs make this up or which ones are in the Fort Providence area, but I will ask RWED to provide that information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Forest management, not previously authorized, negative \$77,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$1,345,200.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Executive

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 20, Executive capital investment expenditures, Commissioner's office, not previously authorized, \$200,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total executive offices, not previously authorized, \$200,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can I get the permission of the House to go back to page 10, regional operations?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko is seeking permission to go back to page 10, Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Municipal And Community Affairs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Go back to page 10, Municipal and Community Affairs, operation expenditures. Mr. Krutko.

Committee Motion 125-14(6): To Report On \$1.3 Million Project For The Tuktoyaktuk Road Reconstruction, Carried

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move a motion. I move that this committee recommends that the Minister of Finance and chairman of the Financial Management Board file a report with the Legislative Assembly in the fall session for the \$1.3 million expenditure relating to the road reconstruction in Tuktoyaktuk which details the approval process and criteria used to ensure compliance with the Financial Administration Act.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The motion has been circulated. The motion is on the floor. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Department Of Executive

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We will go back to page 20. Executive, capital investment expenditures, total for executive offices, \$200,000, not previously authorized.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Financial Management Board Secretariat

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 21, Financial Management Board Secretariat, executive, capital investment expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$324,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the whole idea that the government was going to get out of the housing market, that decision was made during the 13th Assembly. This program seems like it's always coming back by supplementaries and the government is still expending money in this area. Have we looked at an employee housing purchasing program to see if there is a way we can offer these units to the private sector to have those units available to the teachers, nurses or people who provide a public service to the community, so the communities can maintain this asset, but also offer the requirement that seems to have a major affect in our communities, especially when it comes to providing houses to resource people we depend on in our communities? Has anything been done to look at transferring these units to the local housing authority or to the local Housing Corporation that can take on this responsibility and we, as a government, can get out of this once and for all, but allow the public sector to take it on?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we have a policy in the government where we will buy back a government employee's house if they will purchase a house in the community. The reason for having this policy is to encourage employees to buy. When we buy it back, we buy it back at a market value. We put it back on the market at market value. If someone in the community wanted to buy the house, there would be no need for us to buy it back. They could purchase it.

If we buy the house, we want to get our money back out of it, but if the house is surplus to our needs and it's sitting there empty but we own it, then certainly we would consider making it available for rent to someone else. If the hamlet/band council want to buy back the unit rather than us, we would be pleased to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we all know that this probably just doesn't seem to want to go away. We think we have one problem solved by offering the employment housing purchasing program and then we find that we don't have the ability to build houses or provide housing to accommodate people in our communities, not only the residents of our communities but the people we depend on to provide public service. Has the government really seriously taken a close look at this along with the Housing Corporation and started changing some of the criteria that we know is not realistic? It seems like we are continuing to see these purchases come through a supplementary. Is there an easier way to purchase these units? I don't know how many times we purchase these units over and over... I know in other communities, we continue to see these units being purchased back by government, say when a teacher leaves and someone else comes back and takes on the unit. Then they leave and we are purchasing back. It seems like it's an ongoing cycle that doesn't seem to end. So I would just like to ask the Minister, is there any work being done to look at this program to see how we can deal with the housing shortages in our communities and get out of this program and replace it with something that is more user-friendly than going through this cycle? Has the department looked at alternatives?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are currently very actively looking at alternatives to deal with this in a broader issue with respect to housing availability. Certainly this program is one we've maintained and we want to maintain it until we have an alternative in place because it has promoted the entry into homeownership of many of our employees. To date, we've generally been able to resell or productively use the units that we have had to reacquire. But as the Member pointed out, the issue is more of an ongoing and broader concern and we do have a task team that is currently looking at housing issues broadly, including the housing requirements of our staff in smaller communities. We are looking at ways of getting more private sector rental housing into the communities at an affordable rent level that will attract tenants. That committee is aggressively studying a number of options and bringing them forward we hope in the next few months for government consideration.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I waited quite awhile to get to page 20 and then I wasn't in the Chamber when it came up. I would like to go back to page 20.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The Member is seeking consent to go back to page 20. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Executive

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Go back to page 20, Executive, capital investment expenditures, Commissioner's office, not previously authorized, \$200,000. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I spoke to this expenditure previously at some point and we talked about it here in the House. The Minister was kind enough to provide some fairly detailed information with respect to what it would cost to replace the present Commissioner's residence and incorporate office space into that, as opposed to put a \$200,000 leasehold improvement into a building we don't own and won't have anything to show for after awhile. On the page which I think all Members got detailing the information of the costs, I had a few questions about that. Cost assumptions include larger than average lot. I thought we had determined that we had already owned the lot when we had the land already. It's in the possession of the Government of the Northwest Territories and had been set aside for use of the Commissioner's residence for sometime in the future. So why is that listed in there at \$150,000? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$150,000 that was in the costing we provided is for site development. It's for decking and landscaping and costs of that nature as we understand it.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My mistake. Actually, why do you have larger than average lot in your cost assumptions if we already own the land?

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is that the department is factoring into the square footage cost of the unit the estimate of the value of the land. If we were going to dedicate that particular land to this project, it would be normal to capitalize the cost of the land with the improvements, with the building. When you are doing the cost benefit analysis, the option available is if you don't use the lot for this purpose. If the lot is surplus to your need, the lot represents an asset you can dispose of. So it's normal we would build in the value of the lot into the cost benefit analysis.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How did you arrive at a required space of 6,458 square feet? The current residence of the Commissioner is probably about

maybe 1,500 square feet on the main living floor. So how did it go from 1,500 -- which if you are entertaining 1,500 is not large enough and I wouldn't expect it to be the same size -- but how do we go to 6,500 square feet?

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

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The existing square footage that the Commissioner's office consumes is just under 2,000 square feet and I think the intention was that this would afford her an opportunity to meet all of her office requirements. So a minimum of 2,000 to 2,500 square feet is designated for office requirements and that leaves a large home in the vicinity of 4,000 square feet for the Commissioner's requirements, which would include large entertaining capability and other requirements. I believe that's how they came up with the number. We don't have the specific design estimates here, but I do believe that was the basis for the calculation.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think then that the fact that this information indicates that if there was a new residence, that this is the amount of space that would be required, it certainly speaks then of the inadequacy of the current residence. It talks here about prestigious landscaping, interior finishes that befit the images of a Commissioner's residence. Well, what is the image of the Commissioner's residence now? I understand if you are going to build new, you are going to want to upgrade, but I think that all these things that are listed here speak to the fact that we really don't have a place where when we have visiting dignitaries, we can actually entertain except in the Great Hall. For the record, I know we have gone past this page and it's already been approved, but I think this is not a wise investment to put \$200,000 into leasehold improvements into Northwestel and add that to the rent. If you do the math between the existing residence, the land we already own, what you are going to pay for leasehold, what you are going to pay for rent and add it all up? I can't believe you can't do better to build a new residence and own something. That is my comment, for the record. Thank you.

Financial Management Board Secretariat

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. We'll go back to page 21, Financial Management Board Secretariat, total Financial Management Board Secretariat, \$501,000, not previously authorized.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Aboriginal Affairs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page, 22, Executive, capital investment expenditures, Aboriginal Affairs, aboriginal affairs not previously authorized, \$21,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total for Aboriginal Affairs, not previously authorized, \$21,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department not previously authorized, \$722,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Municipal And Community Affairs

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 23, Municipal and Community Affairs, capital investment expenditures, regional operations, not previously authorized, \$3,013,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Special warrant, \$1,721,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, special warrant, \$1,721,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized, \$3,013,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Public Works And Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 24, Public Works and Services, capital investment expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$302,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Systems and communications, not previously authorized, \$213,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Petroleum products, not previously authorized, \$954,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized \$1,469,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Health And Social Services

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 25, Health and Social Services, capital investment expenditures, health services programs, not previously authorized \$4,204,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Community health programs, not previously authorized, \$516,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$4,720,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Justice

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 26, Justice, capital investment expenditures, registries and court services, special warrants, \$90,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Community justice and corrections, special warrants, \$250,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as you probably heard in the news with regard to the Arctic Tern Young Offenders' Facility, this facility has cost us almost \$6 million. Yet we find ourselves in a situation where it's only been in use over a year. We find a major problem with regard to the structure of the facility, which is now shifting. We may have a long-term liability or problem with a facility that's supposedly brand new. The ironic thing about it all is we have a facility with nobody in it, but we have 15 working there and it's costing this government \$1 million a year to run it. Could we have a full explanation with regard to the status of this facility and why it is that we are now coming back to a project of some \$270,000 after it's been constructed, people have moved in and now we find out we have a major infrastructure problem? Could the Minister give us an update or provide some documentation on the scope of this project and the cost of the \$270,000 glitch we seem to find ourselves in?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, if Mr. Krutko would like the documentation, we can have that provided on paper. In the meantime, I will say the building is new. There was a problem. Some of the thermo siphons were not working that caused the ground to melt in one area and there was shifting in the building. The work had to be done to repair the problem. They were getting to the point where they couldn't open some doors. The departments of Justice and Public Works and Services are

now in the process of trying to determine the liability for it and settle. Legal action may be necessary.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister give some timelines? How soon will we hear back about the liability question? Who has the liability and at what point will we know we will have to go to court on this matter because the question of liability has not been worked out? Could we get some idea of how soon we can get some of this information?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would suspect that we should come to some conclusion from our perspective within the next month to two months. If legal action is necessary and this ends up in court, then it could drag on for some time before it would be finally resolved. The legal costs depend on how long we end up in court with it. Mr. Chairman, I think we could undertake to keep the Members apprised of the status of this project, but it's really hard to put a date or a dollar amount on the legal challenge that might be there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Community justice and corrections, special warrants, \$250,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized, \$5,629,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, special warrants, \$340,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized \$5,629,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Education, Culture And Employment

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 27, Education, Culture and Employment, capital investment expenditures, advanced education and careers, not previously authorized, \$6,931,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Education and culture, special warrants, \$160,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized \$3,057,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, special warrants, \$160,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized \$9,988,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Just to get clarification, could the Minister tell me what the status is of the Aurora College in Inuvik? Is that a negotiated contract and who is it negotiated with?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will refer that to the Minister of Public Works and Services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Minister Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, It's a negotiated contract, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): The Member wanted to know who the contract is with. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: The contract is with Dowland.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to this contract, my understanding behind the support letter for this project is it was a joint venture between the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in Development Corporation. I would like to know at what point in time did that status change where that joint venture no longer exists?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, I don't have the exact date, but it was in the fall of 2002 that we received a letter from the Gwich'in Development Corporation who, at the time, were partners with Dowland, that they were no longer the prime contractor and that they were no longer interested in negotiating the contract. They pulled out, in other words. That left it open for Dowland to continue as a negotiated contract.

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

MR. KRUTKO: At what point in time do you have to come back to the Members... The intent of a negotiated contract is you have to get a support letter from the local affected community and the local MLAs. In this case, there was a support letter from myself and Mr. Roland. Did this government

go back to those respective individuals and communities to ask if they still supported the project knowing the company has now changed? Did that take place? Part of the approval process for these contracts is it has to be approved by way of support letters by the communities and MLAs. Did that take place?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Chairman, if the whole contracting process had failed, we would have went back to Cabinet with a request to go to public tender. But that particular contract had not totally collapsed because it just reversed. Instead of the Gwich'in taking the lead as the prime contractor, Dowland was the prime contractor and they had an agreement in letter form from the Gwich'in Development Corporation that the Gwich'in Development Corporation would still be a partner in the negotiated contract.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister tell me if the Gwich'in are still partners in this project?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: To my knowledge, Mr. Chairman, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: I am hearing something different. I would like to ask the Minister to go back and get that information and clarify who is the benefactors to this contract and what the role of the Gwich'in are playing along with Dowland. What I am hearing is they have been pushed out of the way and Dowland has taken over. I would like to know if you have that in writing. If you do, I would like to see a copy of that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Steen.

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can certainly provide that information to the Member, but just for clarification it was a letter from the Gwich'in Development Corporation that indicated clearly to us that they were no longer interested in being the prime contractor because their biggest supporter or biggest partner in the venture was a firm from the Yukon and they had pulled out. That was the reason why the Gwich'in no longer wanted to be the lead contractor.

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

MR. KRUTKO: If I could get that information it would be great.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Total department, not previously authorized, \$9,988,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Transportation

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 28, Transportation, capital investment expenditures, airports, special warrants, \$581,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized, \$612,000. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Just with regard to the Aklavik Airport renovation at the airport terminal, could the Minister give me an update of what the status of that facility is? It has been on the books for some time, so I would just like to know when this project will be completed and what is the government doing to ensure that these projects are completed on time and that we don't have these delays because of people not committed to their contracts.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The contractor is currently completing some deficiencies and should have that done by July. Assuming that NavCan agrees with moving the equipment over then, we should see this project completed by mid-summer.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Could the Minister give me a total cost of the project and what is the cost overrun of the project compared to the cost when we started?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I don't have any information on the carryovers or additional cost, but the total project cost is \$425,000. I would have to get the additional information if there were any cost overruns on the project and provide it to the Member.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Can I get the information the Minister read off earlier with regard to the timelines of when we expect this to be finished, how much work was still needed to be done and the type of work that had to be done?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I will get an update on the status of the project and exactly when they anticipate having it finished.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Airports, not previously authorized, \$612,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Highways, not previously authorized, \$4,310,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, special warrants, \$581,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Not previously authorized, \$4,922,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Department Of Resources, Wildlife And Economic Development

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 22, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, capital investment expenditures, resource management and economic development, not previously authorized, \$1,636,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Forest management, not previously authorized, \$137,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total department, not previously authorized, \$1,773,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree we go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

Clause By Clause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): We go back to page 1, Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation, No.1 2003-2004, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Clause 8.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Schedule, supplementary amounts appropriate for the 2003-2004 fiscal year, part I, vote I, operation expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for operations expenditures, negative \$627,200.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Part II, vote II, capital investment expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for capital investment expenditures, \$35,038,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Total supplementary appropriation, \$34,410,800.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill as a whole.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that Bill 18 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Bill 18 is ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses for appearing.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): That concludes the items on the Committee of the Whole agenda. I will now rise and report progress.

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

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act; Bill

13, Deh Cho Bridge Act; and, Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004, and would like to report progress with eight motions being adopted, that Bill 18 is ready for third reading, that Bill 14 and Bill 13 are ready for third reading, as amended, and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be adopted. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

---Carried

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 13, Deh Cho Bridge Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking consent to give third reading to his bill. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with third reading, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 13: Deh Cho Bridge Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nunakput, that Bill 13, Deh Cho Bridge Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a motion on the floor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

---Applause

Bill 13 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking consent to give third reading to this bill. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with third reading, Mr. Handley.

Bill 14: An Act To Amend The Public Service Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a motion on the floor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

---Applause

Bill 13 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: I seek consent to proceed with third reading of Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking consent to give third reading to his bill. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may proceed with third reading, Mr. Handley.

Bill 18: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004, Carried

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2003-2004, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have a motion on the floor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

---Applause

Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day, Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, a meeting of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight at 9:00 a.m. this morning,

Orders of the Day for Friday, June 13, 2003:

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

- Motion 12-14(6), Extended Adjournment of the House to September 30, 2003

- Motion 13-14(6), Dissolution of the 14th Legislative Assembly

17. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 29, NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation Act

- Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act, No. 2

18. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 28, An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 16, Justice Administration Statutes Amendment Act, 2003

- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Labour Standards Act

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned to 10:00 a.m. this morning, Friday, June 13th.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:25 a.m.