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The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2001****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Madam Groenewegen. Bonjour. Déclarations de ministres. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Madam Groenewegen.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 56-14(3): Early Childhood Development Action Plan**

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Honourable Jake Ootes, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and myself, I rise today to speak about the well-being and future of our youngest and most vulnerable residents -- our children.

Mr. Speaker, the health and well-being of all Northerners is a key priority for our government, as outlined in our vision in *Towards a Better Tomorrow*. There is a clear and distinct linkage between our social well-being and economic well-being and one cannot advance without the other. Our residents must be healthy in order to take advantage of the opportunities the North has to offer. Conversely, a vibrant northern economy requires that our people are fully engaged in and controlling its direction. In this regard, Mr. Speaker, the early childhood development initiative is a strong component in laying the groundwork for the well-being of our future adults.

The Department of Health and Social Services has been providing comprehensive health programming from preconception through infancy, early childhood and beyond. Prenatal programs, infant immunization, family supports with parenting programs, early developmental screening and even the recent introduction of progressive child and family services legislation will all contribute to life-long wellness.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides funding for a number of high quality, early childhood programs throughout the Northwest Territories. These programs are critical in establishing a foundation for learning. Research shows that the earlier learning enrichment begins, the better prepared a child will be for a life of learning.

Mr. Speaker, the Early Childhood Development Action Plan will address these very important issues through increased support for the coordination and integration of programming designed to give all our children the best possible start in life.

In the budget speech, Minister Handley announced an investment of \$2 million a year for the next three years for our Northwest Territories early childhood development initiative.

The goal of our early childhood action plan is to ensure that every child in the Northwest Territories is born healthy, achieves optimal development in the critical early years and arrives at their first day of kindergarten ready to learn.

Mr. Speaker, we know this is an ambitious goal. However, if we truly believe that our children are our future, what better investment could we make than to ensure that they have the best possible start in life?

Our Early Childhood Development Action Plan will focus on four priority areas:

1. pregnancy, birth and infancy;
2. parenting and family supports;
3. early childhood care and learning; and
4. community supports.

Mr. Speaker, various reports tell us that far too many children are born brain-damaged from fetal alcohol syndrome and that many of the children taken into care in their early years come from families struggling with issues of addictions and abuse. That is why the action plan will include a very strong focus on prevention of FAS/FAE, as well as increased supports for early intervention and supports for parents.

During the first three years of life, children's brains grow and develop quickly. Critical learning pathways for language development and learning are established in these important early years. The third area of investment -- early childhood learning -- will build on the many established, successful early childhood development programs that are already in place in almost all communities. Language development will also be emphasized in the plan, including early speech/language remediation and opportunities for aboriginal children to get a strong grounding in their first language.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said that it takes a whole community to raise a child, and it is true that healthy communities are a key factor in healthy child development. For this reason, the fourth area of focus in the plan is community supports. This will include finding better ways to integrate programs and services to provide a comprehensive continuum of services for children's early years in every community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure Members that the plan will include measurable goals and performance indicators. It is vitally important that the programs and services provided to young children and their families are effective.

Information, ideas and suggestions have been received from consultations with our partners and non-government

organizations, including the Northwest Territories Native Women's Association, the Status of Women's Council, the Northwest Territories Councils for Literacy and Persons with Disabilities, the YWCA and representative service providers.

Mr. Speaker, in December, Minister Ootes and I had the opportunity to meet with the Standing Committee on Social Programs on this matter. At that time, the standing committee indicated strong support for the ECD proposal and urged all the Ministers of the social envelope to champion this initiative. We would like to thank the standing committee for their support and their many valuable suggestions.

Our departments are currently completing the detailed early childhood action plan that will include the description of resource allocations, program deliverables and accountability measures.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Jake Ootes and I are both committed to delivering a strong, effective territorial early childhood development initiative. We also commit to keeping Members of this House informed as we move through the anticipated final approval and initial implementation steps, and we thank you for your ongoing support in this very worthwhile endeavour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 2, Minister's statements. Item 3, Members' Statements. Déclarations de députés. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Traffic Volume on the Hay River Reserve Access Road

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Members are aware, the Northwest Territories highway system consists of 2200 kilometres of all-weather roads and 1500 kilometres of ice and winter roads. The highway system also includes five ferries and the Department of Transportation is responsible for the operation, maintenance and upgrading of the Northwest Territories highway system. The department is also responsible for monitoring and counting traffic on the highway system. To do this, the department operates a series of mechanical counters and sometimes makes visual counts and surveys. I am told this information is used to set priorities and maintenance and capital funding and to monitor safety aspects of highways.

However, on the department's own information, they put a disclaimer on their published data. In 1999, only 46 percent of the potential data was usable for determining traffic volume. This performance is attributed to the age of traffic counters, breakdown of loops and improper handling.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister is well aware of the concerns of my constituents for the safety and condition of the Hay River Reserve access road. My information is that this road was developed by DIAND in the early 1960s and there has never been any major construction or reconstruction projects used to change or improve the condition of the road. Yes, the department does carry out a dust control program and some

maintenance and spot repairs in an attempt to keep the road passable.

However, Mr. Speaker, you will note that I have used the word attempt because that is exactly what it is, a mere attempt by the department to make a safe, well-travelled road out of a dirt road that was never designed for today's traffic.

I have checked out the traffic flow figures and the information under reported collisions on this well-travelled access road. I am shocked at the results of my investigation. My constituents deserve better. We are talking about loss of property and lives because the department is not listening to the community. We know better than the Minister the dangers the road presents to them.

On July 7, 2000, the Minister said in a statement to this House that the maintenance and accident records of the Hay River Reserve access road speak for themselves. Mr. Speaker, I would like consent to continue my statement.

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

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On July 7, 2000, the Minister said in a statement to this House that the maintenance and accident records of the Hay River Reserve access road speak for themselves. Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the Minister that effective communication is not only about speaking, but listening. I have to say it just depends on who is doing the listening. I hope the Minister will be listening later today when I have questions on this very serious situation. I can assure the Minister my constituents will be listening to his answers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. McLeod. Déclarations de députés. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement on 2001 Coaching and Volunteer Symposium

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month along with a number of other Members in the House, including the Honourable Roger Allen, Minister responsible for Youth, I had an opportunity to attend a part of the 2001 Coaching and Volunteer Symposium held in Yellowknife. The jam-packed program for the three days was designed to help coaches and volunteers in areas such as nutrition, injury prevention, and motivating athletes and designing training models.

It was also a celebration of the crucial role sports play in enhancing the wellness of our people and the recognition that the integral force behind the viability of any sporting community is the hours of services provided by coaches and volunteers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank numerous organizers of this event, in particular Rob Meckling and Abe Theil of Sport North for a job well done. It was especially meaningful for me to talk to two delegates from Fort Resolution at this symposium. One of them was a soccer coach and the other was a soccer mom extraordinaire, Brandie Miersch and Marcella Fabien.

I learned that coach Miersch volunteers two hours every day in school coaching. She enjoys it and she feels it is really important that children have a place and time for healthy activity to engage in and to keep them out of trouble. That is true commitment and dedication and one that we sometimes take for granted in the North.

The soccer mom, on the other hand, is in charge of raising money so that the children can travel outside of the community for soccer tournaments. She does a lot of bake sales. It was obvious to me that she felt very strongly that she was doing something very worthwhile. Being invited to a symposium like this and to take part in many of the very interesting and educational sessions was a small reward for all that they give to their community.

Mr. Speaker, I think we are all aware that there are thousands of Brandies and Marcellas in the North who do so much to help our children and youth get involved in healthy activities. I truly believe that this is at the heart of how we will achieve individual and community wellness.

This is also an area that needs greater attention from the Members of this Assembly because it is one that is suffering a great deal from lack of funding and coordination on the part of all decision-makers. Many Members in the House have already stated that this has to be a priority area, and I urge all Ministers and Members to put our thinking caps on and address this area of great importance to us all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Déclarations de députés. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Sport and Recreation Programs at the Community Level

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to rise and speak to the issue of sports and recreation. Mr. Speaker, since 1970 with the start of the Arctic Winter Games, the focus on sports and recreation in the North has slowly shifted away from what was community-based, supportive programs for communities and individuals at the community level to an almost complete focus on the Arctic Winter Games and the cost and the never-ending planning for the next Arctic Winter Games.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the government has slowly backed away from the issue of sports and recreation and quietly has off-loaded that responsibility on Sport North and no other organizations, in most cases without really any adequate funding.

On the other hand, the government continues to build sports facilities, rinks, ball diamonds and such with no focus on the practical running and support for these activities. They have put money into infrastructure but not into developing and creating athletes and sport and recreation programs at the community level.

Mr. Speaker, it is now time for the territorial government to step back up to the plate and look at this very important area. We need a leadership role specifically, I would suggest, through Municipal and Community Affairs. If this is one area that we

need a clear vision and strategic plan of how we are going to do that...for 30 years, things have slowly shifted out of focus.

Mr. Speaker, as we work towards a better tomorrow, we do need to keep in mind the critical role that sports and recreation plays in continuing the service that we provide as a government.

Mr. Speaker, in particular, we clearly have to revisit the Arctic Winter Games. They are too big, they cost too much and they are held too often. The international organizing committee, Mr. Speaker, is as secretive and has all of the same problems as the International Olympic Committee. They make decisions in private. They do not keep notes. They make in camera decisions. There are no minutes. It speaks very clearly to the problems we have here. We should not have jurisdictions that exist south of 60 taking part in the Arctic Winter Games. It does not make any sense.

It has expanded too far and it consumes all of the energy of government and all the focus of the planning organizations. Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly there is a need to take a look at the broad issue of sports and recreation. It should not be focused around one primary activity that sucks up all of the resources and energy of the government and people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, we should be looking at the least of three to four years for the Arctic Winter Games. If not, the possibility of even focusing on our own territorial games in the summer and winter and backing away from that very expensive process that now exists.

I will be asking the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs later today how he intends to deal with this very critical issue. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Miltenberger. Déclarations de députés. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Member's Statement on Support for Giant Mine Pensioners

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware, Giant Mine pensioners were notified last February that their former employer, Royal Oak Mines, had under-funded their pension plan. This resulted in the former workers losing approximately 25 percent of their pension payments as of April 1, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, last March our Legislative Assembly unanimously supported a motion to urge the Government of Canada to take immediate action and restore the full pension entitlements earned by these workers.

Despite the obvious unfairness of the situation, federal Minister Robert Nault has advised us that the Government of Canada will not provide any money to make up for the pension shortfall.

Mr. Speaker, the recent announcement that the financial state of the fund has improved and pensioners will now receive 91 percent of their entitlement is certainly welcome. It still leaves pensioners significantly short of what should rightfully be theirs. More importantly, this does not make up for the fact that the laws of our country did not provide relief or protection for the innocent workers or widows in this case.

Mr. Speaker, I call on our government to let the federal government know that we support the private member's bill that was recently given first reading in the House of Commons in Canada. The bill was introduced by MP Pat Martin. It proposes to change the Federal Bankruptcy Act so that unpaid wages and payments with respect to pension are given first priority over claims of ordinary creditors.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that our territorial legislation should be changed. As is the case in Ontario, our government could create a Pension Benefits Act that establishes a fund to guarantee the payment of pension entitlements.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to bankruptcy, employees and pensioners across the Northwest Territories and across Canada must know that their pension benefits will be protected. As a government, we must guarantee that workers always receive the entitlements that they have earned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

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

Member's Statement on Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Government of the Northwest Territories is acting as a contractor for the federal government in delivering non-insured health benefits. In doing so, the Government of the Northwest Territories pays the full cost upfront, then invoices Canada. Apparently, they do not always pay the full amount.

There is \$700,000 still outstanding to the territorial government from the federal government. There is another \$800,000 in disputed billings which has since been agreed to. You have to wonder how we got into this situation in the first place, Mr. Speaker. Maybe it is time to turn the non-insured health benefits responsibility back to the Hudson's Bay Company, employees of churches and RCMP who handled this in the 1950s.

Since the rules have changed to the national Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, our government is paying the price. The contractual arrangements obviously have some flaws. The program is to provide benefits to status Indians and Inuit, a fiduciary responsibility of the federal government and the federal government is short-changing this government. The federal government is not living up to its responsibility.

According to a Health Canada report, the department is ensuring First Nations have ongoing input into the

management and benefits. The focus is to transfer programs to First Nations and Inuit control. Perhaps the time has come for that to happen. I will ask some questions to the Minister responsible during question period.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement on Alternative Residential Heating Sources

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories, especially our small, isolated communities, has seen a major increase, especially in the cost of fuel. In the constituency I represent, in the community of Aklavik, they are paying 74 cents per litre for heating fuel and as high as \$1.25 a litre for gasoline.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentions subsidies that they are going to offset of some \$350. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the cost of heating fuel has skyrocketed, the other costs associated with goods and services and also property taxes have increased. Communities are trying to find new ways and new initiatives of how to offset the high cost of diesel fuel in our communities.

I think one of the things that communities are considering is if it is possible for the Housing Corporation to consider a new initiative by improving the ability of private household owners to use wood as an alternative heat source and diesel fuel where there is a real resource sitting on our doorstep. I think it is important as a government that we start developing our resources, not only the non-renewable but the renewable resources to allow people to have the ability to have a second source of heat within their homes. I think it is important as a government that we have to find unique ways of dealing with the high cost of energy in our communities, especially the costs to heat our homes.

It is important for this government to start looking at new initiatives. We have agencies and groups out there with regard to the Arctic Energy Alliance that are doing work on behalf of this government, but they are looking more in the way of energy. I think we also have to try to find ways to improve the homes of the residents that we serve and also give them the opportunity to find alternative ways of dealing with the high cost of energy, especially heating fuel in the Northwest Territories. So at the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Housing to consider the new initiative of putting woodstoves in people's homes so they can use the renewable resources around them. Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Inconsistent Messages From Government

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Greetings to my constituents in Inuvik, my wife and children. Today I rise to speak on the issue of what I see as a major about-face. Mr. Speaker, when we first came into this Legislative Assembly, we

were told that on the royalty revenue-sharing issue, that we would hear some good news by June. We were told in fact maybe the fall. The latest update, Mr. Speaker, we were told 2003. The timing is quite coincidental with when this Assembly ends its days.

On the issue of fee increases, we were told that revenues we tried to raise on our own were small and virtually had little impact, so they were not a good idea. We were told on the taxing of our people in the Northwest Territories, that as well had little impact because the federal government would take much of that back.

Mr. Speaker, just as we started this session, in my question to the Minister responsible for FMB, he stated that the chief of staff position was probably a DM position, as I read it. An about-face, Mr. Speaker. We were told how things would work out when we sat down as Members of the 14th Assembly that some things were not a good idea and we should not move forward. They justified those reasons to us, yet today, Mr. Speaker, in this budget today and what this government answers in questions today, we get different answers than we were given a year ago.

We see fee increases across the board coming with this new budget. We had this government propose new taxes and we had the Premier state that the chief of staff position was an executive assistant position, but the Minister of FMB told me in an answer that when it is classified, it will probably be a deputy minister position. About-face, Mr. Speaker. How much more will we take as Members of the 14th Assembly? Thank you.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Hay River District Education Authority Petition for a Divisional Council

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to address an ongoing issue that is of great concern to residents of Hay River. Mr. Speaker, the issue that I refer to is the Hay River District Education Authority's request to form their own district education council. Mr. Speaker, Minister Ootes has stated that he will not approve the DEA's petition at this time due to several factors. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has stated that there are financial implications and member communities to be considered. In addition, the Hay River DEA was told that a pending Government of the Northwest Territories review of regional administration structures would have to take place before any change could be brought about.

Mr. Speaker, this brings to mind a similar incident that is relevant. Mr. Speaker, when the Department of Transportation undertook to create a new North Slave region, there was not an exhaustive community consultation process commenced as there was in Hay River surrounding the area of the DEA petition, at considerable expense to the Government of the Northwest Territories, I might add.

The new North Slave region has financial implications as well, Mr. Speaker. Although the Department of Transportation has ensured us there will be no loss of jobs in Hay River and no negative impact to the South Slave region, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that due to the reduction in the economies of scale

and the reallocation of funds, Hay River and the South Slave will realize negative impacts. Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that when the initiative is raised by a community that will better serve that community, they encounter a lot of roadblocks. They are always studies or reviews to be done at great expense which provide incredible delays to process.

However, Mr. Speaker, it appears that when government departments undertake to do something, it is just steamrolled ahead with little consideration given to the concerns of the affected communities. Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will have further questions for the Minister responsible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement on Enhancing Partnerships with Communities

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the heels of my colleague from Hay River, I would like to also address the area of community partnership. Community governments are a very vital part of the way our society receives government, receives services, a very critical part of the whole democratic structure that we strive for, and indeed that we enjoy as Canadians.

Community governments, Mr. Speaker, are in law, creations of this government and in that respect there is, in an old-fashioned sense, a duty, a responsibility on this Assembly, a stewardship. I think in a more modern sense, we are more comfortable if we look at in the sense of being partners with the communities.

Today, in this very rapid pace of growth and opportunity that we face in virtually every region of the Northwest Territories, I think it is incumbent on this government to look more closely and take more to heart that spirit of partnerships with our communities, colleagues and constituents at the community level.

In Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, a couple of opportunities present themselves where we could be doing a better job. One of them is on the opportunity that the city has to use the site of the Yellowknife Correctional Centre for a major community development. Here is something where, in a sense of timing and preparation, we could be working more seriously with the community government to help prepare for that.

We have also, I think, seen a few opportunities for development on the capital planning site, Mr. Speaker, next to the Explorer Hotel. Opportunities, I believe, that because of very stringent conditions that we have, some developments may have been cast aside. Inuvik is a town that is going through a very major development right now and will need the support of a partnership from this government to help capitalize on things.

The power review, Mr. Speaker, presents some very interesting opportunities for community involvement. I would like to seek consent, Mr. Speaker, to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To conclude, the power review, I think, presents some very significant opportunities for this government to foster developments in the energy and the environment fronts with communities in areas such as residual heat, local investment, and if we are really to live up to the spirit of Towards a Better Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, to work on integrated services and planning in the true sense of partnership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Under-Subscribed Government Programs

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to talk today about government programs with poor uptake, or government programs that are not very well subscribed. I would like to start at the federal level because we have talked quite a bit in this House about programs that are offered by the federal government that we might be able to tap into, housing, for example. We know there is money out there for homelessness, Mr. Speaker, but we find when we get to the nuts and bolts of the issue and talking to the department that there are so many criteria in getting any funding that it just ends up being too onerous to access.

In the health area, we know there is a little bit of money out there for FAS/FAE, but it ends up being so little money after the administration is factored in that it is hardly worth the effort and it turns out that many of the projects have to be national in scope.

Mr. Speaker, given that we are very aware that there are federal programs that we just cannot tie into, it amazes me that in our budget we want to discuss increasing business investment and point to the fact that we provide incentives through the income tax system for Northerners to invest in northern businesses. We point out specifically the Risk Capital Investment Tax Program which provides a credit equal to 30 percent of eligible investments up to a maximum credit of \$30,000.

Mr. Speaker, when I first heard the Minister discuss this, I did remember hearing about it in the past, and I thought, "That is a great idea. I am going to go on the government website and look into this." Well, it turns out that when you look at the companies that have been able to register and are eligible, there are a grand total of three companies, Mr. Speaker, in the last three or four years since the inception of this program.

It is pathetic. You wonder why, but when you dig into it you realize that the conditions on registration for a business, the fees, the disclosure, all of these things are so incredibly difficult. There are so many hoops to jump through that make it almost useless for any small business. There is a whole section on what you cannot use the money for, if you are able to raise it. It also tells you that you might be able to issue shares and offer up minority interest in your business, issue equity in effect, but what about debt? It is not really clear. If you are not looking to dilute the ownership of your business, can you offer a guaranteed rate debt instrument? I am not really sure. Maybe you can, Mr. Speaker.

My point is, we do admit that there has been a limited uptake in this program, but we suggest that we plan to market the existing program more aggressively. There are certain things, Mr. Speaker, that we are not going to be able to put a shine on and I would suggest that this is one of them. I hope the Minister will look at the other option he mentioned, which is examining the revision of this program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Global Warming and Climate Change

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about global warming. We hear about it all of the time on the radio. We see it talked about on television and we read about it in the newspaper. Anyone who spends time outside can tell that changes are occurring. In the last few months, a bear was seen out and about near Colville Lake, instead of hibernating.

Robins and salmon are being spotted in northern communities where they have never been seen before. The melting of permafrost is occurring, and of course, our ice roads are increasingly unreliable.

Climate change is a call for us as a government to take the lead role in establishing ways to reduce our impact on the environment. One of the best ways we can do this is to begin addressing this in our planning and in the way we operate our departments.

In the budget address last week, the Minister recognized the high fuel costs that all Northerners are facing and is providing a one-time fuel rebate to eligible households. I am sure that this will be greatly appreciated. However, if we lower our dependence on non-renewable fuel sources we will, in the long term, lower our costs and also contribute to a cleaner environment.

As well, I know that a study on hydropower is planned for 2001-2002. I urge Cabinet to ensure that the hydropower in the Dogrib region and the South Slave is examined and used to benefit the remote communities and the mines. By acting on these two initiatives, the government can do a lot to demonstrate leadership and reduce the impact that we are having on the environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement on Positive Impact of Canadian Forces Northern Region

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to extend my thanks to the Canadian Forces for their contribution to northern life, and my congratulations to the northern members for the recognition they recently received. Earlier this month, 23 Canadian decoration and Canadian

peacekeeping service medals were presented to members of the Canadian Forces serving in the North.

One of the people being honoured is Major Bob Knight, who was recognized for 32 years of service. Among other duties, he has served overseas in eight peacekeeping missions. The sacrifices of the families of serving Canadian Forces personnel who serve long periods of time away from home and families were also recognized.

Mr. Speaker, the Armed Forces play a very significant role in the Northwest Territories. They provide supports to reach, to serve and to rescue operations and maintain a sovereign presence in the North. The Armed Forces and their members contribute to the development of our youth through the Cadet and Canadian Ranger Programs.

There are two cadet organizations operating in Yellowknife involving nearly 100 young people. These young people aged 13 to 18 years old, develop their self-esteem, physical fitness and leadership and instructional abilities through their involvement with the cadets. They can participate in marksmanship and biathlon competitions, map and compass exercises and many other activities. They become better citizens and contributing members of society.

There are many other benefits to Northerners from having members of the Armed Forces in our midst. The Armed Forces, including their members and families, pump more than \$25 million a year into the northern economy. They participate in events like the Midnight Sun Float Plane Fly-In, the Yellowknife International Air Show and Caribou Carnival, forming an integral part of our community. These are just examples in our community, Mr. Speaker. There are many more. I want to thank those members who serve in the North. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Déclarations de députés. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to recognize Kim Beaulieu from Hay River. She's here acting as the chaperone for the pages that were brought in from the reserve. Thank you for coming. Also Mr. Greg Nuli from Fort Providence. He is the president of Shehtah Drilling. Welcome to both of you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Welcome to the visitors gallery. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take a moment to recognize a northern author, journalist and a broadcaster who is well known and a person who gets around the Territory to do many stories on the Northwest Territories, Mr. Lee Selleck.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome, Mr. Selleck. Mr. Selleck is no stranger to the Legislative Assembly. He has been here many times. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 348-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

MR. MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Transportation. In July 2000, the Minister stated that the traffic accident statistics for the Hay River Reserve access road did not suggest that the road is dangerous or hazardous. There were only two injury accidents but not one fatality. I wish to ask the Minister to reconsider that statement because my information is to the contrary. So it concerns me that the Minister does not seem to be on top of this very serious situation. I would like to ask the Minister where he is getting his information about usage and traffic accidents?

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

Return to Question 348-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as far as I know we receive our traffic accident information directly from the RCMP. In some cases, we have some of our own people right on the site. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 348-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Member's statement, the department does their own highway traffic counts and they also put a disclaimer on the information that they collect. They stated that in 1999 only 46 percent of the potential data was usable. I have to ask the Minister how he could come before this House and state the traffic accident statistics for the Hay River access road do not suggest that the road is dangerous or hazardous utilizing this information? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 348-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the information we have with regard to the road condition is the information we receive right on hand from our supervisors and our people who inspect the road conditions. We also receive reports on the road conditions from the RCMP who were actually investigating the accident. That is the information we based our report on. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 348-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you. I take it from the Minister's statement that a lot of this is the fault of the RCMP with their information. My question to the Minister would be if the Minister could provide this House with a report with what the plans are for the department and what the options are to improve the traffic data collection, since the present equipment in his department is so outdated and unreliable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 348-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not understand where the Member gets the opinion that the information we have is unreliable. We feel the information we have is reliable and is professional and is accurate to the best of our ability and that is what we bring forward to the House. So I do not understand where the Member comes to this conclusion that the information is unreliable, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 348-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to understand the Minister's comments. The information I am using is material published from his own department. The stats I am using is his information. However, my final question to the Minister would be out of the 13 access roads, the Hay River Reserve ranks as the third lowest when it comes to maintenance with only seven cents in annual maintenance costs per vehicle being spent. How does the Minister justify that?

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not clear on the question. Could the Member either rephrase it or repeat it?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. McLeod, perhaps you could ask a shorter question and I will redirect it for you. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will rephrase my question. How does the Minister justify the fact that out of 13 access roads noted by the department's own 1999 summary of maintenance, the Hay River Dene Reserve ranks the third lowest with seven cents in annual maintenance costs per vehicle kilometre?

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

Further Return to Question 348-14(3): Hay River Reserve Access Road

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to ensure the Member gets the proper information, I am going to take the question as notice and pass it on to the department to respond.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. That final supplementary has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr Dent.

Question 349-14(3): Federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act Amendments

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Premier. Earlier today, I spoke about a private member's bill, Bill G203, which has been introduced in the Parliament of Canada. This bill would ensure that people receive their salary and pensions before ordinary creditors in the case of a bankruptcy. I was wondering if I could find out if this government will consider letting the federal government know that we support the passage of this bill?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Deputy Premier, Madam Groenewegen.

Return to Question 349-14(3): Federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act Amendments

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of this government having taken a position at this point in time on the bill that the Member refers to in the federal House, but we will certainly undertake to research what it is about and make a decision about whether or not it is something we can support. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 349-14(3): Federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act Amendments

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think this is an important bill. I appreciate the Deputy Premier's offer to research the bill and then make a determination about support. Will the Deputy Premier commit to a timeline that would see this House being advised before we recess on March 6th about whether or not the government will support this bill?

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

Further Return to Question 349-14(3): Federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act Amendments

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can indicate to the House that the Premier has been concerned about the issue of the Giant Mine pensioners here in Yellowknife. He has undertaken to communicate with Minister Nault on this. He has been advised by Minister Nault that there is also a review of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, which is in the process of holding consultations. This is another act in the House of Commons which would address the protection of pension plans as well.

I am aware that the Premier has undertaken these communications and is very concerned about this matter. Yes, we would commit to researching this particular bill that may be before the House now and get back to the Members before the end of this session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Questions orales. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 350-14(3): Alternative Residential Heating Sources

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, in looking at the possibility of a new initiative the department can consider, the possibility of providing wood stoves so they can have an alternative source of heat in their homes. The high cost of fuel has driven a lot of these people to reconsider the whole question about home ownership. I think it is important as a government that we find new ways and new initiatives to try to assist whenever possible for those people in those homes to stay in those homes. If there is a way to deal with some of these problems that they are having, more power to them.

I would like to ask the Minister a question regarding my Member's statement. Is there a possibility of looking at a program so people are able to access wood stoves as another alternative source of heat within their homes, so they can use the renewable resources that are out there? It would also generate a viable economic opportunity for the people in the communities. Will the Minister consider looking at that?

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

Return to Question 350-14(3): Alternative Residential Heating Sources

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to advise the Member that wood stoves are a standard option in home ownership programs that was reintroduced as far back as 1997 and it continues today.

Also, in light of the question regarding the high fuel costs, the Housing Corporation has looked at a number of other heating sources. We have looked at heating that is very fuel-efficient and low-cost maintenance. There are a number of other options that we have been considering in the last year. We hopefully will continue to introduce that to potential homeowners across the Territories. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 350-14(3): Alternative Residential Heating Sources

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister stated that it is an option. I think that my point is the people who do not presently have wood stoves in their homes and who depend on a furnace as their heat source. Is there an option that they could possibly put in wood stoves to assist, to bring down the high cost of heating their homes by using wood as an alternative source? Will the Minister consider looking at

people who presently do not have a wood stove having that option to put in a wood stove to try to find a way around the high price of heating their homes at the present time?

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

Further Return to Question 350-14(3): Alternative Residential Heating Sources

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, definitely we will look at it very closely. I believe we are forced to consider those options because of the high cost of fuel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 351-14(3): Sport and Recreation Concerns

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs. It is a follow up to my Member's statement on the issue of sports and recreation, and the pressing need for the territorial government to play a leadership role in revisiting what has happened to sports and recreation in the North and the need to put a high priority on this and take away from our almost exclusive focus on the Arctic Winter Games and start paying attention to the communities and the many hundreds of volunteers who donate tens of thousands of hours of volunteer time at the community, often with little or no support.

Could the Minister indicate if his department intends to look at this very critical area? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 351-14(3): Sport and Recreation Concerns

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the Members of this House that we have been developing a sport policy, a revised sport policy. We have done it in the context of our Sport North agreement. We have had a number of symposiums to address the key questions that have been raised not only by the Members of this House but by the public. Hopefully by the June session we will be coming forth to this House with a strong indication of the future of sports and recreation in the North, as well as youth. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 351-14(3): Sport and Recreation Concerns

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear the Minister is reviewing the policy. I would hope it would be broad enough yet detailed enough to speak to the whole area of sports and recreation. Could the Minister indicate whether that will also include a detailed review of our current involvement in the Arctic Winter Games and a possible

change in our undying commitment to this endless process? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 351-14(3): Sport and Recreation Concerns

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we have been working diligently to address the questions. It has been raised on several occasions. Again, I must advise the House that we are committed to participate in the Arctic Winter Games until the year 2004. I have concurred with many of the public's requests to look at changing the games format from two to four years. It allows us to develop areas across the Northwest Territories. I have committed to that philosophy. I recognize that it is a lot of work, as the Member has said in his Member's statement. It is cumbersome. It is long drawn out. Once the games are over, we start planning for the next one. We are definitely looking at changing it and changing how we approach sport across the Northwest Territories in that context. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 351-14(3): Sport and Recreation Concerns

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is very gratifying to realize I am not the lonely voice I was in the 13th Assembly when I raised this issue. I would like to ask the Minister if he could indicate to this House the type of consultation that has taken place and possibly will take place as they finalize the document he indicated he wanted to bring to this House in June? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 351-14(3): Sport and Recreation Concerns

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, back in late May, the sports and recreation partners reviewed the legacy and the new direction. They held a conference in Hay River. That is the first step. We have also had, as Ms. Lee indicated earlier, a coaches symposium in Yellowknife just recently. Again, in the latter part of March, there will be another symposium held in Inuvik that will deal strictly with cross-country skiing and the impact the test program has had upon the Northwest Territories. Also, taking the comments of this House last February and which are ongoing from other Members, we need to definitely take some new direction in terms of sport and recreation across the North.

It is important that we acknowledge the input from yourselves as well as other Members and form a new direction as we see we need it here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 351-14(3): Sport and Recreation Concerns

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister for a commitment that he will ensure there is community consultation on this very important issue, because that is where it is critical the attention be focused in terms of sports and recreation, and that the many volunteer groups who operate at the community level are consulted on what we need to do as a Territory to move ahead with a vision for the future of sports and recreation. Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 351-14(3): Sport and Recreation Concerns

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to add on to the comments or the question raised by the Member, that I have been travelling to every community across the Northwest Territories, except for two or three in the Beaufort Delta.

I have been receiving back comments and that is where we are deriving the changes from. So if it requires further consultation then I would certainly consider that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 352-14(3): Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the fiduciary responsibility for the delivery of the non-insured health benefits belongs to the federal government.

This government has had responsibility under contractual arrangement with the federal government for the last 12 years.

What I would like to know is, will this government deliver the delivery of these programs and services on behalf of the federal government for an additional year? If so, how will they do so? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 352-14(3): Non-Insured Health Benefits

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are presently in negotiations with the federal government about our ability to administer this program on their behalf within the current financial arrangements that exist.

If these negotiations proceed as we expect they will and turn out favourably, we will undertake to continue to administer this program to status Indian and Inuit recipients, who qualify for it in the Northwest Territories.

We are hoping that the additional administrative support that the federal government has agreed to will enable us to do that without having to subsidize the cost. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 352-14(3): Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In answers to previous questions relating to the cost overrun, the Minister had indicated that the federal government has refused to pay for certain items or services that they had previously agreed to under contract.

I wonder if I could get a detailed listing of those items and what is the administrative cost overrun. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The Honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 352-14(3): Non-Insured Health Benefits

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the \$1 million that we have referred to really relates to two issues.

One is the administrative costs that are incurred to deliver the program that we are not compensated for. The other is the actual disallowance of certain things, which we try to claim for.

We estimate that the cost to the government for the administrative functions, which we are not compensated for, is between \$400,000 and \$500,000 at least. There is a great deal of involvement at a number of levels of our government in terms of administering this.

As far as the specific areas in which there has been disallowances and we have not been able to collect, they include transportation, boarding home costs, ground transportation, the Larga Boarding Home costs, co-payments, vision care and dental care.

These, together, add up to the other portion of the unfunded amount from the federal government. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 352-14(3): Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish the department every bit of luck in trying to get the additional funding required for the administrative costs and the cost overruns in certain areas.

Specifically, I would like to ask a question relating to dental services. I understand the dental fees paid in the Yukon for dental services by the federal government are different than those that they are proposing to the Northwest Territories Dental Association. Why is that, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The Honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 352-14(3): Non-Insured Health Benefits

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have become aware of this discrepancy in the fee schedule that exists between what is paid to dentists in the Yukon and what is paid to our dentists here in the Northwest Territories.

This has been brought to our attention by the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Association of Dentists. This fee schedule is not sufficient and it is causing problems in the practice of dentists here in the North, and it is making it difficult to recruit dentists who want to set up a practice here. It also makes it difficult for them to sustain themselves in their overhead, when they are here, if these fee schedules are inadequate.

I am concerned with the stance that has been taken by the federal government on the provision of dental services and I do believe this has the potential to undermine the ability of our residents to access dental services as providers find it increasingly difficult to justify the services when revenues are not keeping pace with the costs.

I have been in touch with the dental association. We have set up meetings between a representative from Health Canada with them, and we will continue to monitor this and I think that we should expect no less than what they are prepared to pay for people under a similar program in the Yukon Territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 352-14(3): Non-Insured Health Benefits

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the discussions with the federal government are going well and the possibility of the Government of the Northwest Territories providing the services to continue for another year. However, there are no guarantees.

I would like to know if there is a transitional plan and, if so, as part of that transitional plan, are they looking at encouraging the federal government to devolve that responsibility to those aboriginal organizations that are capable and willing to take on that responsibility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 352-14(3): Non-Insured Health Benefits

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I might suggest that it would be difficult to find any organization that would be willing to take on the administration of the NIHB Program under the current circumstances.

If we can iron out these difficulties with the federal government, we will continue to perform this function. If we cannot, I have committed in this House, and will commit again, that we would undertake to commence consultation with aboriginal beneficiaries immediately in order to ensure a smooth

transition, even if it resulted in the federal government, if no aboriginal organizations were interested in it, giving the obvious required subsidy that has had to go into it in the past.

Even if the federal government were going to take it on and put structures in place to administer it, we would certainly be very attentive to a smooth transition and a consultation process with the beneficiaries. Thank you.

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

Question 353-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition for a Divisional Council

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Hay River DEA's petition was not approved by the Minister of Education, one of the mitigating factors for the denial provided by the Minister was that the fact that the Government of the Northwest Territories was instituting a total review of boards in the Northwest Territories.

The review of the Department of Health and Social Services boards undertaken by the Department of Health and Social Services, which was to be completed by June 2001, may possibly be delayed further due to the recent financial difficulties encountered by the health boards.

Will the Minister of Education please advise if this possible delay of health boards review will affect the DEA's petition even further? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 353-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition for a Divisional Council

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Issues such as the request of Hay River are never easy to handle because there are many circumstances that usually enter into making decisions of this nature.

As I pointed out at the time, there were a number of issues. Two main ones being, financial and the other being that the government is currently undertaking a review of regional administrative structures to consider the effectiveness of boards and how they deliver services and so forth and in consideration of future self-government directions.

As well, there is the issue of the health boards being under review. So those all have to be taken into consideration when any decision is going to be made on this with regard to future action. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 353-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition for a Divisional Council

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier in the year, the Minister told the Hay River DEA that the financial calculations provided by DEA as to the financial impact of their petition differed from the Department of

Education's calculations. Due to the discrepancies, the Minister promised to have officials from his department meet with the Hay River DEA to go over these figures. To date, the department has not yet met with the Hay River DEA to review these figures. Would the Minister please advise as to when this may be taking place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 353-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition for a Divisional Council

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a meeting with the mayor and the deputy chair of the DEA, as well as the two Hay River MLAs to discuss several matters, one of which was this particular issue. At the time, upon request by the representative from the DEA if we could have our officials come to Hay River to do a reconciliation with the officials from the DEA, I informed them yes, I would do that. Representatives from our department were in Hay River a week ago Tuesday, or somewhere in that date and time, to discuss another matter. I had informed the department to do this and it was my understanding that this was an opportunity for the DEA to raise the issue and I do not know whether they did or not, so I have to check to see if it was raised, Mr. Speaker.

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

Supplementary to Question 353-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition for a Divisional Council

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To my knowledge, that issue has not been addressed yet. Mr. Speaker, the DEA has also been told by the Minister that his denial of the petition was based on a functional review of all regional administrative programs. The DEA was promised that their petition would be reviewed again pending the outcome of the regional review. I have made several inquiries as to the terms of reference for this regional review and I have been told that there are no specific terms of reference. Would the Minister please advise if the lack of definite terms of reference, which would provide clear direction to the review, may in any way impede the process of the regional review thereby further delaying the Hay River petition? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 353-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition for a Divisional Council

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My consistent comment has been that as the issues that I have stated above and before are resolved, changes to governance may be considered. Mr. Speaker, the issue of the regional administrative review is being discussed by a committee of Ministers and officials. I am not sure what the status of that is or what the terms of reference of that are. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 353-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition for a Divisional Council

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister inform the House and the Hay River DEA that he will continue to review this issue and find a satisfactory solution to this problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 353-14(3): Hay River District Education Authority Petition for a Divisional Council

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly on the issue of finances, I did make the commitment our officials would get together with the Hay River officials. If they have not done that, then it was my intention to ensure that they do do that. As I say, I hoped they would get into the discussion at their last meeting. With regard to resolution of this issue, as I stated, I want to ensure that some financial areas are answered. As the Member can appreciate, as all Members can appreciate, cost is a factor in this whole issue as it does cover our government operating expenditures. As the issues are resolved, changes to governance, in this particular case, may be considered. Thank you.

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

Question 354-14(3): Federal Funding for the Construction of New Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Vince Steen. Last Wednesday, the Minister informed the House that the construction of any new roads into communities that are not on the present highway system involves working with Indian Affairs to get sufficient funding. I would like to know what the status is between the talks between the Department of Transportation and DIAND. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Question 354-14(3): Federal Funding for the Construction of New Roads

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department has taken the approach through our Highway Investment Strategy and we have identified in there where we would like to build new roads. We put together the estimates for those roads. We have sent those on to the Department of Indian Affairs. As far as I know, that is the only negotiations on new roads that we have been having with them in relation to the Highway Investment Strategy that the Member is referring to. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Monsieur Steen. Questions supplémentaire, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 354-14(3): Federal Funding for the Construction of New Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister about the correspondence between them and Ottawa, if he could make it available to us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Member be more specific about what he is looking for?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Mr. Lafferty, perhaps you could be more specific. I will allow you this supplementary.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would not know the correspondence, Mr. Speaker, because I did not write the correspondence between Transportation and Ottawa, so it would be up to the Minister to give me the correspondence that he says has been sent to Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 354-14(3): Federal Funding for the Construction of New Roads

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my first response, the correspondence we have had with Indian Affairs on new roads related to our Highway Investment Strategy and as we tabled it, we also sent copies to the Minister. If that is what the Member is looking for, I would be happy to supply him with a copy of that letter.

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

Supplementary to Question 354-14(3): Federal Funding for the Construction of New Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also, last week the Minister referred to studies and costs of all-weather roads into North Slave. Most studies come with recommendations. Can the Minister make available to the House or table these recommendations from these studies? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to Question 354-14(3): Federal Funding for the Construction of New Roads

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the only information that I have that relates to studies on roads in the North Slave were in relation to a document that was previously tabled I believe in this House and that was a document related to the highways strategy. Thank you.

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

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister says there are no recommendations, but I talked to people and I get the picture that there is a recommendation that came along with the strategy which has never been tabled in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry, but I do not hear a question there, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 354-14(3): Federal Funding for the Construction of New Roads

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am asking the Minister that with the last study, there were recommendations which have not been tabled. Can he table them, please?

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

Further Return to Question 354-14(3): Federal Funding for the Construction of New Roads

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that I have any documents with recommendations. The documents I was referring to was really the engineering aspect of the Slave Geological Province Road Proposal, for instance. There was engineering documents with that. There were no recommendations that I am aware of that came out of that particular document. However, that document is tabled.

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

Question 355-14(3): Chief of Staff Position

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the Premier back to this House by asking him a question. It leaves off where we left off back in November, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to his response.

Mr. Speaker, earlier during this sitting, I had asked the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board a question on the evaluation of the chief of staff. I quote from page 1719 of the unedited Hansard the Honourable Joe Handley's response on the second paragraph:

"In terms of benefits, including salary and so on, then it does fit pretty much in the same category as do deputy ministers."

Mr. Speaker, in responses to oral questions, the Premier stated on October 31st, page 635 of Hansard:

"We also created a chief of staff position. The chief of staff position is in fact an executive assistant position that has additional responsibilities."

Mr. Speaker, as I rose on my Member's statement about an about-face, it seems on a number of issues within this government, an about-face has occurred, and as smoothly as a military team would be able to do it.

I would like to know from the Premier if in fact this is the case with this responsibility. Is it now in fact going to be termed a deputy minister position?

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

Return to Question 355-14(3): Chief of Staff Position

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have shared some information with the Members of this House about this issue. We can get very technical about it. I think this is where, as people who like to keep things as simple and as transparent as possible, we sometimes get ourselves into difficulty and hear the worst in what are very straightforward answers.

There is no about-face, unless you want to twist it into that. You are completely able to do that as Members.

The chief of staff position is not a newly created position because it came out of the executive assistant position, out of an existing position. Members, including the Member for Inuvik, will remember I was properly asked very strongly not to increase staff. Even additional secretaries were discouraged when we took office. I thought they would have applauded the fact that to politically enhance my office and the staff's ability to deal with their counterparts across this country, that retitling the executive assistant position to be called chief of staff and in order to track the people who can do that job, to give it a senior management level type of salary, to try to work it that way, that it would be resoundingly applauded.

Here we are over a year later with this Member still much chagrining at this development. You know, you could have avoided all of this. They simply could have agreed to give me the additional staff position called the chief of staff and also allow me to keep an executive assistant position as well. That is hindsight.

The fact is we have put together a legislative proposal. We are dealing with it. The Minister responsible, Mr. Handley, has answered the questions. I do not consider that an about-face. It is explained in the legislative proposal and in some of the responses we have made to date. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 355-14(3): Chief of Staff Position

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in fact, we can go back and look at the detail if we want, and there has been an increase in the executive, in the west wing, as some would call it.

Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned, we still have not addressed that he stated in Hansard that this was in fact an executive assistant position. In the response, the Minister responsible for Financial Management Board states that this pretty much does in fact fit in the same category as do deputy ministers. What is the change now? It has only been a couple of months since we broke off the last sitting. Why is there a change? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 355-14(3): Chief of Staff Position

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, it is important to try to communicate these through officials and it does not lend itself well to discussion between people who are not experts in this field. As I have said, the core duties of the chief of staff in my view are those taken on by executive assistants.

Executive assistants do not have job descriptions. They are at pleasure but like the principle secretary, the chief of staff that we have created, which is an enhanced executive assistant position, is operating at a senior management level. The salary that we assign to this and allow for this reflects that. It is to ensure that person is qualified and has the dignity of being able to deal with deputy ministers, chief of staff across this country to be able to attract the type of person we need for this job.

It is a tough job. It is being done very well at this time by the person who fills it. We have said that it came out of the executive assistant position. The duties assigned to it are the core duties that are performed by executive assistant positions. Keep in mind that these are not laid out in a job description. We have enhanced that by including additional duties. That plus the political requirements of the job requires that we pay it a level that is considered a senior management level.

This is where we are. There is a possibility that the Member might be able to see that, but this is a good thing that we have done. He should be able to applaud it very shortly once he gets it. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 355-14(3): Chief of Staff Position

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not know if the Premier was telling me I need to go back to school to try to understand what they put out here. Mr. Speaker, in Hansard of October 31st, page 635, "We also created a chief of staff position." He goes on to say:

"The chief of staff would be allowed to call meetings of all executive assistants, including secretaries, and to ensure the overall coordination of Cabinet."

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has now stated that this position can deal with deputy ministers, so it would seem that it is in fact turning into more than the executive assistant position. As far as I know, and I am sure the Premier knows, as he has been a Cabinet Minister his entire time as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, there are nine pages of duties and responsibilities for an executive assistant. If we are not ducking here, I do not know what it is.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know again, has there been a change in direction in this? I know he will refer to the legislative proposal. I look forward to that opportunity to debate that one as well. Has there been a change in direction here from what he stated on the record that it was an executive assistant

position? Now the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board says it is in the same category as a deputy minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. I just caution Members to shorten their preambles in supplementary questions. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 355-14(3): Chief of Staff Position

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been no change. We are happy with the changes and enhancements that we made. As the Premier, I am very happy with the changes I made to my office. I think as a cost-saving measure, the committee that reviews that the Executive department, I thought applauded that last year, but I could be wrong. They asked specifically not to see any additional cost incurred by my office.

It is true that the chief of staff does more than just provide executive assistant position duties, but it is also true in the 12 years that I was a Minister in the previous government, I have seen executive assistants do a wide range of duties, a wide range of varying types of workloads. I am not going to say that some did nothing, but some of them did a tremendous, tremendous amount of work. They are all different. Each Minister asked their executive assistants to do varying duties and they are varied. That is why there is no job description.

In this case, the chief of staff is a new job. It is being done by a person who is my executive assistant. We have retitled it to reflect that it is going to operate at a senior management level, but it still does all the executive assistant position duties that I was previously able to obtain from my executive assistant. So it is an executive assistant position. It is a chief of staff position. It does executive assistant duties. It does chief of staff duties. It is a pleasure appointment and it is paid as reflected as a senior management level positions. The sooner we get on to dealing with it in a legislative proposal, the better for everyone to clear up the ambiguities and the difficulties we are having with this issue. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 355-14(3): Chief of Staff Position

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is always asking for applause. I give him applause. Now let us get on to some real answers here. Mr. Speaker, if the chief of staff position is an executive assistant with enhanced duties, would the chief of staff then be given authority to talk to the public and make public statements about the future direction of the Government of the Northwest Territories, in particular to heading toward party politics? Thank you.

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

Further Return to Question 355-14(3): Chief of Staff Position

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Mr. Speaker, the individual has opinions that perhaps are shared with the public on occasion. We will ensure that that does not happen again. Thank you.

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

Question 356-14(3): Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Tax

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley. I have a question on the budget that he delivered last week. It is in regard to tax on income. On page 19 of his budget, he speaks about an establishment of a Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Tax. He says it is composed of residents with experience in the tax area. I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, if these people with experience in the tax area, what does he mean by that? Does that mean tax lawyers and accountants and tax policy analysts or would that include middle income families with children, low income families, seniors, persons with disabilities and every other person who pays taxes in the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return To Question 356-14(3): Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the tax committee that I am proposing to create as we move to a tax on income is a committee that I expect would have technical expertise, expertise that would be valuable to me in ensuring that we have the best tax structure for the people of the Northwest Territories. I am thinking of a committee that is made up of people with technical professional expertise such as accountants and tax experts. I was not thinking of someone who has experience of tax on the other end of being the taxpayer. It would be more for the technical expertise. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 356-14(3): Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Tax

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As with other Members in this House, I have been trying to understand what this change in tax structure is. The more I hear it, it is becoming a little bit alarming here. Mr. Speaker, the budget states that the Minister will bring his people together to look at the options and make recommendations. So I have to ask the Minister whether these people are going to be gathered together to raise taxes for the everyday taxpayer? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Further Return to 356-14(3): Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the proposed committee, as I said earlier, is a committee of experts. When we make the move, if we make the move to switch to tax on income, that is our tax is to be based on income earned rather than as a percentage of federal tax, it opens up the opportunity for us as a government to restructure our taxes in the way that best suits Northerners. I see the committee as providing me with that kind of technical expertise on how we can best ensure that our tax

system is fair and yet also achieves our purposes in terms of revenues.

It is not there to raise revenue or anything like that. It is simply to give me professional expertise, advice, on what our new tax structure may look like if we go over to this system. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 356-14(3): Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Tax

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the ambiguity in the Minister's answer makes it difficult for me to understand exactly what the problem is he is trying to fix. Mr. Speaker, I have friends who have chosen to stay in the North because they find the North to be the area with the lowest personal income tax and we also know that we have had windfalls in the budget last year because corporate tax is the lowest. So I do not understand what the problem is that the Minister is trying to fix with this committee and these experts and everything else that he is doing. He is being very ambiguous. Could he be more clear, please?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I am not sure I heard a question there. Could the Minister be more clear. More clear on what? Could you be more specific, please? Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question I thought was very clear. My question is what is the Minister trying to fix? What is the Minister trying to fix?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I have the question. What is the Minister trying to fix? Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 356-14(3): Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Tax

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to see if there is a way of fixing our tax system. Our tax system right now is based as a percentage of federal tax. We have very little flexibility to set our own categories, to set our own tax credit systems and so on. I think there are possibly people in different wage categories in the North who are having a hard time to make ends meet. I think this is an opportunity for us to set new levels, new categories of taxpayers, new systems of tax credit. There are all sorts of options that are open to us as we go towards having our own tax on income system not tied to the federal system. So there's a whole host of things. I have not done up a terms of reference for the committee yet and I would be very happy to share that with all the Members when we do it and get feedback from you and give you more clarity on what I am doing.

This, in my view, provides us with an excellent opportunity to devise a made-in-the-North tax system and provide benefits to people at all levels that are appropriate. So, broadly speaking, that is it. I will provide a terms of reference for all of the Members to have a look at. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 356-14(3): Minister's Advisory Committee on Personal Income Tax

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Members here, I think we would appreciate information like that so we will have a better idea of what it is the Minister is trying to fix with respect to our tax system, which I think is fine at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Handley, there was no question there. If you choose to respond, if not, we will move on. Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 357-14(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. It is regarding the seniors' fuel subsidy. Mr. Speaker, there has been some discussion about the moves to help supplement fuel bills for regular households, but my concern is with seniors who are on fixed incomes.

I would like to ask the Minister, what are the criteria which sets the eligibility for seniors to be eligible for the fuel subsidy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The Honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Return to Question 357-14(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we did have a fuel subsidy program for seniors in the age category of 60 years and it is according to an income level zoned with the high zone being \$39,000.

There is a quantity of fuel provided in various forms and it is either for wood, propane, electricity and all the means of fuel, including natural gas. There is a quantity provided for that, according to the amounts that are equivalent to 2,275 litres, and translated then into other fuels, Mr. Speaker, are equivalent of that. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 357-14(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask whether the Minister, in light of the hike in fuels, especially in diesel and propane, will revisit the volumes of fuel that would be included in the subsidy and this is especially because senior citizens on fixed incomes, I think, are experiencing quite a big bite out of their limited disposable income for energy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The Honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 357-14(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, we have provided the fuel rebate subsidy, as well, of \$320 per

household or \$150 per single. So that can be applied as well, Mr. Speaker, above the amount of fuel allotment that they are allowed, with provision of having provided information that they have consumed the amount above that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Ootes. Questionne supplementaire, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary to Question 357-14(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify, and this would be very good news if I hear it the right way, that even though there is an ongoing program for seniors' fuel subsidy, they will be eligible for the additional increment for as long as that program is going then? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 357-14(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we felt that there are certain individuals in our population that are in need. Seniors were certainly identified as such. When we talked about the fuel rebate program, we felt that this was a very appropriate area to provide that particular rebate portion as well for seniors.

So as I said, it is up to \$320 for family, \$150 for singles. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Ootes. Questionne supplementaire, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary to Question 357-14(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. Excellent news, Mr. Speaker. Then just to clarify one more point. So the income and means test that I understand was to be applied to that other household criteria will not apply to seniors? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must apologize, I missed the question. If Mr. Braden could repeat it for me? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Braden, just for the record, your question.

MR. BRADEN: Yes, of course. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The program that the government is talking about bringing in has a means test or criteria applied to household income, and I believe a figure of about \$70,000 was applied. I take it from the Minister's answer that this will not be applied to an additional increment for seniors. Is that the case? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

Further Return to Question 357-14(3): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. JAKE OOTES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This particular rebate that we are speaking of, the \$320 and the \$150, will apply to everyone based on income and the income criteria had been set during the announcement of the rebate program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Oral question time has expired. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address. Item 10, replies to the budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees under review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 16-14(3): Amendment to the Rules of the Legislative Assembly

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 23, 2001, I will move the following motion:

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Honourable Member for Great Slave that Rule 87(2) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by inserting "and the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures" after "Accountability and Oversight":

AND FURTHER, that the following be added as Rule 87(3):

87(3) The Membership of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures shall consist of:

- (a) Four Members and one Minister; and
- (b) Four alternate Members, one of whom shall be a Minister.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Merci, Mr. Handley. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 19, Committee Reports 5-14(3), 6-14(3), 7-14(3), with Mr. Delorey in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will now call the committee of the whole to order. We have Bill 19 for consideration, and three committee reports. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will deal with Bill 19 and the Department of Health and Social Services and Committee Report 7-14(3) in conjunction with that. If time permits, we will move on to the Department of Transportation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. With that, we will take a short break and come back and consider Bill 19.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): I will call the committee back to order. Would the Minister like to call in any witnesses? Minister Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would like to bring witnesses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Does the committee agree that the Minister brings in her witnesses? Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses in?

Madam Minister, could you introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, today I have Mrs. Penny Ballantyne, deputy minister responsible for Health and Social Services and Warren St. Germaine, the director of finance and management services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. We are on general comments. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yesterday I had been asking the Minister about the allocation of child welfare workers, the increase. The Minister had said she did not have the information in front of her that she had shared with the committee earlier. Just for the record, I was wondering if she has had a chance to get that information and if she could share the expected allocation with us now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in consultation with the health boards, the allocation for the ten social workers, which is a part of the \$1.2 million investment in the response to the Child Welfare League review is ten workers; three in Yellowknife, one in Fort Smith, two in the Deh Cho, two in Inuvik, one in the Dogrib region, and one in Hay River. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Minister providing that information. Also for the record, could I get a confirmation that she and the department have agreed to re-examine the funding allocation to Yellowknife Health and Social Services to see whether or not the department can find it within their budget to maintain what was provided as one-time funding, as base funding for the two positions that have already been provided and the support worker. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Yes, we could re-evaluate and re-examine the situation with Yellowknife again. We cannot make that commitment right now, but we will commit to look at it again. I would also like to say that this response to the Child Welfare League review was intended to be a phased-in approach. There are issues of constraint which we do face. One of them, of course, is as always financial.

Another is the ability to integrate the workers into our system. The other is the desire to find Northerners who are interested in these positions. We will be advertising and putting a priority on hiring Northerners to fill these positions.

In terms of the response to the Child Welfare League, I just want stress that this is the beginning of it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Minister's response. The Minister made some note just now of the need to put a priority on hiring Northerners and the need to integrate qualified employees into the system. I think everyone would support the granting of priority to Northerners, but is that a condition of employment? Is that something that must be filled, or are we in a situation here where if we cannot find enough qualified Northerners to fill the ten positions, we can then look elsewhere? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, initially, we were hopeful that we would be able to identify ten Northerners, perhaps people who were not practicing in social work right now that might have been able to be brought back into the system. Unfortunately, we were not able to find a full complement of ten in our initial scan, so we have reverted to making northern hire a priority, but we will take other candidates as well in order to fill those ten positions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Minister's response, and support that move. I would like to go back to the issue of the relationship between the departments and the boards, also to examine again the number of reports that we have and where we are going with bringing in Mr. Cuff to do another review.

My concern comes from the numbers of times we have had different reports. Look at the report that the Child Welfare League did. They talk about the dynamic tension that exists between the Department of Health and Social Services and boards with regard to the need for accountability and the need for flexibility.

While they talk about one aspect only, I think that the whole issue of tension exists between the need for the Minister to be accountable to this House, the department to make sure that they can help the Minister to be accountable, and the issue of providing services at the local level.

One of the things that the Child Welfare League report noted was that the key to successfully negotiating the unnecessary tension between the two seemingly conflicting agendas is for the two parties to continue to work in partnership to meet their respective responsibilities.

Whether or not that will be successful, they say, depends on the skilled negotiation of the interface, which creates the dynamic tension. If it is successful, it will strengthen the processes and the outcome.

That report was done in May 2000. In July 2000, Minister Groenewegen published the Minister's Response to the 1999 Forum on Health and Social Services.

A number of the forum recommendations had to do with governance. They talked about the need to clarify roles and responsibilities of each player, but one of the other key recommendations of the Minister's forum was the need to devolve responsibility and funding to boards for most health and social services programs.

Obviously, one of the recommendations they followed up with, after that, was that there needs to then be a procedure established for flowing board responsibilities to communities.

The Minister, in her response, indicated, now some time ago, that a revised funding formula was being developed during the current fiscal year. I have not heard that there is a new funding formula. I have heard that there is difficulty with understanding numbers, so that we have not agreed on budgets.

Are we, in fact, moving, as the forum had recommended, to a funding formula, which would take into account services that were expected to be delivered, and the population served, including the movement of populations within the North?

I think that is going to be of interest to us. This was promised to us last year. In fact, if we look at the strategic plan of the Department of Health, which was presented to Members some time ago, this was exactly as stated in there.

One of the strategic directions was to improve management of the system by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the department, boards, private service providers, and non-profit organizations.

One of the other strategic directions was to improve the overall functioning of the public system of health and social services by promoting strong relationships between agencies and governments.

One way to do that was to improve the allocation of financial resources to boards through funding methods, which reflect population characteristics and board responsibilities.

In the business plan last year, Mr. Chairman, we were told that the department was going to develop clearer reporting and accountability requirements for system partners, develop clearer working relationships for system partners, and continue to develop appropriate funding arrangements for boards and NGOs.

So we have a couple of reports that have suggested to the department that they need to work more closely with boards and need to find a way to be more supportive. In fact, in a response to one of those reports, the Minister herself appears to agree with that direction and commit the department to moving that way.

So I have to ask, as a question, knowing that this was happening, why is such an importance being placed now on the recommendations on governance that we are expecting from the report from Mr. Cuff?

We have already, it would appear to me, gotten an awful lot of recommendations here. We appear to be moving to deal with only some of these recommendations and now we have

embarked on another study, when we had two other studies that already told us what to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there was a comment made about the length of my answers. Mr. Dent has certainly covered a wide range of issues and it is difficult to give a short answer, unless we pick just one facet of his question and respond to that.

However, I will try to respond to what I can remember. The Cuff review is intended to take into consideration those previous recommendations that were made.

So it is more focused on recommendations for actions to be taken, as opposed to the emphasis on the review section of it, except to review those reports that have already been done.

It is also contained in the terms of reference that system resourcing, adequacy and equitability of funding allocations to boards, clarity and fairness of board funding allocations, adequacy of board support resources in the department, determination of board forced growth requirements, adequacy of staffing models for nursing and physicians, appropriateness of the surplus deficit retention policy, capacity of department, provide an appropriate and effective monitoring.

So a lot of the issues that Mr. Dent raises with respect to resourcing the boards are clearly identified in the terms of reference of the Cuff review and we are looking for action related recommendations.

Some of the previous reports did identify problems where there were deficiencies and did not always have attached to them, in every instance, a clear action associated with them.

So that is a couple of areas, Mr. Chairman, that Mr. Dent has covered. I will ask Mrs. Ballantyne if she would just speak a little bit more in detail on the issue of the work with the boards to ensure that they are adequately resourced. Thank you.

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

MRS. BALLANTYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, briefly to the comments arising out of the Child Welfare League review report, to note that the department does work in collaboration with the boards on a variety of child welfare matters.

There is an established child and family services working group, that includes CEOs and senior child welfare staff from the boards, who work with the department on child welfare issues. In addition, there was a very strong board representation on the child and family information system working group. A user group, whose input very much shaped that reporting system.

With respect to the budgeting and financial reporting processes, the department has worked closely with the boards over the last two years to try to build capacity at the board level for the government's business planning process. This has included regular updates at the quarterly CEO meetings and the monthly teleconferences on the government's budgeting requirements, what we were expected to bring to Financial

Management Board and the Legislative Assembly. It also has included workshops for board staff and some progress has certainly been made in that regard.

However, boards have really been affected by turnover within their own administration, which has really hampered their ability to meet all of these requirements. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Ballantyne. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question today is that, again going back to the training and the skills that we need to develop especially in our communities where we do have a lot of the frontline workers, I think that it is important that we do carry on the training to do the responsibilities that they have, where the people in social services and the health care system have a whole bunch of paper work that they have to do as part of their responsibility.

I think they do have people there, receptionists and part-time secretarial services, for example. However, I think that we have to improve on that because one of my concerns is, in response to the Minister's opening remarks, when you talk about the lack or short coming of information or reporting back to the central government on how money is being expended.

The problem that I see, especially in the small communities, is that we have people there, but they either do not have the skills or the training to be able to conclude those reports within a short timeframe, or they do not have the tools to do it with.

I will use Aklavik, for instance. I spoke to the department in Aklavik and the little things that we take for granted, where they do not even have a printer for their computers. They have to run somewhere else, print off something off a disk, and run back to their office. I mean, that should not be called for today. They have two computers, one is down and one is working, but yet you have three people in the office. Also, the person that they have for the secretarial service only works half-days.

So there are these little things that are having an effect on the whole area of the sharing of that information and also making sure that the information is developed and also submitted within a short timeframe, because that seems to be a problem. The whole information gathering and making sure that people have those tools.

So those are some of the areas that I feel in ensuring that we have people who do have the resources, but also along with taking on these responsibilities, the government also has to allocate resources for training, skill development, making sure the different resource programs are out there so that people know that when you take on a program, you have skilled labour and qualified people in those different positions.

What we are seeing is the people are put in these positions, but they are put in it either not having the opportunity to take more advancements on their training or on the education skills that are out there where we see a lot of money being lapsed in different areas, especially when it comes to training where it is going back. I think we have to start ensuring that the frontline workers we do have are offered these courses and offered the ability to move up with the training.

So I would like to ask the Minister, what is her department doing to improve the front-line workers to ensure they do have the training and the skill development that is needed to make their jobs easier?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Krutko raises some very valid points with respect to the capacity of communities to deal with what are really a complex set of activities and the people who work for the health boards are not the employees of the department. They are the employees of the health board, but we do agree that there is a function in terms of training and upgrading of skills in order to build the capacity to be able to carry out those roles and responsibilities. That is on the administrative side.

When it comes to the medical professionals themselves, they do have to have a certain amount of credentials before they would be considered to be hired in some of those positions. There are other people who are offering support services to those people who need to be properly equipped and have the proper training and skills themselves to perform those roles. So although the board can be involved to some degree, it is important that the boards also consider this and look at the capabilities of people when they are hiring them and instances where they can offer support for upgrading skills and training, that is a useful exercise as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Another area of concern I have is a lot of people do not really understand what rights they have as a patient. It works both ways. You get an opinion from a doctor and I think a lot of people do not realize you have the right to a second opinion. I think that people have to be able to know that as a patient, there are certain things that you should be able to ask questions on or have information revealed to you as you requested. Is there such a thing as a patient bill of rights within this government or is that something we can look at?

With the problems we are running into now...I have had constituents of mine approach me where they have written letters to different health boards, they have hand delivered letters to people that sit on these boards to bring information forth and they never get a response back. They do not get a simple acknowledgement that they have submitted these concerns to the different boards. It seems like more and more, especially with our elderly people, because of the whole area of cutbacks and what not, a lot of translating services are no longer there.

A lot of people would automatically assume a doctor said this is his analysis and then six months down the road, you get a different opinion from a different doctor. The same thing applies with different medications that a lot of people take. On one day, you might get this medication from this doctor, a new doctor comes in and he will put you on a different medication knowingly or unknowingly that it could have a major effect on you, especially if you have allergic reactions.

I think people have to understand you have a right to know that what you are being prescribed is explained to you in such a manner that you understand. Also, if you do not like the

decision by a particular doctor, you have the right to request another opinion. Is there such a thing in place considering patient rights with regard to some kind of patient bill of rights or is that something that this government can consider looking at?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is not something that is in place right now, but it is something that could be put in place, particularly for people who may have language barriers who may need things communicated to them in plain language in terms of what kind of services, what kinds of support, what kinds of insurance benefits, things like this, are available to them. That is something that I would like to check into to see what kinds of things like that other jurisdictions have in place, but it is a very good idea and it is something worth pursuing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the Aklavik Health Centre, there has been a delay in place, yet going through the budget I noticed from previous years to this year's budget, they have almost \$3.5 million. I received a letter from the Minister of Public Works stating that the department is reviewing or assessing the proposal for the Aklavik Health Centre. They are doing an adjustment to lowering the cost to no more than \$3 million. Yet, in the budget, the budget shows it is \$3.5 million.

Who is the one who makes the decision on how the money is being spent within the budget? Is it the Department of Public Works or the Minister? The letter I received was signed by the deputy minister to myself with regard to a request I made in the House asking for information with regard to the health centre project for Aklavik.

The community is concerned. I have spoken to the nurses and also the nurse-in-charge. They cannot see themselves having their staff room in the same room that is classified as a lab room where you do your tests and what not. The size of the facility that is being described has been cutback. Where the community has requested some 700 square metres, now it has been cut back to 750. They are still continuing to bring down the price of the budget.

In the capital allocation within this budget, it clearly states previous year was \$1 million and there is \$2.5 million being spent, yet there hasn't been one piece of material or the contract has been let go yet. I would like to ask the Minister what can the department do to ensure the community of Aklavik will be getting what they are requesting, which is the \$3.5 million allocation that is in the budget, not what the Department of Public Works is stating where they are reducing the cost to \$3 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we just happen to have both our briefing note and Public Works and Services' latest briefing note here. So I am going to ask Mr. St. Germaine if he will respond to that question. Thank you.

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

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to clarify some of the numbers that Public Works and Services has disclosed to the Member, the construction cost is \$3 million. The actual total project cost is now estimated to be \$4 million. In the Main Estimates at this point in time, we have a proposed budget of \$3.5 million. At this point in time, part of the process the project team is looking at is looking at the preliminary design that has been imposed to see if there are alternatives in terms of construction materials, foundation systems, looking at some way to get the budget closer to what's in the Main Estimates at this point in time. Certainly there will be no effort made or review done in terms of changing the program in terms of the space available for the program. That is currently at 650 square metres and the intent would be to leave that at that amount. So the review at this point in time is looking at what we can do in terms of building the health centre more efficiently. If all those avenues are exhausted, we will be in the position of having to seek additional funding to complete the project. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. St. Germaine. Mrs. Ballantyne, did you have something to add there? Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday, when we concluded our committee of the whole, the issue that was on the table was the inability of the department to seemingly come to grips with the financial situations in the boards, and agree what numbers would be presented. Mr. St. Germaine, on page 1997 of unedited Hansard, yesterday does confirm that the common systems and structures are in place, but the issue really evolves around getting a clear understanding of what transactions occurred. He goes further on to say that it is an underlying business situation that results in the deficits that have become a problem.

Mr. Chairman, I raised the issue, does this mean that since the systems are there, the numbers are there, a trust factor of not being able to trust and accept the numbers at face value that are given to them by the health boards? Mr. Chairman on page 1998 the Minister herself indicated that the issue is not so much about trust as it appears to be, it seems to be more on the capacity of boards to be able to provide this kind of financial information.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to ask the Minister to maybe speak to that comment. I would like to use, for example, Stanton, the flagship of our health and social services in the North, the crown jewel in the continuum of care provided by the department with a staff bigger than headquarters, and a budget of somewhere near \$40 million. Is the Minister saying that with all the talent and expertise they have over there between the board and the staff, that their accounting systems and structures are in place, yet that particular operation does not have the capacity to provide this kind of financial information to the department?

Or for that matter, the Inuvik Hospital which will be replaced with a \$30 million new facility to provide key services in that area, is the Minister saying that the Beaufort-Delta board and all their staff are unable to, and do not have the capacity to, provide the kind of financial information that the department

requires? Or they are providing it in such a way that it cannot be interpreted?

This to me gets to the nub of the issue that seems to be plaguing the department. Very clearly on the clinical side, as has been pointed out, the services we provide are very good. The problem always comes back to counting the money. I would appreciate it if the Minister could speak to that issue, because I think it is a very significant one. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not think it is very accurate to paint all of the boards with the same brush. It is not accurate to make a sweeping summary of the ability for the boards to report good financial information and accurate and timely financial information.

In the instances of the boards where we are having difficulty getting a handle on the expenditures and the factors which are contributing to the deficit, Mr. Miltenberger is right. It does appear that there is a problem with capacity to deliver that information to the department, but I just want to clear up for the record, this does not include all boards. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just so it is clear and what I was quoting, page 1998 of Hansard, "It seems to be more around the capacity of the boards to be able to provide this kind of financial information" were the words spoken by the Minister.

The reality being that two of the largest health boards, two of the biggest with the most staff, do not have the capacity to provide this basic information even when all the systems are in place. Could the Minister indicate, since they have made that determination, why is that? Are they going to wait for Mr. Cuff to tell them what to do about it, or is there a way to ensure that that capacity is there and that standard financial and accounting procedures are followed? It seems to me, that since the information is provided, that the department does not accept on face value the information provided by the boards. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I find it interesting that the Member is referring to the Stanton and the Inuvik boards. I find it interesting that he does not raise the issue of capacity with the Fort Smith board, given that that is the community that he represents.

Mr. Chairman, the structures, the practices and the framework are all in place. The lack of information mostly surrounds the issue of the deficits, which does speak to the ongoing ability to keep records. Mr. Chairman, as the results of the operational audits and the payroll audits and other additional information does become public, I think that the Members of this House will agree that, in spite of the fact that processes and guidelines were in place -- for reasons of what I will say again are more to

my mind, capacity versus trust issues -- these practices were not followed in such a way as for us to be able to receive the kind of information we need in order to come into this House and stand up and present a request for public funds to devolve to these boards. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister seems to be unable to contain herself when it comes to making personal observations. Very clearly, the Minister stated in this House that payroll functions, for example, have been removed from the Fort Smith health board. Fort Smith is a very small health board. I chose to use the other two main health boards -- the biggest ones, the flagship, because it is the flagship -- and if the Minister wishes we could always take the discussion into the capacity of the department to provide the leadership from the Minister on down to run the department. Or the capacity to keep it healthy, and not run it into the ground. Mr. Chairman, I will choose to stay on the high ground here.

The question I have for the Minister, the Minister has indicated, given a veiled reference to, that there is information that is going to come up and it is going to show that the boards do not have the capacity. The question also becomes then, after all this time, what about the accountability and framework that is there, and the ability of the board support people and all the financial people in headquarters to in fact deal with this issue? This did not pop out of the woodwork yesterday, it has been there for some time. Boards have struggled with it. But it comes back to headquarters, the head of the organization for the department. Where were they, and what is going to happen to the needs that are going to be possibly identified there?

Once again, will it be set up that the boards are going to be pointed out as the fall guys because the department will say that they did all these bad things behind our backs, or whatever is going to come out of this? And when the flagship of health and services in terms of the service they provide is characterized as not having that kind of capacity, it seems to me to be a significant problem. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have tried to make it clear, and I have stated several times in this House, that I do not wish to use any particular board as an example because we are awaiting information to come in. I just found it interesting that the Member chose to apply his questions to other health boards from constituencies which he does not represent. That was just an observation.

I will not, Mr. Chairman, take that path the Member has taken with naming specific boards in relation to some of these deficiencies because, Mr. Chairman, to put it in context it is some boards and it is in some area of operation. I do not think we should overstate it. On the other hand, we have a responsibility to flag the issues.

When the Member keeps saying where was the department, Mr. Chairman, I have been responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services for just over one year and during that time is what I can speak to. I cannot speak to the past. I am not even sure that it is particularly...I just can't

knowledgeably speak to the past. All I can speak to is that in the 13 or so months that I have been Minister, we have tried to be proactive.

Mr. Chairman, let me say, this is not intended to be a reflection on any previous Minister's leadership as well, as I look over at Mr. Roland. Surely, people can understand that I can only speak to the time that I have been involved with the department. During that time, I can assure Members that we have taken a proactive approach to the issues and have tried to share and flag the problems in a responsible manner, in a constructive way with the intent of finding resolutions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just following up on my previous questions about the Aklavik Health Centre, I would like to know from the Minister, looking at the previous estimates and also looking at the budget from last year, it is clear that there was \$1.069 million allocated for the year 2000/2001, but as everybody knows there hasn't been any site development, nothing has been done on this particular project. Again, I am getting back to my calculations of what was in 2001/2002, in which the total is \$3.5 million. I again would like to ask, could the Minister tell me exactly what of the \$1.069 that has been expended and what has it been expended on? Public Works?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will attempt to find that detail for the Member, Mr. Chairman. Mr. St. Germaine does not have the breakdown of what that initial amount of money was actually spent on, but we will commit to getting it for the Member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the community of Aklavik was expecting a \$3.569 million hospital. They have not got anything yet. Now we are being told there's \$2.5 million in this budget and that we estimate the costs of the facility after we do all our cuts as \$3 million. Yet, calculating the estimates, there is still \$500,000 and some thousand dollars that hasn't been expended. I would like to know exactly where has that \$500,000 gone?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will see if Mr. St. Germaine could answer that. Thank you.

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

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to repeat, in terms of the estimated total project, the cost now is \$4 million as opposed to the original \$3.5 million. That is over the life of the project to completion. So there is, in fact, an estimated increase of the overall cost of \$500,000. That is why the value and engineering and other processes are going on to try to live within budget, if possible. There has been no loss of funding to the overall project. Whatever is not

expended this year on the project would be subject to a carry over for the following year. So the money would be available for the completion of the project in subsequent years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The problem I have is I have had this experience with other projects in my riding with regard to the different schools that have been constructed. It seemed like there was always these cost overruns or cost deficiencies in how it is being handled. In this case of the Aklavik Health Centre, so far it has gone through three different project managers. It has not even got off the drawing board yet. It is not out to public tender, but this thing has been in the works for a couple of years now. Now they are telling us we aren't going to be able to get the materials in over the winter road, so we are going to have to barge it in. I see that as an extra cost that wasn't included. The costs would have been cheaper to truck the materials in all the way from wherever the materials are going to be coming from directly to Aklavik than having to truck it into Inuvik, store it in warehousing, pick it up again, put it in a barge, barge it in, take it off the barge, move it to site. You are moving the thing three times. So for me that is an unforeseen cost. Yet, the community is penalized because of someone else's mistakes or someone else's delays. These delays are going to cost more money in the long run than what's in the budget. But because of that, the community is going to be penalized because of someone else's mistakes.

I, for one, have a real problem with Public Works when it comes to them managing these type of projects where they're given the ability to take on these projects. They add their 15 percent up top -- in some cases, probably 20 or 30 percent -- for all these different engineering studies, delays in projects because of change of personnel or what not. I think it will be cheaper for this government in the long run, when we have these types of projects, to go to the private sector. When we have three different project managers handling a project that never even gets off the ground, I think there's something wrong. I would like to ask the Minister, what are you doing to review the responsibility of Public Works to oversee these type of contracts, especially the contracts that are being delayed because of administration problems within a separate department?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, of course we are working with the Department of Public Works and Services. As to the reassignment of the project managers on this particular facility, that might be a question better directed to Public Works and Services. As for the change in delivery of materials, changing the method of delivery of materials from winter road to barge delivery is not likely to increase the cost of the project. Increases that might occur because of later delivery would be offset by the lower barge transportation costs, so there is no net change in the cost of the project as a result of doing it by barge versus being trucked on the winter road. They even out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: The Minister didn't touch on my other question about the whole area of Public Works and for them to have a project in which they have three different individuals or changing of the guard with regard to this project being handed from one person to another person to another person and not having the file concluded because of personnel problems within the department. Has the Minister looked at the possibility of privatizing this service to the private sector, so that maybe we can get a better return on the dollar we are spending compared to what service we are getting from Public Works?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in most instances, it is the Department of Public Works and Services who oversees these projects. In some unusual circumstances, there are different arrangements that are made. Again, I might suggest that if the Member has questions about Public Works and Services' capacity or ability to carry out this function on behalf of departments, perhaps that is a discussion better taken up with Public Works and Services. Certainly I can undertake to speak to Mr. Steen about the dedicated personnel to this project to ensure that it is given a priority. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Another concern, especially from the community of Aklavik and also the mayor, is that they were told that they were going to be kept in the loop on what is happening on this project. They were going to be involved all the way through the design stage, the development, and I believe they had one public meeting on it.

The community made some recommendations to the people from Public Works and Health and Social Services, but yet the community has not heard back, nor have they come back, and now they are being told that there is a delay in the project and that also they have to cut back on the different designs of the health centre. Yet the community was told right from the start that they were going to be involved in the design, what not, of the health centre.

On one hand, we talk about empowering communities. Giving communities more input into design of what they lack in their communities. They are the ones that have to live with what the final results are.

However, when it comes to having input, people within the government seem to lose sight of ensuring that they are kept involved all the way through the process.

So I would like to ask the Minister, exactly what is her department doing to ensure that we do have involvement of community members and people from the health centres involved in the design of new facilities, because they are the ones that have to work in these facilities, in the communities, and the ones that are going to use these?

So, in the case of Aklavik, that is a concern that I have heard from my constituency and especially from the Mayor of Aklavik.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just in terms of community consultation, I just want to note that the mayor was provided with an update of the status of the revised schedule in mid-January, and partially completed design documents were received by Public Works and Services in mid-February, and these will be provided to the Hamlet of Aklavik for your information and comments.

So, apart from just that brief update on the consultation with the community, I can suggest that the community work closely with the health board to ensure that the communication between themselves and Public Works and Services is kept current. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. At this time, I would like to recognize the president of the Arctic Tourism Association, Mr. Richard Lafferty in the gallery.

- Applause

Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to, once again note as well for the record, the issue of the Stanton Hospital, which I understand, while it is physically located in Yellowknife, is a territorial facility and as a territorial board, with a member from Fort Smith on it.

It provides services to many, many, many of the people in my constituency. So I, in my capacity as a Member of this Legislature, think it is not unreasonable for me to be able to discuss facilities of that nature, especially when it relates to how they are being run.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to just shift my final questions to another area that I have some concern about it and that is the issue of, as I know it, the Carver model that governs how boards are run and the relationship they have with their CEO and staff.

From what I have heard and seen over the last number of years, this model is, at least as it seems to be working in the North, very problematic and may be, in fact, causing some of the problems that are now besetting the department and the boards.

I would like to ask the Minister if she could speak briefly to the Carver model and is that, as well, going to be put under the magnifying glass by Mr. Cuff? Thank you.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I wholeheartedly agree with the Member. The Carver model is problematic and it was something that was never endorsed by the department. It is something that seems to have been born out of the Health Care Association and it has created issues and it is definitely under consideration in the Cuff review. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering, in the few minutes that I have left here, the Carver

model will probably mean nothing to anybody outside of this House, or from a very select circle.

Mr. Chairman, the concern, as far as I can see, is that the Carver model removed the board from part of the critical role that they should have been playing, in terms of the broad decision making of the facilities.

I see the running of, at least, the Fort Smith Health Centre should be very similar to the running of the municipal council, where you have the mayor and council, who deal with the broad issues, the broad budgets and the political side of the operation and the staff once the council has made their decision and carries that out.

My sense, with the Carver model is that, in fact, the board is removed from part of that key process and that there is often communication problems between boards and CEOs and possibly between the department and the boards as a result.

If the Minister could speak to some of the concerns they have observed about the Carver model and why they, in fact, see it as problematic and needing review. Thank you.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the implementation, the interpretation, I guess, that has been put on the Carver model that has been chosen to be implemented with some of our boards has created problems.

We have competent people sitting on our health boards in the regions and in the communities, and their ability to get into the details of supervising or overseeing how the system is being managed is actually limited by the interpretation of the Carver model in some instances.

If I could give the members one example of a certain directive, which we were able to identify with one of the boards was that something to the effect, and I paraphrase, that as a result of the interpretation of the Carver model, it was indicated that the CEO should not burden board members unduly with complicated or detailed information.

I would suggest that some might even consider issues of things like budgets to be that kind of complicated and detailed information.

So when you have a model of governance that separates the management of a facility from the board members, who are ultimately responsible for the delivery of the programs and services, that is troublesome to us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister indicate, she said that some boards, so could she just clarify, is this model currently in place in all boards or, if it is not, what other model, for lack of a better word, would they be using? Thank you.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Ballantyne indicates that it is not in place in all boards and I am not sure where their models are in place and which ones have Carver and which ones do not.

So I am going to refer that question to Mrs. Ballantyne. Thank you.

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

MRS. BALLANTYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in some of the smaller boards, where the board is essentially the band or members of the band, they do not use the Carver method.

Other boards have trained their members extensively in Carver and I should clarify that by saying it is not the same method in every board. It is sort of a variation on Carver that has been amended for that board.

That is a real problem in the system if there is not a consistent approach to board governance, not a consistent approach to the training and development of board members. So it is very inconsistent at the present time. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just another question in this regards, as I indicated earlier, Mr. St. Germaine had confirmed that there are standardized reporting formats and accounting systems and structures that are in place.

Is the intent of the department, then, once the dust settles on the Cuff report and decisions are made based on those recommendations, to have a standard model or process in place so there is a management model there that the boards and the department both support and are understanding and that their reporting relationships are clear and the roles of the board are clear in terms of their responsibilities in relation to the CEO, as well as in relation to the department? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there's a distinction between the issue of governance models versus accountability frameworks, but certainly there needs to be a linkage between those two things and that is part of having a cohesive and effective system. I am not sure if that answers all of the Member's questions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I recognize that there is a difference between accounting functions and the issue we are talking about in terms of the type of governance model that boards are functioning under. The question is, you have this standard accounting process, are you also envisioning a standard board management model that all boards will be operating under that the department will be clear on, that the boards will be clear on, so that there is no confusion over, for example, the situation the Minister made

reference to about boards not being burdened with detailed complex issues like budgets because they aren't capable of handling it? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It might be premature to speculate in too much detail about that because if you look at the existing boards, we have some certainly very diverse situations but certainly we think initially there would be merit in having a standardized orientation because that would clarify for everyone who is responsible for what roles and responsibilities at the various levels. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister made note of a memo she has in front of her where she stated that the mayor of Aklavik, Mr. Richard Gordon, I am not sure what the wording was, but she did state something off a memo. Is there any chance I could get a copy of that memo?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to say yes, but it is a Public Works and Services briefing note. I will ask Mr. Steen if he agrees. I am agreeable to you receiving a copy of it, yes. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just getting back to the report that was filed in this House almost a year ago with regard to the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services, in which we had a board established to go to the different communities to receive input in which they went to 12 communities and heard from over 800 people and organizations. Also with regard to the different government structures that are out there and looking at trying to find unique ways to deal with our problems.

Yet, to date, there seems to be an option that either the report wasn't done specifically to the likings of some people or to the likings of the department. I, for one, clearly state there were two things that were clearly identified in the letter to the Minister back on January 20th. The first thing was there should be no more reviews, studies and reports needed. Yet, what do we do? We have another report that is going to be coming forth to this House shortly. The second was that action is wanted today, not tomorrow, and that people may want a better system at the grass roots level and they want a better system of government, of health and social services, and accountability for carrying out those wishes.

Just on that statement to the letter that was sent to the Minister, I would like to ask the Minister what exactly has been done with the recommendations that were put forth to this House and tabling that report in this House. Has the department implemented any of those recommendations to date?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services was a good documentation of what the concerns were out there in terms of the consultation that took place. Where it might have been a little weaker was in terms of providing any new ideas as to how we could accomplish those recommendations, in terms of the structure of the system. Concrete types recommendations are what we will be looking for in the Cuff review. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Again it makes me wonder exactly, is there a problem that we do not trust the people that we appoint to these committees to go out and collect the information and bring it forth. I believe that with all the people on this committees, they are Northerners. They are appointed by this House to sit on a committee on behalf of this government to go out and get the information and bring it back in the text of a northern perspective about northern problems.

But we are out there doing studies with southern institutions, southern firms to dictate to us in the North what we know best. We have been trying to get out of that cycle with Ottawa for years. Yet we as a government continue to practice that philosophy from the Northerners' point of view. Sorry, your views do not count. We have to use experts from the south to tell us what is good for us.

So I would like to ask the Minister exactly why is it that we as a government cannot implement reports and studies that we have put forth, we have spent money on, yet we continue to spend money on studies and reports from southern institutions. Why is it that we do not use northern people to give us this northern input on northern problems?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services, as I said, did do a good job of identifying what the concerns were out there. It was more of an information gathering process, whereas the Cuff review is intended to provide recommendations that can be readily implemented and this does require a fair amount of expertise. The Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services, although the participants in the panel were very good and they received a lot of feedback from Northerners, they did not themselves possess the expertise around the areas of accountability, frameworks, governance, clinical issues, practices. Some of the people who were on the Cuff team are actually formally health care administrators and professionals in this specific area.

So that is basically a summary of the difference of what we are expecting of the Cuff review versus what we got out of the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I for one have not seen an improvement in the health care system in the North, especially in regard to the last year, in which I think these recommendations were fully implemented and probably would have seen an improvement in the health care system.

But to date I continue to see problems in regards to closures of health clinics, health centres and also people having problems accessing health care. I think, for one, the so-called experts because they were not part of the ministerial forum, at least they had a hands-on knowledge of the problems that originate in our communities. And for us as a government to not take the communities comments seriously when we are always talking about community empowerment and bettering our communities, and dealing with community problems and community issues, here we are again today realizing that we are not getting the services that we are supposed to get or that there are some boards that are not administering the dollars that they were given on particular programs.

I for one have seen enough people in my riding die because of problems and this government's inability to move on recommendations and continue to do studies and studies until we are blue in the face. We are not seeing results and I, for one, hope that we have some legal counsel or some firm up here who will take on some legal challenges, because I think this government needs a good law suit to wake them up to the reality that we are not above the law, we are not God. For myself, I have raised this issue so many times in this House and nothing is changing in the health care system.

As a Minister who wants to do good and look at the health care system, if we are not moving on the little things, how do we expect to deal with the big things? Communities were asking for this report. We have had some 800 people make a presentation to a committee, and yet what do we tell them, "Sorry, your input does not mean anything because we are going to go and do another study anyhow" and that is exactly what we are doing.

In this day and age when people are dying of diseases that could have been prevented, and are preventable, there is something wrong with our health care system. I for one feel that continuing to pass the buck or blame this group or blame that group, is not going to get us out of this mess. It is action that is going to get us out of this mess. The action that the communities are asking for. They want to have more say in their health care system. They want to have more resources so they can deal with their problems in the communities with respect to alcohol and drug problems, mental health, community well-being. But the nickels and dimes that you throw at the problem, that is what it is. It is going to be a problem until we put some real resources into it.

I would like to know from the Minister exactly what are they doing to improve the health care system in the small communities, with regard to the resources that we are spending on health boards and other agencies of this government, and we are not seeing the improvement in the communities, where a lot of our problems originate, because we are lacking the resources or the people in our communities to take care of our own health problems. Could the Minister tell me, where is that miracle coming from, because another study is not going to do it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, the Member mentions the hands-on knowledge that was provided to the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services. Mr. Chairman, we do recognize the value of that hands-on knowledge that Northerners have, that first-hand knowledge that they have of the reality of the system that we have in place right now.

I want to assure the Members again that the Cuff review will take that information that was gathered. That information is not being discarded and it is not being disregarded. It is being taken by the Cuff review now, and helping to establish a plan of action so that we can have the best quality of service possible.

Mr. Krutko refers to the fact that people have died, and without speaking to that specifically, Mr. Chairman, I just want to say that we do have a responsibility as a government to ensure that we do take action to make sure that our people have access to quality health services. We are moving on putting that kind of action into place. We have done it in many small ways and hopefully when we receive the results of the Cuff review, we will be looking at the overall structure to ensure the sustainability for the foreseeable future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. We are on general comments. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in other areas of the department, I would like to know how far will some of these -- I guess it is hard to tell right now -- but I am trying out find out how far things will go or what kind of changes are being looked at. There have been a lot of changes through the 13th Assembly, drug and alcohol changes. We went through a huge reduction cycle

In the last year of the 13th Assembly, there was discussion on trying to come up with another model for drug and alcohol treatment, children and families and that area. To date, I believe there hasn't been a firm area done and I know as a previous Member of the Social Programs Committee when we talked about a task team working on drug and alcohol reform, there has not been, to my knowledge, a final position or statement out there. We know it is in flux because there is all this other stuff happening when it comes to drug and alcohol facilities and programming out there. Right now, we are talking mobile treatment and I would like to get some ideas if the Minister thinks that the Cuff report will go into that detail or will it be more overview and more of a governance area? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the Cuff review, we will be looking at the roles and responsibilities of the department, the delivery of all of those kinds of services that the Member refers to.

With respect to the ongoing activities within the department to address some of the other issues that the Member refers to, we have continued to work on the initiatives that he's identified. Next week, we've offered to provide a briefing to Members on our addictions and mental health framework and we have

sought input as we go along, but certainly the Cuff review is not the only activity. We are not completely focused just on that. There's the ongoing work of the department, which continues in consultation. There will be a document ready for public consultation in March specifically on the addictions and mental health framework the Member refers to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the same line of questioning, as we all know, there is lots of economic opportunities in the diamond industry, oil and gas industry, but there are also alcohol and drug policies that are being implemented by a lot of these companies who are doing work here in the North. One of the big problems we are running into, especially in a lot of our communities, is that a lot of people aren't passing these tests because of the alcohol and drugs that are in our communities within our society. We continue to cut the alcohol and drug programming where it is inefficient. We are down to basically one provider in the North.

We keep talking about FAE/FAS, but we all know where that problem originates from. As a government, we can continue to say it is a problem, but unless we do something about it and realize that in order to make those positive choices we, as a government, also have to ensure that our residents have access to alcohol and drug programs and also have access to ensuring that when a person fails a drug test or an alcohol test, that they are able to go to a particular clinic within their geographical area and be able to deal with the problem and be able to come back into the workforce and meet the goals this government is setting.

We are talking about economic opportunities that are out there, but again I come back to the thing with the resources that are going into alcohol and drug programs. Right now, because of the cuts or the way the dollars have been allocated, we are not seeing results. I think it is important that we do seriously put more resources into preventive programs such as alcohol and drug programs. We cannot be the providers of all the jobs, but if we can make it easier for people to access these jobs by programs that we assist them on to make those changes, it will help us as a government to meet the goals we set. We can set all these goals, but at the end of it all, if people are not being hired or not being able to meet that requirement, then it is all for nothing. Are there any plans in the future of improving the alcohol and drug programs or expanding the facilities that are out there compared to what we have today?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, alternative programming initiatives will continue to be developed through the addictions and mental health framework and be overseen by the Addictions and Mental Health Steering Committee. There are a number of initiatives out there right now. The women's mobile program has been delivered in Rae by the Dogrib Community Services Board; in Fort Simpson, by the Deh Cho Health and Social Services Board; and in Lutsel'k'e, by the Lutsel'k'e Health and Social Services Board. The Dogrib board has also held a three-day follow up session for the women who participated. The Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board will pilot a women's mobile treatment program in March and the post-trauma

healing and recovery program for women and children sponsored by the YWCA in cooperation with the Yellowknife Women's Centre is underway now.

I shouldn't fail to mention that the youth mobile program has been piloted in Fort Providence and Fort Simpson by the Deh Cho and Dogrib boards. The Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board has also submitted a proposal for a youth mobile program. So these are ongoing programs within the department. The funding to the area of addictions drug and alcohol treatment has not been reduced. I do not disagree that we could always be doing more, resources permitting.

Just to outline the areas where we do spend our funding now. Community-based alcohol and drug funding is \$2.197 million; alcohol and drug treatment services, \$1.625 million; southern treatment, \$329,000; federal funding \$262,000; and, alternate programming funding, \$1.350 million for a total of \$5.763 million. So this is a fairly significant contribution or allocation that we make to the area of drug and alcohol treatment.

Mr. Chairman, I just also want to stress that we as a government can put on all kinds of programs, but we really need people who want to find work, who want to recover from these kind of addictions and take the initiative to access these opportunities and these programs which are in place for them. I also agree with Mr. Krutko that a lot of the work that is out there right now with various companies are subject to things like drug tests and we are encouraging Northerners to access these jobs. We want them to.

We've discussed the Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative that we want to undertake as a government and I really encourage proponents in the private sector to, together with NGOs or health boards, bring forward proposals for how they think they might be able to help address this issue of employment readiness by being able to address their need to be free from alcohol and drugs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Can the Minister tell me exactly how many treatment beds are there in the Northwest Territories to date?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe there are 27. Just one second, I will get the exact number. Nats'ejee K'eh Treatment Centre in Hay River is a 30-bed facility, so that is a residential treatment centre. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, so we put all this money into programs and what not, but I think what's needed is we do need facilities for people to go to. We can go out and have these resources going to different groups, but it is not serving the whole Territory as a whole. When you are limited to one facility, it restricts the community or people in the different regions, especially the region I come from where people at one time had two facilities with regard to Delta House and the Ti'oondih program. Now we are down to a big zero. What is the Minister doing to find new facilities so we can

increase the amount of treatment beds that are in the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we do have a fairly high number of beds available on a per capita basis. I guess research would indicate that not one type of treatment program serves the best results for everybody. Some people respond really well to residential treatment programs and other people respond to different kinds of treatment. I think we need to make sure that we have a variety of services available. One of the advantages of the mobile treatment program, which is something fairly recent and fairly new, is that people are able to stay in their own communities and be able to receive this treatment, as opposed to going away from their families. The rate of return or the incidence of people coming back, relapsing and coming back in residential treatment is also fairly high. So like I said we could always be doing more, resources permitting, but we have not fully taken up the capacity and the various options we have available now for people. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other area that I touched on earlier is the FAE/FAS problem in our communities and the thing is that it is having a major problem, especially in our education system and also within the communities. Again, we need the resources in the communities to deal with these problems. It is children in the communities that we are seeing with these effects. Because it is having an effect on our communities and in the education system that is there, more resources have to be put into this area in light of the concerns. We seem to be funding a lot of organizations out there to do all these different tests or programs or what not, but if you are not associated with that organization, you are not associated with that particular group, it leaves you out of the loop. We are here to represent all of the people of the Northwest Territories, not just a few specific special interest groups that this government feels they have the ability to fund.

There are other groups out there having to deal with children with regard to community-based groups, yet they are not being given the resources or the dollars to carry out that responsibility when it comes to FAE/FAS. In a lot of our communities, it is a real major problem. What is the Minister doing to ensure resources for FAE/FAS to deal with that problem in our communities are in our communities and not just given to a few interest groups?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member refers to groups that we partner with in trying to deliver our programs and we do find that it is advantageous to us as a department to partner with community groups and NGOs, because usually they bring with them a fair amount of people who are involved in the community first-hand and they also harness the resources of volunteers in a lot of instances. We really feel that when we partner with various groups that we get value added for what we are trying to achieve.

As far as what we are doing on the FAS/FAE front, my Minister's statement today in the House spoke to the early childhood development initiative, which we are committing significant resources to as a government. Some of the activities taking place under FAS/FAE, if I could just identify some of them for the Member. Eight communities, Fort Good Hope, Lutselk'e, Fort Providence, Wha Ti, Inuvik, Fort Smith, Yellowknife and Tuktoyaktuk are all participating in early childhood screening for developmental delays. The screening assists in early identification of children affected by alcohol before birth and other conditions. As I stated in my statement today, early identification is recognized as a strong protective factor for children with FAS/FAE.

There's also the FAS/FAE public education campaign that we are undertaking in partnership with the Status of Women Council and the Native Women's Association. This is a public education campaign focusing on the root causes of why women drink. The campaign has consisted of two television public service announcements, presentation folders, bookmarks, fridge magnets and a poster.

Mr. Chairman, there's also been a survey of Northwest Territories license outlets. They were surveyed to establish which points of sale offer pregnant patrons alcohol-free beverages free of cost. It was determined that the majority, 41 out of 44, licensed outlets did not provide this option and staff were unaware of the benefits of promoting alcohol-free pregnancies. In addition, licensed outlet operators interviewed did not consider this issue to be their responsibility or area of concern. So there's a lot of awareness that needs to be created in that area as well.

There is also my participation as a Minister, in the Prairie Northern Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Partnership. As Ministers of various portfolios, we get together. The Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, along with the three Prairie Provinces, get together and collaborate on our efforts so we can build on some of the research and program activity that the larger provinces have more money to pour into and we are able to benefit from those as well.

There is a fetal alcohol syndrome video that was put together by the department and assisted by the Yellowknife Association for Community Living. This is also a useful tool in creating awareness about the prevention of FAS.

I could go on with other programs, but suffice it to say, Mr. Chairman, without making the answer too long, there are quite a number of initiatives that are going on within the department right now to address the issue of FAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the list that the Minister mentioned, I do not believe she mentioned any of the communities I represent. So, there again, that program is not being delivered to all communities. That is the problem that I have with the way this department is operating. It serves some communities, but it does not serve all communities and I think that is a problem that has to be looked at.

I think it is also imperative that a lot of the aboriginal communities have lost faith or lost trust within this government when it comes to depending on this government to deal with problems in our communities, especially relating to alcohol and drugs and FAS.

A lot of communities have turned to the federal government because of the reluctance of this government to deal with those problems in a lot of our small aboriginal communities.

So in regard to the issue I mentioned yesterday, in regard to trying to eliminate the barriers between different providers of alcohol and drug programs and front-line staff that are being affected in our communities, I will use an example. In Fort McPherson, we have the Tl'oondih Healing Society upstairs in a building, and downstairs we have the alcohol and drug programs and both of them are doing their own thing. However, a lot of the funds that the Tl'oondih healing program gets, they work along with the band councils and the tribal councils, where they access federal dollars to carry out a lot of their programs and services.

So we are having duplicate services being provided by two agencies within one community. The same thing applies to the other smaller communities where the resources that you get, say in Aklavik, for alcohol and drug workers, they cannot sustain staff or people to carry out those programs because for the resources they are getting based on a per capita distribution, which is being done by the Inuvik Regional Health Board. You cannot serve your clients in the community with those limited resources and be able to carry out the program.

So you are damned if you do and you are damned if you do not because you do not have the resource people or you do not have the resources.

So I think it is important that, as a government, we need to start to find ways of taking down those barriers between those two groups and have them work in conjunction with each other, instead of against each other, or participating like it is a horse race, where you are trying to get across the finish line, or resource dollars, before the other guy does.

So, as a department, I would like to know if you have looked at the whole area ensuring that the front-line workers and staff are working in conjunction with other providers within the communities and also within the government?

You seem to be doing a lot of studies and research and reports going out to different interest groups, but I do not see anything coming back from the aboriginal community.

I am just wondering, is there a particular reason that you are not working closer with the aboriginal community, tribal councils, agencies that are out there? Is that because this government feels that since we are not funding them, we do not have to deal with them? It is an Ottawa problem, not a Northwest Territories problem?

Could the Minister tell me, why exactly does there seem to be a lack of aboriginal input into your resources and studies that are going on today?

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to refer that question to Mrs. Ballantyne. Thank you.

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

MRS. BALLANTYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, to the concern about the limited number of communities that are participating in the FAS/FAE screening tool pilot project, this is simply a pilot project where we are testing a screening tool.

The screening tool is used by nurses and physicians and it is being evaluated. It is working quite well so far and, of course, the idea is that if it is successful, it will be expanded to be in place in every community. However, because it is something that is new and requires training for staff to be able to use it appropriately, we are targeting it in these eight communities.

With respect to aboriginal involvement in departmental work on these, to inform the Member that aboriginal organizations are involved in a number of our steering committees, for example, the Native Women's Association has been a very strong partner with us on the FAS/FAE public education campaign.

At the departmental level, our focus tends to be on working with territorial-level organizations. We would rely on the regional boards to be working with the regional organizations and certainly encourage them to do so. In fact, on many of our boards there are dedicated seats on the health and social services boards for members of regional aboriginal organizations or local aboriginal governments.

The aboriginal organizations and aboriginal governments are very much involved, not only in the program consultation but also in the day-to-day governance of the system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Ms. Ballantyne. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With boards and agencies, everyone knows the decisions made where policies are being developed, and I think what we are hearing from this government when it comes to non-insured health benefits that there seems to be a real lack of understanding from the government's view; they think this is just a federal program and because we are not making money on it, we are losing money that maybe we should give it back.

I think we are starting to lose sight. This program has been there for several years and a lot of money was taken out of this program which was not given to the aboriginal community. This government used it in-house to fund other programs and it was there to top off other programs in the past and yet now, because of the federal programs, we have seen a real major effect in our communities where aboriginal people are being told now, "Well sorry, you are a status Indian" or what not. That you are going to get \$600 on your dental care. You can only get one set of glasses.

This government seems not to be enhancing the programs but we are delivering it on the basis, "Well sorry, we are losing money here. We cannot assist you." I think for a lot of people, especially in dental care, it is going to cost you a lot more than \$600 to deal with a problem, especially with a lot of our children. When you start looking at the cost of dental care in

the North, you cannot get much done for \$600, especially if you only get to see the dentist once or twice every two years.

There again, I think that this government should be enhancing those programs instead of taking the position that they do not support what is, in regard to the aboriginal programs that we administer on behalf of Ottawa.

I know for a fact that in the past, there has been monies taken out of this program, when it was used for alcohol and drug programs. It was used for other initiatives, in regard to the TI'oondih program. A lot of the dollars that were spent on that program came out of this fund because the government was not going to put their own money into it because it was an aboriginal-based program and that they were going to use those dollars to offset that cost.

If the Minister wants, I can give her that information, because that was something that I requested in this House and I got that information.

So I would like to know, is the Minister willing to enhance aboriginal programs or enhance the health and well-being of aboriginal people? Or will we continue to treat them as second-class citizens when it comes to programs and funding from this government?

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the non-insured health benefits is specifically for the things which I have been discussing in the House over the last couple of days in response to questions. Those things, and those things alone, are funded through the NIHB.

There are other programs, which Mr. Krutko might be referring to, but I am going to ask Mrs. Ballantyne to identify what other program that Mr. Krutko might be referring to. However, I do assure the Members that the money received from the federal government for the non-insured health benefits has only been spent on that list of things that we identified earlier today. Thank you.

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

MRS. BALLANTYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think there is just a bit of confusion about the different federal programs, which is not surprising, since there are so many of them and they all have confusing acronyms.

I think the program that Mr. Krutko was referring to that was used to access funding for TI'oondih, when it was provided, came from the NADAP program, which was the federal Northern Alcohol and Drug Addictions Program and that would have been a very appropriate use of that funding.

The NIHB program, the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, is a different program under Health Canada that provides for benefits in very specified areas, none of which are alcohol and drug treatment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Ballantyne. General comments. Are there any other Members with general comments?

What is the wish of the committee? Detail.

Mr. Krutko, did you have your hand up again?

We will go on to detail. Health and Social Services, directorate and corporate services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Budget summary. Total operations and expense, \$25,926,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Page 6-10. We are on page 6-10. The directorate and corporate services budget summary. Operations and expense, total operations and expense, \$25,926,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to ask some questions and this looks like the place to do it, under detail, under the recruitment and retention strategy.

The committee was provided some information, but also there was a comment made earlier, a couple of days ago, that this particular strategy is under review right now.

If the Minister could elaborate on this relatively new strategy; the review, who is doing it, how long is it going to take considering the amount of money that is invested here and the, of course, important focus of retention of doctors and nurses? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Actually, the recruitment and retention policy has been in place for three years now and it is an evaluation to determine how successful and effective the various initiatives within that area have been.

It is not a review. It is an evaluation process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The distinction between the evaluation review all lead to the Minister. Could the Minister indicate who is doing this comprehensive evaluation and what are the areas of concern, or is this being done just as part of good government? Thank you.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this work, when it commences, I am pleased to report to the Member, will be contracted out to a northern contractor. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then could the Minister indicate, or is it known, who that contractor will be and is this a public tender or is that a sole-source? Thank you.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have that information at this point in time, but I will commit to keep the Members apprised of what kind of dollars and the process that we will undertake to receive that information.

Mrs. Ballantyne informs me that a part of that is also a survey, which is being conducted on our behalf by the Northwest Territories Registered Nurses Association. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, on the issue of recruitment and retention as well, the information that was given to us indicates that Stanton is considered a public service board, as are Deh Cho, Inuvik, Fort Smith, Yellowknife and the Dogrib. Non-public service boards are Hay River, Deline and Lutselk'e.

To be clear, is that a distinction between government employees and non-government employees?

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. The three boards, Hay River, Lutselk'e and Fort Resolution, are contracts with the local government or the band councils. The other boards are public service boards, which are under the Territorial Health and Hospital Insurance Services Act.

So that is the differences between them. The employees under the public service boards are government employees. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like the Minister, as well, to speak to the issue in this information that was given of information systems. Can the Minister indicate which boards are on PeopleSoft, if any?

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just the Stanton board is on PeopleSoft. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister speak to that particular issue as it relates to this program as well? It indicates here that all board information is manually counted and reported.

Are there moves afoot to bring the department and the board information into the computer-age and the technology of the 21st century? This seems like a very cumbersome way to try to keep track of things as we looked at the Human Resource Strategy for government, for example, and all those systems.

One of the biggest departments, in one of the areas where we spend a huge amount of our budget, are sitting there with staff, spending valuable time counting things by hand. Thank you.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am going to refer that question to be answered by Mr. St. Germaine. Thank you.

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

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of information systems and the requirement to report information on human resources, we recognize that it is a problem with the boards in terms of the types and lack of systems that they do have and we will be assessing their needs and what the solutions would be to that, to make their ability to collect and report on human resource data more efficient. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, on the issue of the retention program as well, under the area of the professional development fund, the information provided, indicates that 217 nurses and "blank" social workers have benefited from this program, since it began in 1998.

I was wondering, it is on page 6 of 11 of this document, if the Minister had that information or could indicate were there any social workers or was it just an oversight? Thank you.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are awaiting the information with respect to the social workers, from the boards right now. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, in regard, once again, to recruitment and retention on page 7-11, there are a number of bursaries listed; health and social services Bursary, George Gibson Bursary. There are no details on any of the amounts per person.

I was wondering, did I overlook that or is that available somewhere? Thank you.

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

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we will provide the detail of the dollar values attached to those bursaries to the Members. Thank you.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to indicate that we just got this before we started this and there is a lot of information that the department provided. So I am just trying to go through it as fast as I can.

On page 9 of 11, the Nurse Mentorship Program that there were five mentorships opportunities in 2000, and they are looking at 10 this year; two in Hay River, one Inuvik and eight Stanton. I was wondering can the Minister speak to this particular program and how do they intend to make sure that this particular opportunity and staff retention practices is expanded to other boards? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Madame Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mrs. Ballantyne is going to speak to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madame Minister. Mrs. Ballantyne.

MRS. BALLANTYNE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the table that the Member refers to indicates the number of placement sites that are available in the Northwest Territories. What we are doing to increase the number of sites is through the Maximizing Northern Employment Initiative, looking at ways to becoming a nurse mentor more attractive by increasing the financial compensation that is provided to nurse mentors. Also we are working closely with the Northwest Territories Registered Nurses Association who are providing us with advice as to how make nurse mentorship work better and be more attractive both for the mentor and for the new graduate nurse.

So it is being done in a collaborative way with the professional organization and with the boards themselves. And, of course, as recruitment and retention issues stabilize in a board then they do find themselves in a better position to be able to offer these opportunities to our new graduate nurses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, on page 10 of 11 when you look at question 20 "How many northern graduates are placed in permanent term positions, all in their graduation in the spring of 2000?" I note here that there is problem with Education and Culture not being able to release the names of students in health and social services programs because of confidentiality issues under access to information and privacy.

Could the Minister speak to this very fundamental issue and I know that it has come up before when I wanted to write to all the education students. It was a significant problem because of the confidentiality issue. What steps are being taken to address that process issue so that you can have this pertinent kind of information, so that we can carry through on these things and clear up this red tape so we are not making life more difficult for each other, as we try to place graduates, in fact, make recruitment and retention work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Madame Minister

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We rely on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to secure the permission in order to access this. So this is something that we need to work on cooperatively with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madame Minister. The Chair recognizes Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My questions have to deal with health promotion, community wellness programs and grants for health awareness activities.

I have heard the Minister speak often about the need to get ahead of the ball and be proactive in dealing with health issues. I know our Premier has also spoken often about the need to deal proactively with health problems, rather than treating issues after the fact. I am a little surprised not to see more emphasis in this budget on health promotion. For instance, there is a slight drop in the health promotion program funding from this year to next year. I recognize it is only \$18,000, but it is still a move in the wrong direction. In health awareness activities under grants and contributions, it has stayed exactly the same now for three years in a row.

In community wellness programs, again it is only a slight drop from \$601,000 to \$584,000, but it is \$17,000 in the wrong direction. Knowing that is one of the pet areas that the Minister has spoken about, why were we not able to see more investment in the health awareness and health promotion side of this budget? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Madame Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we have stated in response to so many things, it would always be nice to be able to do more. These numbers do not identify all of the activity in these particular areas because these are areas where there is a fair amount of federal participation as well in addressing some of these issues.

Mr. Chairman, a bit out of curiosity I thought we were on 6-10. This actually comes under 6-11, just if you wanted to continue to do things in order. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madame Minister. We do not have anything to call on 6 11 so this would be the right thing. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I recognize there are other players in the field and federal monies coming into the area of health are important ones. Again I would argue that we cannot depend on the federal government for this and if in fact we do believe that it is a priority we should be investing in it.

I would ask the Minister, why? I know it is something that she has often spoken very passionately about; the need to get ahead of the ball rather than dealing solely with treatment after the fact; to try and get a head of the game, and to be proactive in the health field, and getting more of our population making healthy choices.

Why would we not demonstrate to our partners the federal government, why they should be spending more, by us putting more of an emphasis into the preventative side of our budget? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Madame Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate the Member's support. Mr. Chairman, we do recognize the members of the standing committees and other Members' support for doing more in this area and that is certainly something that we will take into consideration when we are building our business plans for next year. We have chosen to focus some of our additional resources in other areas for this particular fiscal year but the Member raises a good point about the need for additional activity in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madame Minister. The Chair recognizes Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to continue on the same theme as Mr. Dent was on. In the area of health promotion and community wellness programs, I imagine that this is where much of our FAS/FAE prevention funding awareness and education dollars per program come in. Would that be the case? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Madame Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Ballantyne has some further elaboration on that question and Mr. Dent's question. Refer the question to her. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madame Minister. Mrs. Ballantyne.

MRS. BALLANTYNE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the amount shown on 6-11 only indicates the compensation and benefits for the staff who are working in this area. It does not include all of the program dollars. When we get into other aspects of the budget, I do not know if I am allowed to skip ahead, but to make a general reference, further on in the budget is where we would find the actual grants and contributions and other funding that these folks are administering and using to financially support the different health promotion strategies and we can certainly speak to them when we come to that point in the budget.

So this does not represent the full health promotion activity. It simply indicates the costs for staffing that particular unit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Ballantyne. Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering then if that indicates that we are placing less of a focus in this area and we decided that we are either going to pay people less or use fewer people to do the same work possibly. It looks to me then, if the amount we are spending on administration and staff in this area is on the decline, are we then doing less? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Madame Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: One moment please. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. St. Germaine is going to answer that question. I will refer it to him. Thank you.

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

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to get into some of the detail of the change in the budget, it was the transfer of positions within the department which resulted in a position transferring into the unit that was a higher cost position. That was offset by some reduction in just the general operations and maintenance.

For the Members information, every year we go through and reassess our headquarters budget to ensure that all funding is required for things such as photocopying, travel and so on. We do that on an annual basis and through that review, we reduce the requirements for health promotion by about \$15,000. It was a combination of staff transfers and re-examining the detailed budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So then I am to take it that this is no indication that we are now doing less with less and, in fact, I hope we are doing more with less and we found some efficiencies.

I guess I was a little, maybe taken back when, the Minister referred to there being also federal funding in a lot of these areas and the recent announcement of supposed federal funding in the area of FAS/FAE. I think that was \$850,000 a year. I thought it was new money. It looked like it was new money when it was reported on the media. In fact I now understand it is basically the wind down of a program. These are dollars that are allocated across the nation and we stand very little chance of getting any of this money, because many of the projects have to be national in scope to qualify. It is pathetic.

I hope that we are not sitting around waiting for the federal government to ante up and fill in where we are unable or unwilling to put the dollars ourselves, because they will not. I think that everybody in this room knows it.

I think this speaks volumes about the importance the federal government places on FAS and FAE and other similar areas in health promotion. Again maybe the Minister can comment and reassure me that we are not waiting for them to step into the breach here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Bell. Madame Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, no we are not waiting for the federal government to step into the breach. But the federal government does provide funding under various areas and certainly all funding is welcome when it comes to addressing the really enormous issues that we are facing and there is more specific detail later on in the budget with respect to federal funding. I will speak to that when we come to. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Looking at the record and corporate services area and program delivery details, it is a total amount of \$11,234,000 million there. And over on the next page, it is grants and contributions of another \$4.8 million. It makes up \$16 million. But on the budget summary, the total operation expense of directorate and corporate services is \$25 million. A difference of \$9 million. I am just trying to make sense of some of these numbers, because compensation benefits shows \$12 million, grants and contributions is the only clear one at \$4.8 million. It is identical to the detailed page of that grants and contributions section. Then other expenses of \$8.9 million. Can I get some clarification on numbers? How that works? Is there some of the compensation benefits in program delivery? Is there other expenses in program delivery details?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Madame Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, on page 6-10, if you are looking at that, are you including the other expenses?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I am doing is when I compare the numbers on 6-10 to 6-11 and 6-12, 6-12 is the grants and contribution section, it matches up with your grants and contributions section on 6-10.

When I look at your program delivery details on 6-11, of \$11.2 million and try to compare it between compensation benefits and other expenses, if we can get some clarification there as to how that breaks down. Thank you.

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

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Page 6-11 on program delivery detail, those include all expenditure categories and they are compensation benefits, grants and contributions and other expenses. Page 6-12 on grants and contributions simply breaks out the grants and contributions. Page 6-11 is a combination of both grants and contributions and other expenses and compensation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then maybe we can get a breakdown on the program delivery details. For example, under recruitment retention strategy and strategic initiatives fund, health services administration, information systems, how much of those have compensation benefits included in those numbers? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. ST. GERMAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have that level of detail on that breakdown here with us today, but we can provide that to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would look forward to having that detail so I can match up the numbers as to what is actually compensation benefits and what is actual O and M. As well, how much of that O and M for the program delivery detail area is held at headquarters, and how much is forwarded to the boards? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Chairman, we will provide that.

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

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to conclude some of my questions on recruitment and retention. The Minister indicated that this problem between access to information for students on financial assistance is being worked at cooperatively with the Minister of Education. Could the Minister be more specific? What exactly are they doing to resolve this issue, and when do they anticipate it will be resolved? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Ms. Ballantyne.

MS. BALLANTYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Education has been very cooperative in working with us to try and address this issue. There are two things that are happening. One is they are trying to ensure that all of the students who are in programs related to health and social services where they have signed that form, that information is being provided to us so we can directly contact those students. The other approach is to ask them on our behalf to send out information with respect to programming to them.

On a broader issue, this issue is certainly being looked at government-wide with respect to some of the Maximising Northern Employment Initiatives, to ensure that we are able to contact the Northwest Territories students, who are in post-secondary education institutions outside of the Territory. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Ballantyne. The Chair will recognize the clock and rise to report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 21, report of the committee of the whole. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2001-2002 and Committee Report 7-14(3) and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden, who seconds the motion.

The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meetings this evening for the Standing Committee on Social Programs at 6:00 p.m. Tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. for the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, and at 11:00 a.m. for the Special Committee on Self-Government and the Sunset Clause.

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 22, 2001:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address (6th of 7 allotted days)
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2001-2002
 - Committee Report 5-14(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 6-14(3), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 7-14(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 2001-2002 Main Estimates
- 21. Report of Committee of the Whole
- 22. Third Reading of Bills
- 23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 22nd at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

