



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**14<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Monday, February 25, 2002**

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**The Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, February 25, 2002****Members Present**

Honourable Roger Allen, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. McLeod, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Honourable Jake Ootes, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford.

**ITEM 1: PRAYER**

-- Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford):** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Please be seated. Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back after a very, very eventful weekend. You will notice that the Canadian flags are decorating the Chamber today. They are here to honour the Canadian athletes who recently competed in the Olympic Games.

-- Applause

The past two weeks of Olympic action in Salt Lake City has indeed united Canadians from coast to coast to coast, and overseas as well, in feelings of pride and of accomplishment. All Canadians are justifiably proud of the efforts of our winter Olympians. It is a pleasure to congratulate and to know that it is more than tragedy that unites Canadians. It can sometimes be feats of skill that bring us together.

As you may be interested to know, the majority of the 17 Canadian medals were won by women.

-- Applause

I know I speak for all Members when I extend our congratulations to the Canadian Olympic team. Thank you. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

**ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two statements today that I would like to make.

**Minister's Statement 9-14(5): Minister Absent From the House**

I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jim Antoine will be absent from the House today to attend the Joint Energy/Environment Ministers Meeting in Victoria, British Columbia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Minister's Statement 10-14(5): Team Canada Trade Mission**

Mr. Speaker, it is also my pleasure to report today on another successful Team Canada trade mission. I would like to take this time to share some highlights of the trade trip with the people of the Northwest Territories.

While en-route to the Team Canada trade mission, I had an opportunity to meet with De Beers and Rio Tinto in London, England. In speaking with De Beers, I restated our position of wanting them to provide rough diamonds to our northern cutting and polishing factories. I remain hopeful that they will

see the premium in our northern diamonds and provide these locally as other companies, such as BHP Billiton and Rio Tinto, have done.

Team Canada travelled to Russia and Germany, visiting Moscow, Berlin and Munich. At different stops, several members of the NWT business community joined me. People such as Chris Ghazouly from Canada North Projects Limited, who signed a memorandum of understanding in Russia to provide technology in wood frame construction, and Stephen Simek of Ferguson, Simek, and Clark, whose company has vast experience working in Russia. Chahe Arslanian of Arslanian Cutting Works and Fernando Alvarez from Jacques Cartier Clothier Inc, which is a partner of the Inuvialuit Regional Development Corporation, were also able to meet with business counterparts in Munich, Germany.

I had the pleasure of having Kevin Diebold and Kelly Hayden, representing the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce, join me for the entire mission. Considering our population and our natural resource base, the level of business interest, especially in Russia, was incredible.

In Berlin we were invited to participate in a time capsule ceremony at the future site of the Canadian Embassy. On behalf of the Northwest Territories, I contributed a bow loom with the porcupine quillwork to the capsule. Ruby Minoza of Fort Providence made this bow loom, representing centuries old techniques that are still being used today in many of our communities. It was a proud moment.

Finally, our presentation of Beneath the Dancing Sky in Munich, Germany, was a fitting end to a successful Canada trade mission for the NWT delegation. This presentation was a celebration of the richness and diversity of the culture of the Northwest Territories. This event, staged last Thursday evening in Munich, showcased Northwest Territories diamonds, furs, designer fashions and accessories, and a variety of arts and crafts to over 250 people. A number of northern businesses involved in the tourism industry were able to share information on their products and promote the Northwest Territories as a world-class tourism destination. The crowd included representatives of the German business community, government dignitaries, members of the German aristocracy and Team Canada trade mission participants, including Premier Ralph Klein, his wife Colleen, and Senator Frank Mahovlich and his wife Marie.

The response to the show and the Northwest Territories was overwhelmingly positive. The event was also an effective tool to raise the profile of the Northwest Territories and promote our tourism products and services at an international level.

In addition to a fashion show of contemporary and traditional aboriginal fashion designs, Beneath the Dancing Sky provided visitors the opportunity to observe our artists and craftspeople

demonstrating their unique crafts in the natural setting of a recreated cultural village. I would like to take a moment to thank the cultural ambassadors for all of their assistance: Judy Magrum, Bill Nasogaluak, Karen Wright-Fraser, Antoine Mountain, Francois Thibault, Lucy Barnaby, Berna Beaulieu, Jane Dragon, Jimmy, Kevin and Roberta Memogana, Fred and Linda Kataoyak and Buddy Alikamik.

I would also like to thank the many NWT companies who helped plan this event and the delegation that joined us to help promote the Northwest Territories, and as well, my wife, Marie, who accompanied me on this trip. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Minister Handley.

**Minister's Statement 11-14(5): Improved Highway Safety Information Services**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I am pleased to tell the House about several initiatives the Department of Transportation has taken to make critical highway information available to the travelling public. I would like to thank Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development members for suggesting some of these positive initiatives.

The department has erected some 41 emergency information signs. These signs give motorists the name and telephone number of the RCMP detachment responsible for the section of highway they are travelling. The signs are located near where an access road joins a primary highway and where the responsibility for highway patrols passes from one RCMP detachment to another.

If the public wants to know what is happening at the Fort Providence ferry crossing, they can take a look for themselves on the Department of Transportation's web site. The department has installed a video camera on the south side of the ferry crossing that sends a picture every few minutes to their web site. People can actually watch the ferry taking vehicles across the river.

The public can obtain current highway and ferry information from either the department's web site or its toll free telephone service. The service advises of road conditions on the all-weather highway system, seasonal ferry schedules and the status of the winter road system. The service keeps the public informed of highway maintenance and construction activities, interruptions in ferry operations and, for commercial traffic, the load limits in effect on the all-weather and seasonal highways.

To assist those not familiar with the NWT highway system, the department has produced a brochure that provides highway services and safety information, along with other helpful topics about the highway system.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, information is a two-way street. As well as receiving information, the public may sometimes want to comment on highway conditions. Most recently, the Department of Transportation's North Slave regional office has opened a toll free line to listen to what motorists have to say about our highways. The new line should give the department an indication of what the public thinks are the most important

factors relating to good road conditions and safe highway travel.

Mr. Speaker, timely and reliable information about our highway system can make all the difference for planning a more convenient, pleasant and safer trip. The highway information services I have mentioned today should help to make travelling our territorial highways a more comfortable and enjoyable experience.

Credit where credit is due. I want to thank all Members who have offered the Department of Transportation their constructive suggestions for safer and better highway transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 2, Minister's statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**Minister's Statement 12-14(5): Better Access to Government**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to talk today about a project that makes it easier for Northerners to locate and phone for government services. The new NorthwesTel directory is being distributed this month and it features a big change in the pages of government phone numbers.

Now if you need information about electrical permits, you do not need to know the branch of government or the department name. You can flip to the blue pages and look under the broad heading of licences and permits. The entry tells you the phone number and also who delivers the program and where it is located.

The blue pages project was coordinated by the Department of Public Works and Services. It is part of a Canada-wide program to improve the blue pages in our telephone directory. Our government worked with First Nations, communities, municipalities and the federal government to make a consolidated list of services offered by all levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this new way of listing phone information will benefit all residents of the Northwest Territories. I am pleased that my department could contribute to this effort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Steen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Ootes.

**Minister's Statement 13-14(5): Apprenticeship and Occupational Week**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize and pay tribute to all of the apprentices, journeypersons and employers who are working together to build a strong and self-reliant Northwest Territories.

Earlier this month, communities across the Territories celebrated Apprenticeship Week by recognizing and rewarding the achievements of this year's top graduating apprentices. The awards are given to apprentices who achieved the highest mark over 80 percent in their year of training. Over 35 awards were presented to apprentices in all the regions of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass along my congratulations to the Apprentice of the Year, Jason Coakwell, of Kingland Ford, Hay River. Jason earned the title of Apprentice of the Year by obtaining the highest marks of all graduating apprentices.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding achievement of another Hay River apprentice, Cameron Locke. Cameron, who is working towards journeyman status in auto body repair, completed two levels of training in one academic year, achieving top marks at both levels. He also received the Dean's Award from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology for his efforts.

Mr. Speaker, Jason and Cameron are only two of the 300 apprentices who are registered in the NWT this year. They exemplify a sense of commitment and enthusiasm for their trade and their studies. Because of this, and support from industry, private business, NWT schools and Aurora College, the apprenticeship program in the Northwest Territories is one of the most successful in Canada.

The demand for skilled trades people remains at an all-time high. The government, by working with its partners, can help to find solutions to this current shortage. Together we can help to ensure the continuation of a successful apprenticeship program, but more than that, we can help to ensure that a qualified, skilled and professional workforce that meets the needs of employers is resident in the NWT. Local people meeting local needs -- the essence of a self-reliant community and economy.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to encourage youth and other employment seekers to consider the trades as a career. With over 40 trades available for certification in the NWT, there is plenty of opportunity to be a part of the tremendous economic growth we are currently experiencing.

A successful, economically viable and self-reliant future lies within the grasp of every resident of the NWT. The time is right for government, education providers and industry to work together in developing the skilled workforce required to achieve this future. Apprenticeship is just one of the tools we have to help ensure that this happens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ootes. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

### ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Member's Statement on Access to Cabinet Legal Opinions

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, February 21, I asked a question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment regarding a legal opinion that he received, which has been seen by Cabinet, about the clawback of impact benefit agreements. I quote from Hansard, the Minister stated:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is highly unusual, it is unprecedented to release legal opinions. They are between a lawyer and a government. However, we will do this, provide a summary of the report.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the precedent that has been mentioned, I would just like to remind the Minister that the precedent has been set in this House. There have been legal opinions tabled by my colleague for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty, and also from the Premier. Also from Ms. Lee, Tabled Document 71-14(4), tabled November 5<sup>th</sup>. Also, Tabled Document 78-14(4), tabled November 6, 2001. With that, I would just like to make the Minister aware that we talk about a consensus government here. We are supposed to represent all of the people and share information and work together as a team. However, when you start holding back information, information that is relevant to the public interest, I for one feel that we have to show that there is openness here, unless somebody made the decision overnight that we are having party politics, with you over there and us over here.

The whole idea of sharing information is so that we can make good decisions. I think it is important that the Minister start sharing that information so we can try to find a solution to this problem, with regard to the clawbacks of impact benefit agreement payments. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister questions with regard to Hansard later on this afternoon.

-- Applause

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

#### Member's Statement on Special Event Liquor Licenses

**MS. LEE:** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, thank you. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join you in sending my sincere congratulations to the men and women's hockey team and all of the other medalists and participants of the Canadian team.

Mr. Speaker, it is amazing to see the power of a game of hockey, to lift up a nation's spirit and make us all feel so special. I truly appreciate watching the extraordinary things these athletes do, which can only come with years and years of training their bodies and disciplining their minds. My admiration goes to all of them.

There is also a related, not-so-admirable story that I must make a point of on behalf of my constituents. On Saturday, I received a call from a constituent who was representing a non-profit group who had applied to the Liquor Board for a special license to hold a public gathering, in which liquor could be served for the Sunday gold medal game. They applied for this in February and were rejected on Thursday. I am not advocating liquor sales at any time at all cost, but I am quite mystified by the reasons that were given to them. Apparently, the reason was that the only special sports event that a special license is given is for the Super Bowl and Grey Cup. I guess I could understand the board's predicament, in that gold medal hockey games only come around every 50 years, but even going directly to the board was not able to change this position by late Saturday.

I would just like to make a recommendation to the board that it may be that we may have another gold-winning game in four years. They should make room there for a special event like a gold medal hockey game for men and women to be considered as a special event worthy of consideration. I understand that we lost a very good opportunity to be in the national media as one of the cities joining the rest of the country watching the hockey game and showing our support.

On behalf of my constituent, I wanted to make a note of this in a lighter side of it, but I do want to bring this to the attention of the board and the Liquor Commission. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Member's Statement on Wha Ti Community Hall Fire**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the current community hall in Wha Ti is still smoking. There was a fire Sunday and there is nothing that can be salvaged, except a few burnt coins from the pool tables, Mr. Speaker. The fire truck tried but could not help. Two water trucks also responded to the call. We also had a water treatment plant next door but could not keep the fire under control. The fire is still under investigation.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to losing this community hall, the community lost a big screen television, VCR stereo system, pool tables, plus their bingo and karaoke machines. Now they have nowhere to sing.

Mr. Speaker, Treaty 11 meetings were supposed to be in the community hall this week. This summer, the Dogrib Annual Assembly was supposed to be hosted by Wha Ti. The Dogrib Assembly required the community hall for its cultural and meeting activities. I am sure there are other events that will also be impacted by this fire.

Mr. Speaker, this building was due for replacement and is on the budget for capital projects. However, circumstances have changed and I would like to see the project moved ahead and use this year's winter haul season to bring in the materials for this building. Mr. Speaker, historically, projects have been moved up when there is a fire loss.

Wha Ti's community hall was built by community volunteers about 30 years ago, Mr. Speaker. It was a place for youth. When the hockey rink or school gym are closed, this was the only other place for the youth to go.

Mr. Speaker, we need a new community hall a lot sooner than we thought. Where else can they sing karaoke, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Arsenic Trioxide Waste Site at Yellowknife Giant Mine**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the raven flies, this Assembly is a mere two kilometres from the site of one of Canada's worst mining legacies. I am speaking of the vaults of lethal arsenic trioxide lying underneath the Giant Mine property. This site ranks along with the Nova Scotia tar sands as one of the ten most toxic waste sites in Canada. Mr. Speaker, arsenic is a giant problem.

These underground caverns are sealed with concrete bulkheads a few dozen metres below the surface. They are the

seven repositories of almost 40 years of a dark side of a mining industry. They store an estimated 237,000 tons of this toxic by-product. To put this in a bit of perspective, Mr. Speaker, if this stuff is aspirin tablets, two of them could be lethal.

Earlier this month, a consultant assigned by DIAND to the Giant Mine working group said that while a search continues for viable ways of eliminating the problem, the best answer still appears to be to leave it in place, monitor the rates of seepage and discharge and, if needed, artificially freeze the ground around the poison to prevent its escape. This is not the type of thing I expect to hear at this time.

Storage is the answer -- absolutely not. The people of Yellowknife, Detah and N'dilo and everyone on the watershed of the Great Slave Lake deserves better than that from our federal government. The NWT needs a permanent solution to end this problem for good, not a storage site that we simply hand off to our grandchildren in the hopes that they have the will and the way to fix it.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the efforts of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to date for the communications that they have initiated to keep the community informed of what is going on. There are rounds of information sessions coming up in Yellowknife, N'dilo and Detah in the next two weeks. I urge citizens and organizations concerned to attend.

We cannot be complacent about this, Mr. Speaker. I am issuing a call for action to anyone who has the care to get in touch with DIAND to attend these information sessions and find out what is going on.

The Minister of DIAND and the federal government must accept and eradicate the environmental liability that lies beneath the surface of Giant Mine. We can accept no less. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Management of Northwest Territories Water Resources**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, I would like to raise an issue that impacts every person in the Northwest Territories, the very important issue of water quality. Mr. Speaker, I raise this issue of water quality because of the importance it has on our environment and the traditional lifestyles of the aboriginal people and Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is part of the Mackenzie River Basin and area that encompasses approximately 1.8 million square kilometres, which includes three territories and three provinces. The combination of past and current development activities in the Northwest Territories and the upstream activity, such as mining, oil and gas development, forestry activity and the damming of rivers, has impacted water quality in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that this government provide assurances to the people of the North that we are actively and effectively managing our water resources. The Northwest Territories is advertised by this government as a place to visit



because of its pristine environment, an environment where one imagines dipping a glass in any stream, river or lake and being confident that the water is clean and safe to drink.

However, Mr. Speaker, we in the North are hesitating to dip a glass in these streams, rivers and lakes, or consume the wildlife that was once the mainstay of our diet. For that matter, Mr. Speaker, we are becoming worried of the quality of water being delivered to our homes. As an example, Mr. Speaker, what person here in Yellowknife is not familiar with the term arsenic and the likelihood of its presence in each glass of water we drink?

Another potential negative impact of water quality and the loss of resources was brought to my attention by an elder who was concerned with the dumping of culled fish back into Great Slave Lake. There are numerous examples of past activities resulting in the leaching of hazardous materials into our waterways. One example is Axe point, an old army base left over from the 1940's, downstream from Fort Providence, which requires current clean up due to the leaching of hazardous material.

The negative effects of water quality cannot be attributed to any one industry, company or person. It is the cumulative effect of the past and current development activities, not only in the Northwest Territories but upstream as well. As economic activities take place, it is certain there will be some form of environmental impact for us. We should be concerned and, more importantly, question.

The question then arises, at what level of environmental impact do we become concerned and what are the cumulative impacts and cost?

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

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

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the responsibility for water in the Northwest Territories has been the primary responsibility of DIAND's water resource division. With the finalization of land claim agreements in some regions, provisions are in place to ensure the quality, quantity and rate of water flow through those lands remain unaltered.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, this government has in place environmental legislation and agreements designed to minimize or eliminate risk of environmental damage to our water resources.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for the residents of the Northwest Territories to recognize and understand that we as political representatives are effectively participating in the management of our water resources to ensure the sustainability and integrity for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, with the talk of pipelines, mines, forestry, new highway construction and dams on the Mackenzie River, I urge this government to confirm its commitment to the management

of our water resources by providing this Assembly and the residents of the Northwest Territories with information on the level of the contaminants provided through direct participation in allocation of resources for water resource management, research, monitoring, identification of contaminated sites, clean up and enforcement by this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Management of the GNWT Public Service**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we expend a lot of words in this Legislature talking about how much we value our public service, those people behind the scenes carrying on the work of this government. They do not get their picture on the front page of the newspaper when the government undertakes a successful initiative. They do not take the credit in any public way when programs and services that Northerners are counting on are consistently delivered in our communities day in and day out, year after year.

When there are statistics indicating success in meeting the needs of our constituents, how often are we quick to recognize the talent and dedication of the people on the ground who make it happen?

Tonight, I hope to go to Hay River to help honour dedicated GNWT employees who will be receiving long service awards. These events and functions are great but they are not a substitute for a philosophy of fair practice, stability and access to opportunity in their workplaces.

Earlier in the life of the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Regular Members brought forward a proposal for a Public Service Commission. There are pros and cons of the establishment of such an institution. It is reasonable to believe that given the size of our government, it should be possible to keep our eye on the ball, so to speak, in ensuring a high standard of fairness and equity as the norm in our departments and workplaces.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the rules of engagement are not very clear. This uncertainty creates a lack of confidence and morale amongst our public service. Some may argue that this lack of clarity allows for flexibility in achieving our goals for things such as a representative workforce. I suggest that in fact, flexibility equals misunderstanding and it creates more problems than it solves.

Because our jurisdiction is so small, it does not take too many unexplained interventions to have people feeling insecure or looking over their shoulder. This in turn causes tension between employees, tension between management and staff and tension between management and their political masters. It is possible for situations to deteriorate to a political milieu, potentially losing all sight of the goal, which is serving the public and the public interest.

Unionized employees have the avenue of grieving issues through their unions. Although this is not a perfect science, it is an opportunity. What about excluded employees? What about

people trying to enter the public service? What about employees on probation? What avenues do they have at their disposal if they are on the receiving end of what they consider to be unfair treatment?

This is a government that started off with a stated commitment to fairness, openness and accountability. This has to extend to our public service. Mr. Speaker, we do not have a Department of Personnel any more. We have an Affirmative Action Policy that seems rather subject to individual interpretation.

Maybe we do not need a full Public Service Commission, but judging from the number of personnel issues around hiring and firing that have been raised just lately, I would like to hear a response from this government.

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

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, colleagues, and thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to hear a clear response from this government as to their intentions on how they plan to stabilize uncertainty that arises in our public service. I would like to hear a clear and public response to the recommendations that were contained in the review of the Affirmative Action Policy undertaken in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

If a Public Service Commission is not the answer, what is the answer? Our public servants have a right to that answer. Let us set our goals. Let us make sure the rules are in place to reflect those goals, and let us make sure those rules are followed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

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

#### **Member's Statement on Capitalizing on the Achievements of Canada's Winter Olympians**

**MR. NITAH:** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to echo yours and my colleague's, Ms. Lee's sentiments on congratulating Team Canada with winning the hockey gold in both the men and women's categories. I would also like to congratulate Team Canada for winning the most medals ever, 17 medals. Canada did well this year and I am pretty sure they will do well in the future.

I would like to use that to tie Towards a Better Tomorrow into my statement, Mr. Speaker. In the document Towards a Better Tomorrow, the document we plan our agenda by, we talk about youth and how we are going to be helping the youth in creating an environment for healthy lifestyles. I do not see our government doing anything much about youth today. I do not see new recreational complexes going up, I do not see any programs that will see youth enjoy a healthy lifestyle in the smaller communities, Mr. Speaker.

We have the Arctic Winter Games that start in the next little while. We have one or two or three people from my

communities participating in these Arctic Winter Games. The trials were good but the athletes going over there were not prepared. They did not have the facilities. They did not have the human resources to assist them in getting prepared.

If we are going to have a healthy lifestyle in the Northwest Territories, we need to create the environment. I would like to know from the Minister responsible for Youth and the government how we are going to do that. They have not told me. They have not told the people of the Northwest Territories. Again, ending on a positive note, congratulations to Team Canada. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mahsi, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Ootes.

#### **Member's Statement on Mel Brown Tribute**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to publicly honour Mel Brown, who passed away at Stanton Hospital on January 26 at the age of 84. Mel, a highly respected long-time Northerner and a proud Canadian, made significant contributions to northern life since his arrival here in 1963. Mel was born to farming parents in Hughton, Saskatchewan, in 1917. After finishing high school, he worked on the farm and did some travelling, looking for work until he was conscripted into the army in 1942. He was a pacifist and not at all interested in going to war, but he had no choice and went on to serve in battle with distinction. Mel served with the Royal Edmonton Regiment in both Italy and Holland, participating in many battles and experiencing the horrors of war until he was seriously wounded and released from his duty.

For the rest of his life, he refused to talk much about his experience of war, and although he received several medals, he never wore them. His youngest daughter, Joanne, with whom he lived for the past several years, says that they were never on display and that he explained that war medals were not something to be proud of. He was far prouder of the pins he received from the Dutch people at the reunions held in Holland for Canadian servicemen in 1995 and the 2000 50<sup>th</sup> D-Day Celebrations. It was these pins that he wore on Remembrance Day.

After his war service, Mel took advantage of the education available to veterans and went to the University of Saskatchewan, where he received a degree in mining engineering. Mel then worked in mining, including managing mines in Elliot Lake and Renabie, Ontario, before he came to the Northwest Territories in 1963 to be the regional mining inspector. He brought with him his wife, Florence, and their five children. Their youngest daughter, Joanne, was born here in Yellowknife.

Mel travelled widely and worked throughout the North in the following years, playing an important role in the development and inspection of mining in the Northwest Territories. In the early 1970s, he was one of the founding members of the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of the Northwest Territories. He was very involved with this professional association and proudly served as its executive director until 1990. Mel was a spiritual man, a staunch supporter of the United Church. He was also involved

with the planning and building of Northern United Place and the Aven Court for seniors. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? You may conclude.

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. He was also involved with the planning and building of Northern United Place and the Aven Court for seniors. He was very dedicated to the Seniors' Society, advocating for conditions that would allow for seniors to live and die with dignity.

Among his many other interests were the Yellowknife branch of the Canadian Legion, curling, bird watching and reading, especially poetry. His daughter Joanne says that right until the end of his life, her father was able to recite poetry he had memorized as a young child.

Mel Brown was a fine human being and we were privileged to have him in our midst, Mr. Speaker. I ask this House to join me in sending our condolences to his family, many friends and colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Indeed, Mel was a true friend to the North. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

#### ITEM 5: RECOGNITIONS OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

Colleagues, it is a rare occasion when I have the opportunity to recognize two of my brothers at one time in the gallery. Richard Whitford was a former Member of this Legislative Assembly, representing the North Slave.

-- Applause

A retired businessman. Also, my younger brother Norman. Norman lives in Fort Smith.

-- Applause

Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

#### ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Question 55-14(5): Release of Cabinet Legal Opinions

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I asked a question to the Minister last week regarding the clawback of impact benefit agreements and income support payments. In Hansard, the Minister made a comment. I will read page 143 of unedited Hansard, where it states: "Mr. Speaker, it is highly unusual. It is unprecedented to release legal opinions."

I would like to ask the Minister, in my statement, I mentioned three legal opinions, along with Mr. Lafferty's, that were tabled in this House. I would like to ask the Minister, is it still his view that it is unprecedented to release legal opinions in this House?

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

##### Return to Question 55-14(5): Release of Cabinet Legal Opinions

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the documents that the honourable Member is referring to were provided to them as individuals. They made the decision to release those particular documents, Mr. Speaker, in the case of those released on behalf of two employees and in the case of the Premier. They were sought personally, Mr. Speaker.

The document that I have was provided by the Department of Justice and it does have a restriction on it, Mr. Speaker. These documents where they provide legal advice usually do have restrictions. Thank you.

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

##### Supplementary to Question 55-14(5): Release of Cabinet Legal Opinions

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in questions last week to the Minister, he stated that he was going to get a summary report to the Members. I would like to ask the Minister where that summary report is and how soon can we receive it?

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

##### Further Return to Question 55-14(5): Release of Cabinet Legal Opinions

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will be providing that, Mr. Speaker. We will be providing that as soon as possible, certainly well before the end of this session. Thank you.

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

##### Supplementary to Question 55-14(5): Release of Cabinet Legal Opinions

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, regarding the Minister not releasing the legal opinion, can the Minister state exactly what is the concern from Cabinet? What will happen if you release this report? Will it bring down the government? What exactly is the threat to the government?

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

##### Further Return to Question 55-14(5): Release of Cabinet Legal Opinions

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that question may be hypothetical. The fact that there is a restriction on this, I am not in a position to release this particular document by instruction on the document. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 55-14(5): Release of Cabinet Legal Opinions**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, has the Minister spoken with the Premier and his Cabinet colleagues about releasing this legal opinion, so he can share the information with the Members of this House in the style of consensus government, where we are here to represent all of the people and we should work cooperatively on this?

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

**Further Return to Question 55-14(5): Release of Cabinet Legal Opinions**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has been away for the past week, as you know, on the Team Canada tour. I did reference this in a Cabinet strategy meeting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 56-14(5): Wha Ti Community Hall**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he would move up the Wha Ti community hall on capital projects so we can use the winter road season this year to bring in all the materials to build it by fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 56-14(5): Wha Ti Community Hall**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet with the Member this morning on this unfortunate situation in Wha Ti. I made him aware that we already had this project moved up for this year. However, it is before the Financial Management Board and I believe it is approved by the Financial Management Board, but all we can accomplish, according to Public Works and Services, for this year is the planning and have the materials on the road for next year. It is just not possible to have all the equipment and materials on the road for this year. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 56-14(5): Wha Ti Community Hall**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister how long does it take to pull out a blueprint and look at ordering the materials? We do have about a month and a half winter road season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 56-14(5): Wha Ti Community Hall**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Public Works has been working on this. If it is at all possible, we will do it this year. We will move the materials in this year. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 56-14(5): Wha Ti Community Hall**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister if he can keep me updated on the progress of this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 56-14(5): Wha Ti Community Hall**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, we will be working with the Member and with the community on how we can assist them in the meantime, as to how to get the community hall as quickly as possible. Thank you.

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

**Question 57-14(5): Position on Kyoto Protocol**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Premier in his capacity as the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs with respect to the Kyoto agreement. Mr. Speaker, within the last couple of weeks at the First Ministers' Conference, there was some confusion about the difference between Canada's position on the Kyoto accord for the environment and that of the provinces. Would the Premier advise whether the position of Canada is different from the position of the Government of the Northwest Territories on the Kyoto accord? Thank you.

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

**Return to Question 57-14(5): Position on Kyoto Protocol**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories has been fairly consistent in the last few years in supporting the proposed Kyoto agreement, the protocol that has been on the table for the last number of years. We continue to support the ratification of the agreement. However, the negotiations are still ongoing. Canada is still seeking to gain some concessions and amendments to the proposed agreement.

We have Minister Antoine today meeting with Ministers Anderson and Dhaliwal to carry on those discussions and to make clear the position of the Government of the Northwest Territories. We would expect that later this spring there will be some meetings held between our government and the federal

Ministers to look at the steps that we would want taken before there is ratification, should negotiations be successful by Canada. That is, we would want stakeholders here in the Northwest Territories to be involved in a consultation process before ratification is achieved. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary to Question 57-14(5): Position on Kyoto Protocol**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to inquire into the communication on this kind of issue. Mr. Klein, in a rather famous little piece of television, kind of hijacked some of the agenda from the Prime Minister. I will get to my question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier make the government's position regarding Kyoto clearly known to the Prime Minister and to the other provinces of Canada? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 57-14(5): Position on Kyoto Protocol**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had indicated two things to the staff of the Prime Minister's office in the travels in Russia and Germany. Contrary to what was indicated by the letter that was read by Premier Klein, the Government of the Northwest Territories has consistently taken the position that we will support the Kyoto agreement and support Canada in seeking further changes that would make the agreement even more attractive and supportable. There were two points made with the PMO and we are prepared to send a letter to that effect once we have concluded the meetings in Victoria. Once I have had a chance to meet with Minister Antoine, we will indicate our support for the Kyoto Protocol, the agreement.

Secondly, we will state our views regarding the manner in which the letter was brought to the attention of the Prime Minister, which we took some exception to. It was all a surprise to us and we felt, given that we were on a foreign trade mission and we were in another country, that this was not the way to do business. Certainly not the way to lend dignity and respect to the office of the Prime Minister of Canada. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

**Supplementary to Question 57-14(5): Position on Kyoto Protocol**

**MR. BRADEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to hear that the Premier has made that position known. I too was not impressed as a Canadian watching that kind of shenanigan going on overseas, so I support that position. I would like to further ask, the concern has been expressed from industry that Kyoto is going to impair or deteriorate Canada's industrial position. Does the Premier have any information or evidence that may indeed be the case in the Northwest Territories, especially with the significant scale of development we are anticipating? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 57-14(5): Position on Kyoto Protocol**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is true that there will be some impact on the Northwest Territories if we are committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions within a certain time frame. Going into production at the BHP mines, for instance, dramatically increased the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in the Northwest Territories.

Having said that, we also recognize that continued pollution of the environment in Canada and globally has a profound impact on the Arctic and on the northern climate. Here in the Northwest Territories, we find airborne pollutants and contaminants continually coming to reside in our part of the world. We have to take a positive approach to ensuring that Canada takes a strong and positive approach to challenging other countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions and to find collaborative ways to work together on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and finding less damaging ways of consuming energy. We know there will be cost. Minister Antoine will be providing more information to the House when he returns to the Legislature later this week. Thank you.

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

**Question 58-14(5): Fairness in the Public Service**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Public Service, but I may be incorrect in that. Mr. Speaker, in my statement, I spoke about some of the uncertainty that surrounds issues around hiring and disciplining within the public service, also around this government's policy for affirmative action.

I hope that the government agrees that this does not create a healthy environment for our employees. Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if I could ask the Minister if he believes that there is a need for an Affirmative Action Policy in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Chair is having some difficulty in assigning the question. However, I shall take the liberty of assigning it to the Premier, who can further reassign that issue. The honourable Premier.

**Return to Question 58-14(5): Fairness in the Public Service**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We believe that there are policies that are necessary in the hiring, recruitment and retention of staff by this government. Certain policies are wanted and should be in place to enhance the presence of aboriginal people, women, the disabled, as well as other sectors of our population that are not, in our view, adequately represented in the government workforce. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary to Question 58-14(5): Fairness in the Public Service**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly, a report was compiled. It was called the Report of the Working Group on Affirmative Action and Human Resource Management, and it contains several good recommendations regarding the specifics of our Affirmative Action Policy. To date, I do not believe these recommendations have been responded to.

What is the status of our Affirmative Action Policy in terms of revisions or modifications at this time? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 58-14(5): Fairness in the Public Service**

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

**MR. SPEAKER:** The question has been taken as notice. Thank you. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

**Question 59-14(5): Revenue From Liquor Sales**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister in charge of the Liquor Commission. I am looking at this year's budget and when I look at Liquor Commission net revenues, it appears that if we compare the 2001-2002 mains to this year's, we are looking at a jump from \$15 million to just over \$17.5 million in Liquor Commission net revenues. I am wondering if the Minister can explain this blip? Thank you.

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

**Return to Question 59-14(5): Revenue From Liquor Sales**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two reasons for the change. First of all, we as a department took a look at our projected revenues over the next few years. Given the amount of activity, the number of people in the Territories, the income and so on, we are projecting that liquor sales will continue to rise at two percent, which is higher than we had projected before.

Second, the cost for administration of the Liquor Commission has remained fairly stable. In fact, have actually dropped slightly from last year's cost, just through good, efficient management.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, the increased economic activity is leading to a situation where we expect liquor sales to continue to rise. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 59-14(5): Revenue From Liquor Sales**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if he could further clarify if that means that people have more

disposable income or we have, in his view, more people in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 59-14(5): Revenue From Liquor Sales**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I believe it is likely both. There are more people here, whether they are staying here full-time or just on work assignments. Second is clearly, with our increased employment rates, people do have more disposable income. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 59-14(5): Revenue From Liquor Sales**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, Mr. Speaker, Stats Canada has recently not been as optimistic as the Minister. Given the increased tax revenues that we are seeing, I am wondering if the Minister would go back to his Cabinet colleagues and raise the issue of possibly earmarking some of those funds for research, treatment and prevention of FAS? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 59-14(5): Revenue From Liquor Sales**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, we are putting more money in our budget this year into some of the areas, such as FAS/FAE. I mentioned those in my budget address. Exactly where the money comes from is probably one we could debate, but clearly this government is going to put more money, and we have made that commitment in this budget, into areas such as FAS/FAE. We will continue that.

The amount of money that we spend on alcohol treatment and on public education on issues like FAS/FAE is greater than the amount that we take in as revenue. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

**Supplementary to Question 59-14(5): Revenue From Liquor Sales**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the good initiatives that the Minister speaks of, I believe, are the health warning labels on liquor. I think we have been doing that since about 1991, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if we ever surveyed the population to determine the effectiveness.

For instance, I would wonder how many women believe it is still acceptable to have a few drinks at a sitting during a pregnancy. I am wondering if the Minister could tell us, has he conducted a survey to determine the effectiveness of this labelling? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley. I am not sure if that is a

proper question for Finance, but I will allow the Minister to answer.

**Further Return to Question 59-14(5): Revenue From Liquor Sales**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To my knowledge, there has not been a recent survey of the effectiveness of some of our public information campaigns, such as the messages on the bottles, on the bags. I think the Member's suggestion is a good one and one that I will certainly take back to my department and discuss it with the Minister of Health as well. Thank you.

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

**Question 60-14(5): Diamonds Allocated to Northwest Territories Business**

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the Premier. I know I was very pleased last week to hear in the media, and again in his statement today, that the Premier and this government are pushing to have more diamonds made available for polishing in the Northwest Territories. I just wanted to get a little information on what we are trying for here. Could the Minister tell me what percentage of their production BHP Billiton now provides to diamond polishing firms in the Northwest Territories?

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

**Return to Question 60-14(5): Diamonds Allocated to Northwest Territories Business**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have that percentage with me here. I will have to take it as notice. I would say that, for the Member's information, BHP does allocate a certain amount of diamonds in a month.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. The question has been taken as notice. I just want to remind Members that if a question is taken as notice, that is exactly what it is. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

**Question 61-14(5): Minister's Visit to Hay River Reserve**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Several months ago, we had the opportunity to have the Minister visit the Hay River Reserve to the Chief Sunrise Education Centre and talk to the staff and the teachers there, and also the councillors in the community.

We talked about the overcrowding problem that exists there. At the time, he indicated he would be getting back to us with some answers. I would like to ask him if he can give us the status of what the situation is for the Hay River Reserve? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 61-14(5): Minister's Visit to Hay River Reserve**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had a tour of the school and met with some of the officials, including the band council and the DEA members. There was no question, Mr. Speaker, that there were some concerns in the school about occupancy. What we did to follow up was have our Public Works individuals go through the school to see how changes can be made. We are proceeding with that.

I understand there was a teleconference or a meeting with the principal, who in turn is consulting with some of the staff and other officials about the potential changes we are proposing to make within the school. Additionally, there was a concern, Mr. Speaker, about the location of Aboriginal Head Start and the Adult Education Program in the school. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 61-14(5): Minister's Visit to Hay River Reserve**

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to hear that the Minister has made considerable headway regarding this problem. I would like to ask if the Minister could tell me at what point would he be able to go to the community to have a meeting to discuss the final details regarding this issue?

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

**Further Return to Question 61-14(5): Minister's Visit to Hay River Reserve**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suspect that our Public Works individuals are waiting for a reply back from the principal on the proposed changes. The moment that has taken place, Mr. Speaker, then we are in a position to be able to go to the community to discuss final plans. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, if I may, the Aboriginal Head Start Program and the Adult Education Program were of concern to me that we try and address those needs as well. As the Member had pointed out to me at the time of our visit, it is resulting in a crowding situation in school, and we are working on that. Thank you.

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

**Question 62-14(5): Cancellation of Fuel Price Increase**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Public Works and his responsibility in the areas of petroleum products division. I congratulate the Minister for cancelling the fuel price increases that started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February. I would like to ask the Minister if in fact the fuel prices have gone down to prices before February 1, 2002?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**Return to Question 62-14(5): Cancellation of Fuel Price Increase**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the information that I have was that the prices we had received were lower than the ones we had before Christmas.

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

**Supplementary to Question 62-14(5): Cancellation of Fuel Price Increase**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is good news for people in the 16 communities that depend on the petroleum products division for its fuel. Unfortunately, the talk of increased prices and decreased prices must be hard on their stomach, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister why was he able to announce, after such a short time in announcing the increases were going to happen, that he is able to announce the increase is not going to happen?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 62-14(5): Cancellation of Fuel Price Increase**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, originally the prices we had for delivery were based on the prices we had over the summer. Those included all of the petroleum products communities. However, because the oil price fell and we get a better price in Edmonton, the rack prices were quite a bit lower for this year, so the fuel that is being delivered on the winter roads is quite a bit lower than what we had delivered for the barge services. That allows us to go with a lower price. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 62-14(5): Cancellation of Fuel Price Increase**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So it was the petroleum products division from within Public Works that bought the fuel? Is that correct, Mr. Speaker? It was not another Crown corporation that might have purchased fuel?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 62-14(5): Cancellation of Fuel Price Increase**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Public Works works closely with the Power Corporation. Sometimes we combine our purchase together. That helps us to get a better price. It may be that the Power Corporation was involved in this as well. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 62-14(5): Cancellation of Fuel Price Increase**

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the petroleum products division is a very important division for many people in the 16 communities that it services. If the government can come up with a better way of ensuring that the prices of fuel could be as low as possible at all times, I think it should be the responsibility of the government to do so. Can the Minister commit to the House that he will look at the possibility of transferring that responsibility to the Power Corporation? The Power Corporation seems to be able to purchase fuel at a much cheaper rate in the southern market, then transferring that rate to the northern markets. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 62-14(5): Cancellation of Fuel Price Increase**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Public Works has been working with our colleagues and Cabinet as to how we can do what the Member is suggesting here, turning over the petroleum products to the private sector, including NTPC. Right now, the decision from Cabinet and FMB is that we cannot do anything until June. Between now and June, we can look at proposals. NTPC's proposal is one we are looking at. Thank you.

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

**Question 63-14(5): Review of Supplementary Health Benefits**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today goes to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, I have been exchanging communication with the Minister regarding some of the categories of protection or coverage on mental health insurance coverage. One of the ones my constituent was asking about was excluded from this. The Minister has indicated on a couple of occasions that his department is reviewing the types and kinds of coverage that the insurance is currently providing, whether by the standard one or by the extended one. My question to the Minister is what is the intended purpose of this review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Question 63-14(5): Review of Supplementary Health Benefits**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the whole area of supplementary health benefits has been one that has had a number of questions raised over the past years. There have been concerns identified. It is the opinion of the department that it is time to take a look at this particular, very important program area and that is what we intend to do. Thank you.



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

**Supplementary to Question 63-14(5): Review of Supplementary Health Benefits**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister indicate what criteria will be used in this review and who may be doing the review? What is the time line?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Lee. Three questions there. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**Further Return to Question 63-14(5): Review of Supplementary Health Benefits**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is going to be done at this point internally with existing resources within the department, bringing to bear other resources as required. I have committed to sharing the terms of reference with the Social Programs committee when we do a briefing next week. We are in the preliminary stage of pulling that information together. We will do that in our briefing. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 63-14(5): Review of Supplementary Health Benefits**

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the Minister give assurances to this House that this is not a measure to reduce the number and types of coverage that are currently available? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Further Return to Question 63-14(5): Review of Supplementary Health Benefits**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can state unequivocally that this is not a cost-cutting exercise. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 63-14(5): Review of Supplementary Health Benefits**

**MS. LEE:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Minister answered my question. Could the Minister give assurance that this is not going to result in cutting of programs, or of the coverage that is currently available? Not whether it is a cost-cutting measure or not.

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

**Further Return to Question 63-14(5): Review of Supplementary Health Benefits**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I misunderstood the question. I link the two, cost-cutting and program reduction. That is not the intent of this exercise, to look at deleting services. Thank you.

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

**Question 64-14(5): Fuel Pricing Levels**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works and Services. It is regarding the fuel pricing and fuel products and the price decrease. Is the price going to be decreased to the original price that was in place before the last increase?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**Return to Question 64-14(5): Fuel Pricing Levels**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes. The price was raised 4.5 cents, but it was actually never put into effect other than for about five days. When we rolled it back, we rolled it back to the start of the increase so that it was neutralized and there was no increase. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 64-14(5): Fuel Pricing Levels**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the price of fuel right now in Tsiigehtchic is at \$1.03 to \$1.06 per litre of gas. You can purchase gas in Inuvik at 86 to 89 cents. The same thing in Fort McPherson. Diesel fuel right now is sold by a private entrepreneur for 66 cents per litre. I believe in Tsiigehtchic it is almost 97 cents. I would like to ask the Minister, will the price be in line with other communities in the Mackenzie Delta region?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 64-14(5): Fuel Pricing Levels**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the price in the Delta right now is different in different communities partly because there is an outfit in Inuvik that is delivering to Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson at 25 cents a litre less than what we charge.

That is because they are able to pay the rack price in Edmonton. It is all controlled by Esso. Therefore, the communities of Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson are taking advantage of this and they are purchasing their fuel from, I believe it is Arctic Dove. Right now, Public Works and Services is not selling. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 64-14(5): Fuel Pricing Levels**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, does he have a list of what the prices are in all these communities that supply fuel products through POL?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 64-14(5): Fuel Pricing Levels**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a list of the prices in every community and I can supply that to the Member if he likes.

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

**Supplementary to Question 64-14(5): Fuel Pricing Levels**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now there are some three million litres of diesel fuel sitting in Fort McPherson that are not being sold. I would like to ask the Minister what the department plans to do with those three million litres of fuel in Fort McPherson?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Public Works and Services, Mr. Steen.

**Further Return to Question 64-14(5): Fuel Pricing Levels**

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, right now we are holding on to that inventory because we are not sure how long the supplier in Inuvik is going to be able to supply that low price of fuel. It may go up, depending on the price of fuel at the rack in Edmonton. We are holding it in inventory. At the same time, we are looking at options as to how to make a deal with the local contractors, if necessary. Thank you.

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

**Question 65-14(5): Processing of Rough Diamonds**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow up to Mr. Dent's question with respect to the Premier's attempts to acquire further quota from the diamond mining companies for rough diamonds to be processed here in the North, my question to the Premier is, if he is successful in obtaining more rough diamonds, will these diamonds necessarily be processed in Yellowknife? Thank you.

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

**Return to Question 65-14(5): Processing of Rough Diamonds**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is our intention to continue with the direction we set, which is to have BHP continue to allocate a portion of their monthly production

and make it available to businesses that they chose to do business with locally for cutting and polishing purposes.

It was possible that BHP could have picked partners that would locate in places like Edzo, Fort Rae, Providence, Deline, Hay River or Fort Smith, but they did not do that. The businesses they chose set up shop in Yellowknife. We will continue to seek ways to see whether we can encourage business in the future that would do business with BHP and Diavik to ensure that a portion of that monthly allocation is made available for businesses in places other than Yellowknife, if that is possible.

Right now, it is done on an agreement basis. BHP, for instance, has the final say in whom they choose to do business with. I am sure Diavik and Aber Resources would do the same thing. We are hopeful that De Beers will also come around and agree that it is in their interest as a business to go the way that BHP and Diavik have done. It will take some further work. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary to Question 65-14(5): Processing of Rough Diamonds**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if new quota is obtained as other companies go into production, and as the Premier says, if these companies have the ability to determine who they are going to deal with in terms of secondary processes, I understand that these companies who are interested in doing this would go through the Government of the Northwest Territories looking for these opportunities. The companies who are in existence now have been assisted by this government.

Would it not be correct then to assume that the government does have an avenue by which they could influence where these companies that are interested in processing diamonds would locate? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 65-14(5): Processing of Rough Diamonds**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been the view of this government that not only Yellowknife should benefit economically from the agreement that we have made with BHP. Fortunately for Yellowknife though, that is the way that particular arrangement played out. I know there was at least one proposal that had been made from Hay River during the time when business proposals were being entertained and weighed by the people at BHP.

This government will continue to find ways to encourage and support businesses outside of Yellowknife where possible, to take advantage of the future opportunities. If there are monthly allocations available in the near future for cutting and polishing, we will do everything we can to ensure that not only Yellowknife benefits but other communities in the area. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

**Supplementary to Question 65-14(5): Processing of Rough Diamonds**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in order to support the establishment of these businesses, it has been the practice of parties interested in the processing of diamonds to contact the GNWT and express that interest. Would the Premier commit to sharing the names of those companies? I understand they have a number of them on file now, with communities such as Hay River, so that Hay River could explore opportunities for developing diamond cutting and polishing outside of Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 65-14(5): Processing of Rough Diamonds**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We should allow the Minister for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Jim Antoine, to respond to that question later. It is his prerogative to decide how to handle the specifics of people they do business with. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 65-14(5): Processing of Rough Diamonds**

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we had previously written to the former Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and had sought a commitment from him to ensure that kind of information was shared with the community. I appreciate the Premier's answer. I would just ask that in the interests of fairness, and it is within the capability of other communities to benefit from this industry, that they would support any kind of sharing of information that would be helpful to us. Would they commit to that? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 65-14(5): Processing of Rough Diamonds**

**HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government will entertain any suggestions that are made by Members and representatives from the outlying communities on how we can enhance the possibility for communities like Hay River to take advantage of future opportunities in the diamond cutting and polishing business. We will also look for ways to encourage employees from those diamond mines who are currently in need of finding permanent residence in the Northwest Territories to look to communities like Hay River and Fort Smith as good places for permanent residence. Many of the employees, in fact, almost all of them, are fly-in and fly-out type of employees. Thank you.

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

**Question 66-14(5): Dangers of Consuming Alcohol While Pregnant**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and again it is about fetal alcohol syndrome. I am wondering if the Northwest Territories Department of Education has curriculum which serves to educate young people about the dangers of drinking during pregnancy? Thank you.

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

**Return to Question 66-14(5): Dangers of Consuming Alcohol While Pregnant**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect is, I believe, part of the health curriculum that is taught in the schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Supplementary to Question 66-14(5): Dangers of Consuming Alcohol While Pregnant**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am wondering if the Minister can tell us what grade this curriculum begins at? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 66-14(5): Dangers of Consuming Alcohol While Pregnant**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information at hand, but I will get the information for the Member. Thank you.

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

**Supplementary to Question 66-14(5): Dangers of Consuming Alcohol While Pregnant**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am also wondering about the diagnosis of FAS in our students and wondering how it occurs. For instance, if a teacher suspects that a child may suffer from FAS, is that child automatically referred for diagnostic testing? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 66-14(5): Dangers of Consuming Alcohol While Pregnant**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a process in place whereby the parents would have to be consulted. It does have to be diagnosed by a medical doctor with specialization in this area. During the student support needs survey, it was found that a number of students were there but the answer to the question of the numbers could only

be done so on the basis of those who have been medically diagnosed, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

**Supplementary to Question 66-14(5): Dangers of Consuming Alcohol While Pregnant**

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If a teacher suspects FAS and the family consents to testing, does the Department of Education, Culture and Employment pay for that testing? Thank you.

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

**Further Return to Question 66-14(5): Dangers of Consuming Alcohol While Pregnant**

**HON. JAKE OOTES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that it becomes the responsibility of the Department of Health at that point, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to the budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

**ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS**

**Tabled Document 3-14(5): GNWT Business Plans 2002-2005**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Business Plans 2002-2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Handley.

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

**Bill 6: An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act**

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, February 27, 2002, I will move that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

**ITEM 17: MOTIONS**

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that

this Legislative Assembly establish a special committee to be named the Special Committee on Rural...

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Nitah, sorry to interrupt, but you are to read the whole of your motion. Start all over again.

**MR. NITAH:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**Motion 1-14(5): Establishment of a Special Committee on Rural Community Affairs**

WHEREAS the small communities of the Northwest Territories represent enduring remnants of a traditional social and cultural existence that must be recognized and preserved;

AND WHEREAS the equitable distribution of resources to NWT communities is vital to the health and well being of residents of small communities in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the interests of small NWT communities deserve the attention and consideration of the Legislative Assembly;

NOW THEREFORE I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that this Legislative Assembly establish a special committee to be named the Special Committee on Rural Community Affairs.

AND FURTHER, that the following Members be appointed to this special committee: Mr. David Krutko, Mr. Leon Lafferty, Mr. Michael McLeod and myself, Mr. Stephen Nitah.

AND FURTHER that the terms of reference for this Special Committee on Rural Community Affairs be established as follows:

- The Special Committee on Rural Community Affairs shall consider and make recommendations on the equitable distribution of GNWT resources to NWT communities ;
- Consider and make recommendations respecting the preservation of social, cultural and spiritual traditions as they are represented in rural communities in the Northwest Territories; and
- Consider and recommend on any other matter that, in the opinion of the special committee, is within its responsibilities respecting rural community affairs.

AND FURTHERMORE, that the special committee shall conduct its business in a manner approved by the committee in accordance with the Rules of the Legislative Assembly and which does not impinge or encroach on the mandate of any existing standing or special committees;

- be provided with the necessary administrative and professional support by the Legislative Assembly;
- have access to such persons, papers and records necessary to conduct its business; and
- be provided with the necessary funds to carry out its responsibilities from the appropriations of the Legislative Assembly.

Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nitah. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Motion 1-14(5) be referred to committee of the whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable. Is the House ready for the question? Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. Motion 1-14(5) is now referred to committee of the whole for consideration. Item 17, motions. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried.

Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Steen.

#### **ITEM 19: SECOND READING OF BILLS**

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this bill will amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act as follows:

- A Member from outside the capital will be allowed to claim additional travel costs for his or her family members;
- The maximum amount of each Member's constituency expenses will be changed each year according to the consumer price index;
- During each Legislative Assembly, an independent commission will be established to review Member's compensation;
- The indemnity payable to chairpersons of standing committees will be increased and an indemnity payable to chairpersons of special committees will be added; and

- A technical error is corrected in the French version.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Steen. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 4 has had second reading. The Chair recognizes Mr. Steen.

**HON. VINCE STEEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, moved into committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Steen. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2). Are there any nays? There are no nays. Bill 4 is now referred to committee of the whole. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 10.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 10, replies to budget address. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Item 10, replies to budget address. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

#### **REVERT TO ITEM 10: REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS**

##### **Reply 1-14(5)**

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in reviewing the budget, I for one have some concerns regarding the inequity of distribution, especially in the area of capital infrastructure, and also consideration of the socio-economic impacts on communities and lack of services provided to our communities.

Regarding the capacity of our small communities, a lot of our communities do not have the simple things. There is a lack of housing, of office space, and a lack of professional people in our communities to carry out these responsibilities.

Regarding the budget, they have identified areas that I can support, yet you look at the distribution of the resources, a large portion of the resources are put into small, one-time payments for projects. We have to have a vision of how do we include all people in the Northwest Territories in a budgetary process. I for one have a lot of concerns regarding where the rural communities fit into the concept of government.

Coming from the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly, being a part of the Northwest Territories as we knew it, I had comfort being on that side of the House, knowing that a large majority of the Members were in a similar predicament that I was -- representing small communities with similar concerns, similar issues, and trying to find ways of working it into the government.

This government focuses a lot on the economy. Regarding support for small communities, there is very little by way of looking at initiatives that were brought forth from myself and other colleagues on this side of the House.

We talk about environmental concerns in our communities. I have been pounding on the table about environmental health and water in our communities. Again, the amount of resources put in that area is inadequate.

Recreation and sport -- we talk about the health and well being of communities and our children. Yes, you have identified \$1.4 million, but when you are talking some 30-odd communities, and in regard to the small communities within the Northwest Territories, which make up a large portion of that, there are some 27 communities.

With regard to capital infrastructure and capital investment in communities, talk about community roads and the distribution of \$13.8 million, and a lot of the capital allocations that you have are minute. In this riding, in regard to capital, I get \$2,000 for the community of Aklavik. I get \$125,000 for the community of Fort McPherson, with almost a thousand people. For Tsiigehtchic, I get \$100,000 in infrastructure for water improvements.

There has been an order served on this government regarding the lack of clean drinking water for the community of Tsiigehtchic, yet that is supposed to be one of the priorities of this government. You get \$100,000 to take care of your drinking water problem. There again, that is another inequity of trying to distribute wealth in the Northwest Territories.

Regarding northern employment benefits, you mentioned there is going to be funding for Maximizing Northern Employment. We had a fund similar to that with the last budget address. Again, a lot of that money was spent within the bureaucracy of government. Very few dollars were spent within communities.

I think it is time that this government seriously took a look at exactly where we go with the investments that we make, to ensure it is a fair distribution of wealth and not all stuck in Yellowknife in regard to the Government of the Northwest Territories and also in regard to new initiatives by this government.

In regard to the Social Agenda, one of the biggest challenges, the biggest problems we have in the Northwest Territories is alcoholism. Yet in the Northwest Territories, based on distribution with regard to alcohol and drug treatment programs, we have one treatment centre with 30 beds, and that is for the whole Northwest Territories. We are in the process again of exporting people to the southern treatment facilities to provide that service for us. I thought we got out of that in the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

I see we are back to institutionalizing our people by sending them to southern institutions. Our children, people wanting to go for treatment. That for me is one of the biggest challenges we face.

Taking advantage of the oil and gas boom, we talk about a pipeline; unless we deal with the problem at hand of having to play second fiddle to southern employees.

Yes, the economy might be great with the dollars and cents, but a lot of people in our communities are struggling to make ends meet. Yet this government puts in place more restrictions with the harmonization of housing and social programs. I have a problem with that.

I feel it is another form of tax. It is another form of taking away dollars and resources that people should be able to keep. If anything, expand it. Put some brainpower behind finding new initiatives for housing in our communities. Who says a house has to have four rooms and a washroom? Back in the days when Inuvik was built, there was such a thing called a five-wall, which was two rooms, a small little living room and most people had a wood stove.

People in our communities are bunched up in these houses, but people in most of our communities would love to have a similar unit with a roof over their head, allowing them to take more responsibility for their lives.

I think what we do as a government is put everything out to engineers and architects and at the end of it all, we do it in such a way that it becomes so costly for the amount of housing units that we get, we do not really receive the communities or give them a say in how they want to construct these units.

Do they want to have a simple little two-bedroom house for a single person or an elder? That is something we have to look at, new ways and new initiatives. It was mentioned that we received \$7.5 million from the federal government. We are in the process of going back to the old initiative of selling off government houses and infrastructure. Right now, the biggest challenge in our communities is just having the housing, yet this government is in the practice of selling off housing assets.

We talk about healthy people, healthy communities and the health of the Northwest Territories. I think the government has to invest more in educational programs and ensuring we have an alternative for people so that they can take programs and services in our communities.

The biggest challenge to our communities is just trying to ensure that we do have adequate resources and human resources in our communities. Mental health workers in our smaller communities get paid less than mental health workers in larger communities. Why is that? The cost of living in our small communities is probably one-third higher than living in our urban communities when it comes to maintaining a home and the cost of goods and services.

I think this government has to do more to ensure the communities have the capacity to have those professionals there to carry out the responsibility for the government and the communities, so that we do not have to continue to send people out of the communities. If anything, we should be increasing the amount of services we are getting from this government.

Right now, a doctor visits once a month. If you are not able to see that doctor in the month, you have to wait until the following month in order to get in to see him. I think this government has to ensure that we increase services in health and social services to allow the communities to develop their capacity and give them the resources so that they can hire the people themselves.

We talk about support to our youth and the children of the Northwest Territories. In many of our communities, the dropout rates are so high you are lucky to see one or two graduates a year. In some cases, you do not see one in two or three years. That is telling us something. We are not producing programs and services that are ensuring our students and children can

take advantage of the economic booms that happen. Those are our future leaders. We have to do more to provide the support mechanisms in our communities.

We talk about recreation being a fundamental part of any person's life, to be able to not only physically, but mentally and emotionally build yourself to realize that you have the capacity and ability to do whatever you want, setting goals for yourself in sport and in life. In most of our communities, the recreation facilities are restricted from carrying on because of cut backs in this government.

I will use an example. Fort McPherson has a recreation centre with a hockey rink, but they are not allowed to put on regional tournaments because the facility is not up to safety standards. That is an example of how this government has to do more to invest in the infrastructure in our communities, invest in our children and make sure they can compete just like anyone else.

One of the other areas I would like to touch on is the area of culture and language. Myself, being a member of the Special Committee on Languages, we have heard and we have seen that languages and the culture of the aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories is presently being threatened. In some cases, like with the Gwich'in language and the people I represent, it is just over 13 percent of the population that speaks the language.

Mr. Speaker, we as a government are responsible for languages through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Why is it that there is such a decline of aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories and services in the different languages and the development of curriculum, programs and services for our communities? I think it is important that we do more to ensure that we invest in the culture and language of the people of the Northwest Territories and the aboriginal groups in the Northwest Territories, to ensure there are aboriginal languages being spoken well into the future, rather than having the concern of seeing them lost within the next decade.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about the benefits of development and the sharing between communities, governments and regions. I do not see the sharing between the regions and government to the communities. It is very frustrating when you have to argue with the government because of having water problems or problems with infrastructure in your communities. The lack of fire protection because you have a fire truck which is almost 20 years old and the government is nickel and diming the community by throwing more and more parts into the thing, knowing that it is on its last legs but cannot make a decision to make the investment to ensure the public safety is being adhered to.

I have a real problem with the way the shift of government as we know it is going. The Northwest Territories was established back in the 1800's. Yet the actions of this government from the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly to the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly, it seems like we are driven by the economy and not the well-being of the people in our communities.

The economy seems to have an upper hand on the well being of people in our communities, and also the programs and services delivered to our communities.

We see a lot of dollars being spent in this government. In Justice, we have \$18 million being spent on a correctional facility here in Yellowknife, at a total cost of \$41 million. With Health and Social Services, they are building a new hospital in Inuvik, \$20 million, with a total cost of \$43 million.

Yet the communities I represent, for three communities, they are going to get \$227,000 in this budget. I find that pathetic with regard to the government and the money that was spent for the diamond industry -- million-dollar loan guarantees for people to be able to invest in their diamond businesses.

Also, with regard to special initiatives that this government established with regard to hydro initiatives, energy initiatives, the establishment of different, new initiatives that this government has basically pulled out of the sky, with no idea of how those dollars at the end of the day make their way to our communities.

You might see a lot of money in the budget, where you earmark \$13.8 million for capital investment in communities, but you have to realize that a very small portion of that actually makes its way to the communities. The bureaucracy that is within the government, with regard to Public Works and other areas, developing the drafting, the costs associated with developing the budget and what not are incurred by the different arms of government. I think as a government, we have to ensure the fair distribution of wealth is not all left at the capital and regional centres, that we have a mechanism of ensuring the people in the communities are able to strive and be able to feel like they are part of the developments that are taking place in the Northwest Territories, and also feel a part of this government.

I for one have a very hard time accepting the notion that the benefit to oil and gas development, diamond developments, are really benefiting communities. When we look at government initiatives such as harmonization, for me, that is just another form of holding people back from exceeding, expanding. If anything, I was hoping that this government was going to be able to put a mechanism in place so that people want to stay in our communities. People do not want to feel threatened, and "Oh, sorry, you are making too much money and you have to leave your home" realizing that there are no other alternatives but to leave.

A lot of our young people are leaving our communities because there is a better life or better education program or better services being provided at the regional centres and the cost of living is a lot less. I think this government has a lot to do with that by the efforts and the initiatives that it has taken from the 13<sup>th</sup> Assembly, with the major cutbacks in capital allocations to communities, and with the initiatives of pushing large-scale regional developments with regard to developing infrastructure and developing a government around those developments, with no real capital investment in our communities and allowing the communities to lose out on opportunities in different sectors -- tourism, taking advantage of the oil and gas developments, taking advantage of the cultural aspects of what makes our communities unique.

I think as a government, we are not doing enough to represent small communities.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I for one feel that this government has to listen to what people are saying in our small communities and truly take the initiatives in helping communities to allow

them to develop their communities by making decisions that they feel they are part of the decision-making process. As it is right now, all we are hearing is dictatorship from the top down. It should be from the bottom up. Thank you.

-- Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 10, replies to the budget address. Item 20, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters; Bill 2, Bill 4, Committee Reports 1-14(5), 2-14(5), 3-14(5), and Motion 1-14(5), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I would like to call committee of the whole to order. We are dealing with Bill 2, Committee Reports 1-14(5), 2-14(5), 3-14(5), and Bill 4, Motion 1-14(5). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Handley.

**HON. JOE HANDLEY:** Mr. Chairman, I recommend that we continue on with Bill 2, specifically the review of Health and Social Services, and when that is concluded, move ahead with the Department of Transportation. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We will take a short break and be back in five minutes.

-- Break

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** I will call the committee of the whole back to order. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in any witnesses.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, yes.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Does the committee agree the Minister may bring in his witnesses?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Agreed. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you escort the witnesses in please? Mr. Minister, for the record, would you introduce your witnesses?

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Director of corporate services, right? Welcome witnesses. I believe we are on page 6-13, program delivery support, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$24 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Grants and contributions, program delivery support, contributions, total contributions, \$14,485,000. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering, are we not going to deal with page 6-14?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** This is program delivery support, so you can speak to it. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see that one of the line items here is recruitment and development. I was wondering if the Minister could speak a bit to the recruitment program and its effectiveness to date, and where we are headed with it in his view.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The recruitment and retention initiatives have had some success. It has been identified by all the board chairs, and by the department as well, as the number one priority that we have to continue to pay very close attention to. The recruitment of professionals, nurses and doctors, in addition to the allied health and social services professionals, is something that we are looking at as we speak as part of the action plan to see how we can improve how we coordinate our efforts, definitely on the hiring of doctors and nurses. We are looking at longer term issues like the Nurse Practitioners Program. We are looking at some legislation to do some of the collaborative pilots that are necessary. We have also been getting some very strong messages. We have to look at other areas like the social workers, and the other community support people, like the alcohol and drug workers.

We have had some success but it has clearly opened up an area for us in terms of a comprehensive human resource strategy that makes us recognize that we have to look at all the people and all the professions within the department. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to hear the Minister say that we have had some success. I was wondering if the Minister could quantify that success for us in terms of the numbers of nurses recruited that we have managed to attract to work for the boards in the Northwest Territories and the number of physicians that we have attracted, just in terms of numbers and which boards they are working for. I would appreciate some more quantification to this line. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Minister of Health.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As of February 15<sup>th</sup> I can indicate the number of nurses, social workers and physicians that we have. I can share these documents or I can read them, whatever the Member would prefer. I have three separate documents for social workers, nurses and physicians.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. If we can, we will have copies made for the Members. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think rather than reading it into the record, it would be useful to have the copies and then, perhaps just for the information of the public, you could table the documents tomorrow so they are also available, if he is prepared to make that information public.



What I am wondering though is that he says that he has the numbers, but I gather from what he is saying is that we are talking about total numbers here. What I am interested in is some quantification of what we have seen in terms of actual recruitment. Have we attracted three nurses to the Northwest Territories with this program or have we attracted 30? That is really what I am looking for. Have we attracted one doctor or ten?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have that specific level of detail, of being able to crack out or break out doctors or nurses who have come up here specifically because of recruitment and retention or because they knew other doctors or nurses, or because they responded to just our general advertising. It all links together.

I can indicate that we are still looking for doctors and nurses, and in some cases, social workers as well, especially with the new positions that are being funded in this budget. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, can you give a copy of that to the page so we can get copies to the Members so we have something to follow? Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was not sure from the Minister's answer whether he does not have that kind of information available or if it is not being tracked -- if he does not have it available now, if he can get it for us later, or if it is not being tracked. I am assuming that he is saying that it has not been tracked. That causes me a bit of concern, especially knowing the number of times that I have heard Mr. Miltenberger in this House demand that there be accountability for the expenditure of dollars. I would expect that there would be some kind of mechanism used, whether by surveying new hires or through some method to find out whether or not our actions were in fact productive.

We keep voting money to spend on recruitment and retention. I would hope that there is going to be some tracking of whether or not that expenditure is making sense for us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has been an interim review done on the recruitment and retention strategy. I will commit to get numbers for this Legislature and the Member that will give you, to the best of our ability, the information that he has requested. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to seeing that information. There is another line item here called systems development. It has gone from \$3.8 million in last year's main estimates to \$4.1 million proposed in the 2002-2003 main estimates. What exactly is systems development?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Systems development speaks to the information systems that we are investing significant amounts of money in, as it has

been clearly identified over the past number of years that our systems are weak. We spent money on the child welfare information system. We are looking at improving PeopleSoft. We are moving towards a standard financial system. Those are the types of areas we are looking at when we talk about systems development. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think a number of us have been concerned for a while that we do not get what the Minister himself used to call blue-chip information when it comes to the financial management information that we get from the Department of Health and Social Services. From his explanation, I am afraid that we are not seeing an awful lot of this money going into a revision of the financial information systems. I think that is something that we have seen as being fairly weak in the department for a while. Can the Minister tell us what is planned in order to upgrade the financial information systems in the department?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are going to do a number of things. We have moved to a standard chart of accounts. We are going to make sure that we move with the boards to a common financial system among the boards. We want to come up with common reporting information requirements. Those are the key areas that we want to look at. Of course, we are going to better synchronize the business planning process between the department and the health boards, so that the information is not only there but that it is properly sequenced and that it can be put to use at the appropriate time, both by the boards and by the departments. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What time line are we looking at for institution of the new financial systems and how much is it going to cost to implement?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The target date is April 1<sup>st</sup> of next year. The cost is projected at...

-- Interjection

We have not determined the final cost yet. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am surprised that the Minister cannot give us at least an order of magnitude. I had expected that it was going to be fairly expensive and I was looking forward to having some indication of what it was going to cost.

There is another line here called population health. I note that in fact, there has been a decrease in the amount that we are spending, from \$1.8 million to \$1.7 million, so a decrease of just over \$100,000. Given the Minister's comments the past couple of days about the importance of moving from treatment to prevention and the importance that I know he places on

population health measures, why are we not seeing a dramatic increase in population health spending?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am planning, and I think we are planning as a department and as a system, to be moving aggressively on this. As we look at the implementation of the action plan and as we start the planning for the upcoming budget cycle, that it is an area of significant concern. We talked about it in this House as a sustainability issue. I agree that it is one that we have to be putting more resources into. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question has to do with the recruitment and development section as well. Along with other Members, I have been expressing to the Minister about some of the inequities that exist with respect to bonuses or some sort of incentives to recruit and retain not only the nurses and doctors, but also for other health care deliverers, which we have been calling allied health workers. Just today, the Minister provided us with a letter that suggests that the vacancy rate in this area may not be as severe as the nurses and doctors.

Also, the Minister, in previous answers to other Members in this House, suggested that he may be looking at social workers as well. I guess what I am getting out of this is that his work on this is still very preliminary, sketchy. He is still thinking on it. Could I have the Minister's latest position on where he is at with respect to this issue?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, what we are in a broad sense moving towards is the goal of a comprehensive human resource strategy that will address the human resource requirements for the whole health and social services system. A key component of that is the Recruitment and Retention Program.

As it was initially designed, it applied to doctors and nurses where we came up with the idea of temporary supplements for the nurses. Very clearly it has been determined that there are impacts to that which are system-wide in terms of the way it is perceived, the optics, the determination of value that other professions may have by not being given the same kind of monetary consideration.

The boards have identified this along with the department as our number one priority. The joint senior management committee is looking at this, which comprises of the board CEOs and the senior management of the department. They are reviewing this particular area along with the overall comprehensive human resource strategy.

We are also anticipating that the issue of supplements will be dealt with through the collective bargaining process as the UNW and the bargaining unit brings it forward as an issue that they want to see addressed as well in the processes that they have available to themselves.

We are taking the steps to put this plan in place. We already have a system that is operational but we recognize that it needs to be better coordinated and it has to be more comprehensive and that is what we intend to do. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just want to make it clear that it is not that, if we want to open up the realm of area that we want to address, it would be social workers and alcohol and addiction workers and caregivers and program deliverers in communities and cities. I do not mean to imply that any of them are any less important in their work, but at the same time, I just want to point out that sometimes reaching too far may result in losing sight of what we set out to do in the first place.

I believe the specific issues to do with the allied health care workers is the real and apparent inequities in the work place for those who are delivering health and medical care. I am sure it is the case in health centres as it is the case in bigger institutions like Stanton Hospital, where there are x-ray technologists, laboratory technicians, occupational therapists and speech therapists who are working in a very close area with the nurses and doctors and are also faced with the shortages in staff and being overworked and overburdened. They look around and see their colleagues with the same level of education receiving bonuses and incentives three years in a row. They do not want to complain about that because you do not want to begrudge your colleague for getting something you are not getting, but at the same time, it is not a good working environment.

I need to specify that as one of the more unique features about this problem. I am not getting any comfort from the Minister's answers. I know from day one that he stepped into his position as the Minister, he has worked very hard to be an action man. He has made it very clear that he has deadlines, visions, objectives and steps he is going to follow. He has gone a long way in assuring us that he is a man of action and not one of reviews and studies.

Yet in his latest answer, he is telling me that he is reviewing it, he has executive committees and deputy ministers and boards -- I think it is deputy ministers that he is going to bring to the executive committee -- looking at this, taking the same steps and coordinating and all of that.

My specific question is, has the Minister directed whoever is in charge of this? Has he made any specific direction to say we need to have equity for the allied health care workers?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two points I would like to make. One is that this is going to be a collective bargaining issue and there is collective bargaining currently underway. There is a process in place to deal with that particular issue.

I would also like to assure my colleague that this comprehensive human resource strategy that we are developing will be done and it will pull together all of these issues. It is not something that is just an abstract concept. This is a complicated system with a \$200 million budget, over 1200 employees and a host of different occupations and professions.

Like the rest of government, as the Grant Thornton report pointed out, we need to have a comprehensive human resource strategy and we are developing that. It is not something that I do in the privacy of my office by myself. It is an undertaking that is going to require all parts of the system to come together and to pull together the information and the plans necessary in conjunction with the corporate human resources of the government as well as FMBS with their expertise.

This is a very serious undertaking. It will be done. I hope that when we do get it done and we put it on the table and we involve the MLAs, then we will be in a position to have the type of debate we need to make sure we have done the work that is required. It will be done and there will be an opportunity for that kind of feedback. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am still looking for a specific commitment from the Minister. I appreciate that he understands that this is a part of the bigger picture, but I am aware that the Minister has been meeting with allied health workers. I am assuming he must have given some sort of instruction, seeing that it has made it to the collective bargaining process.

Can I get the Minister to at least confirm that he agrees with the fact that allied health workers have been treated inequitably in comparison to their colleagues in their workplaces? Can he give any assurance that he has given special consideration to this group? I am not getting that, Mr. Chairman. I am getting a general statement about the importance of the overall health system. I am pursuing this very specific issue and I would like some specific answers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as the health and social services system, we recognize the need to have a competitive, fair and equitable compensation package for all of our employees.

As we move ahead, that is the goal we are striving to maintain or achieve. We are taking the steps through the various options open to us, the collective bargaining process plus our own planning processes that I have already referred to to ensure that all employees, all professions are given that fair and just compensation and that it is consistent and reflective of the high value that we place upon the services that are being provided. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. We are on page 6-15. Grants and contributions. Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question on page 6-14 with regard to population health and it relates to vaccinations and what, in fact, the department is covering so that people do not have to pay for them themselves. I did ask the Minister earlier in this session about meningitis vaccinations. He assured me that the department will be covering the cost of vaccinations for school trips that go south, and sports teams that are on official school functions. However, I am wondering about other clubs, such as minor hockey and gymnastics, our children who are going into the south, particularly Alberta, whether or not we are offering to pay the cost of vaccinations for those young people. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first, I think we should be clear that the idea of a vaccination is something that has to be taken carefully. If there is a risk, the commitment has been made that we will cover the cost for the areas and the groups touched on by my colleague. That will be done in conjunction with the medical staff, the doctors. If there is an identified risk in the type of sport or activity, maybe one where there is a greater chance of possibly contacting meningitis, then we will definitely look at that.

The other issue we keep in mind, of course, is that there have been almost province-wide inoculations or vaccinations in Alberta because of the issues they have had down there with meningitis. Yes, that is the process we will follow. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Bell.

**MR. BELL:** Thank you. Just quickly then, just confirmation that if a risk is identified by the medical staff, we will pay for the vaccinations? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one short last question on the same issue that I was pursuing. Mr. Chairman, we have been provided with a copy of tables that show vacancy rates of different occupational groups, registered nurses, social workers and physicians. I see that whereas the nurses and doctors are showing a vacancy rate of 12 to 17 percent, social workers here are at 7 percent.

Also, Mr. Chairman, the Minister has recently provided the Members with information showing that the allied health workers might not be experiencing as much of a vacancy rate as these ones, so I am just wondering what the purpose of that communication was. Is that to indicate that the Minister may think that it is not as much of a problem, or was it just for information purposes?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the point of sharing the information was to do just that. It is to make sure that we all have as much information as possible to deal with the issues before us and to help us address the concerns, so that we are dealing from the same information base. The numbers you have are the numbers I have. It just helps us look at how we are going to deal with the issues in terms of recruitment and retention and the comprehensive Human Resources Strategy; the issues raised by my colleague in terms of equity and all these other types of things.

We just want to give all the information we can so that we can all have that information to make the best decisions possible. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** So could I concur from that the Minister will not just consider the vacancy rate as a criteria on which to work the recruitment and retention enhancements? That he would look at questions such as inequities or equities, who works with whom and the work place morale and such? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, very clearly as we look at the human resource side of this very complex system, we are going to consider all factors and variables that impact on the human resource strategy and human resource component of the health and social services system. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. While I have some time remaining here, may I ask a question on page 6-14? I see a reduction in the budget of board support and health services administration this fiscal year as compared to last year. May I get an explanation as to why there is a reduction? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The board support director's position was not funded, so that is not reflected there. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Ms. Lee.

**MS. LEE:** May I have an explanation as to why there is a reduction in health services administration?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a deletion of a health policy consultant's position. It was unfilled and then deleted. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** We are dealing with program delivery support, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$14,485,000. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under contributions to boards of management, I see \$1,525,000, and this is funding for nurses' market supplement and recruitment/retention. I thought that we had put approximately \$3 million into the recruitment and retention program. Is this all of the money that we put into recruitment and retention, \$1.5 million, or is some of it shown in another line in the budget?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That money listed is the money that goes directly to the boards. There is also money that has been put into the recruitment and retention units in headquarters. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister, do you have something else to add?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** No, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if we could get a breakdown. In total, what is being spent on recruitment and retention? What is the breakdown right now on the nurses' side and what is on the physicians' side? If I can go ahead, I have a letter from the Minister indicating that he is going to embark on a recruitment and retention program for allied health professionals as well. Where is the budget for that? Is that something that is contained in this \$1.5 million now? If so, how are we going to possibly be divvying that up? Or is it somewhere else in the budget? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are going to make every effort to use existing resources, possibly reprofiling, but very clearly tied into the action plan is going to be some costs that have to be determined. Then we have to make the efforts to see if we can obtain those funds once they are agreed on. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I have to admit that I am a little surprised. I had thought from the letter I received from the Minister that it was a sure thing, the recruitment and retention plan for the allied health professionals. Now I hear a suggestion from him that he is going to have to come back for supplementary funding. I am sure in that letter he said that the program would start on April 1<sup>st</sup>, so if we do not see the money in this budget for that part of the program, and he said that it would start on April 1<sup>st</sup>, how are we possibly going to start it without the supp?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is \$3.9 million in the budget overall and \$1.5 million is identified for nurses' market supplements. There is also some other money in there for northern development contributions and other recruitment and retention contributions. We are, as I indicated, going to be making the best possible effort to use existing resources and we are going to be looking at any cost that comes out of that separately. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think if I were to use some of the Minister's formerly colourful language -- he has gotten rather bland lately -- I think he would characterize his last answer to be somewhat loopy-goopy. I did not hear a lot of commitment there.

I also asked him what the number was for physician recruitment and retention, and that number has not yet been separated out in his answers to me, I believe.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know my colleague would never bait me and I will just assume that he is not. The recruitment cost for doctors is within that \$3.9 million. If the Member wishes, we can break out the numbers and provide him with some further detail.

We are also currently underway with negotiations with physicians, which is dealing with a lot of those issues through the compensation package we are going to be negotiating. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has the department considered alternative approaches to the issue of physician recruitment? Perhaps looking to the medical association to take on that job, rather than having it done by people within the department? I just think there may be some value to having physicians recruit physicians, rather than having staff people within the department try and work on that issue.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is a good point. I met twice now with the medical association. As well, they have met with Mr. Cleveland and his senior staff. We are looking at that particular option. It had been put forward by the physicians. We also try to involve the physicians and the medical association with hiring as it now exists, but they have raised that issue as part of the review of the recruitment and retention initiatives as it relates to doctors.

We are committed to see what is possible in that area. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** General comments. Grants and contributions, total contributions, \$14,485,000. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Health services program, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$103,466,000. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 6-16, we get an activity description, which says that health services, including in-patient and out-patient care, public health and chronic care, are provided to eligible Northerners. Do we have many Northerners who are not eligible?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not many. It tends to be RCMP, DND or WCB. There are some who would not be considered immediately eligible.

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

**MR. DENT:** I take it from that that the Department of Health and Social Services uses a different definition of Northerner than other departments of government. Could we get the definition of Northerner from the Department of Health and Social Services?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Dent indicated that he would like me to allow the staff some opportunity to talk, so on this one, I will let Mr. Cleveland respond.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The deputy minister, Mr. Cleveland.

**MR. CLEVELAND:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is more a question of eligibility in programs that are offered.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 6-17, under health services programs, and I know we will get into detail shortly, I was just wondering, the grants and contributions. What is driving that increase? There is almost \$10 million from last year's main estimates and almost \$12 million if you go back to the 2001-2002 action plan.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of key changes, collective agreement adjustments for boards, the increase to standardized physician contracts, the increase to medical clinics' operating costs, forced growth for boards, enhancements to the primary care health services delivery model. There was a third internist at Stanton. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two questions. Under other expenses, that line has dropped by \$1.5 million. Is that a transfer into grants and contributions? Is it an actual reduction under other expenses? Could we also get a bit of an explanation about what is included in other expenses?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I could ask the Member, did he say there was a decrease or was he asking why there was an increase under other expenses?

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for not being precise. I was talking about the difference between the 2000-2001 actuals and the 2002-2003 main estimates. There is a slight increase over last year, or the current year we are in. It is down quite significantly from the year previous.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you could spare me one second here. We apparently do not have that particular detail, so I will commit to get that for the Member and for the Assembly. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will carry on as we get into the details. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee):** Budget summary, total operations expense, \$103,466,000. Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to ask the Minister about the amortization of the health centres in Yellowknife that have been taken over by the department. I would like to ask the Minister why there has been an increase in the costs of delivering health care because of that take over from the health clinic to the Department of Health and Social Services?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Lee):** Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Minister.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the budget, there is about a \$1.4 million increase in the medical clinic operating costs. Part of that is the initial costs of converting from the private fee for service clinics to the model that is currently there. Those are some of the costs and they have been dealt with over the last couple of years. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the community amortization, it went from \$40 million to \$43 million. I am wondering, was there a \$3 million increase? Is that the increase?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that this is to do with the depreciation of the overall assets within the health system. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Where in the budget is that line item in regard to the costs to the Department of Health and Social Services because of the take over of the health clinics?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That number is within the grants and contributions.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Looking at the main estimates for 2001-2002, it was \$76 million, whereas in 2002-2003, the main estimates are \$85 million. Was there a \$9 million increase because of the take over of the health clinics?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** No, Mr. Chairman. There is a \$1.4 million cost if you look at the revised main estimates as compared to the 2002-2003. The numbers are significantly different. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Does the Minister have the actual costs in regard to the take over of those clinics?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Member is asking, do I have from its inception to today the total overall package of costs to convert from fee for service to salary and take over positions and take over the clinics, I do not have that number with me. I can indicate that in this particular budget, there is \$1.4 million in there as a result of the increase to operating costs. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell us, will the government be giving up any of these leases for these facilities in the next short while?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, can I ask for clarification? Is the Member asking for the actual buildings where the clinics now operate out of?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Clarification, Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with the clinics that have been taken over here in Yellowknife by the department, a few of them were long-term leases. Exactly what will the government do when these leases expire or come to an end? Will the government be getting out of these leases?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that there are three to four years left in the leases for most of the clinics. In a year or so, we will be starting to evaluate what the best course of action is in terms of what to do when the leases do expire. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How soon will the Minister or the department have an answer back to us in regards to the concern of the leases? Are we going to be in or out? Will it be in a short time or is that a couple of years down the road?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Given the length of time in the existing leases, I anticipate it will be 18 months or so down the road. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Does the department have to give notice in those leases that you will not be extending them in the next short while?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not within the next short while, no. Should that decision be made in due course after full consideration, then we would comply with the requirements of the leases in terms of notice. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** A question to the Minister, is there anything happening or going to happen with the communities in regard to expansion or what not at other health centres, so the communities could take on more resource people? We can have people working out of the health centre so you have more room. One of the concerns you hear from the health professions is there seems to be a lot of concerns when you have clinics or when you have a doctor in the health centre.

A lot of times, most of the offices in the clinics are usually taken up by someone else and it does cause a problem with delivery in regards to privacy with the patient, the doctor and what not.

Is the department looking at anything to see if there is a need or an expansion in the different centres to ensure that we are able to deliver all services in all our communities, so that we are not compelled by the restriction of having not enough space within our health centres?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the existing capital plan was done on current service levels. We are currently reviewing the service delivery model and the core service document. If there is a change, then the capital plan will be adjusted accordingly. At present, a lot of the major capital renovations are based on the current level of service and things like the half-life of the existing facilities and the requirements needed to maintain and preserve the investment that we have in the existing facilities. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is exactly the concern because if you use the current level of services, it does not allow you the room to expand to take on other services, especially in our small communities.

One thing that you seem to have in regard to health and social services, you are always battling with the department to look at the forecast, say ten or 20 years down the road, for these facilities and the population growth in our communities. If you use that scenario, the communities will never be able to have a facility to serve the needs of the communities 20 or 30 years down the road.

Will you consider looking at reviewing the whole way you allocate space within health centres, to ensure we do have the capacity when you have a doctor or dentist in the health centre? At any one time, you are fighting over space because the scenario you just explained is exactly that, only for existing services. What about future services? Do we have the capacity to take those on?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member raises a good point. As I indicated, we are in the process of trying to identify in a very clear way the service delivery model that we think is the most appropriate for the health and social services system as it applies across the Northwest Territories. Should that be an increase from the current service levels, then yes, we will be looking at the functional reviews that were done of the facilities we now have, with an eye to complying with the new service delivery model, should it be different from the current level of service. Yes, that will be there. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. Krutko. I now have Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent, do you have...?

**MR. DENT:** Sorry, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering, are we on page 6-18 yet?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 6-17. We are still on page 6-17, Mr. Dent. Budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$103,466,000. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am told that this motion would be in order on this page, although I thought we were going to do it when we talked about out-of-territories hospitals on the next page. As the Minister and Members will be aware, the Standing Committee on Social Programs examined the issue of the nurses that work on behalf of the Northwest Territories for Capital Health in Edmonton. While we know and have been told that they provide excellent services on behalf of northern residents, we were of the opinion that it was worth taking a look at whether or not they should be direct employees of this government to ensure that they were looking out not just for the patients, but also the interests of the government. To that end, I would like to present a motion on behalf of the committee.

**Committee Motion 2-14(5): Capital Health Authority Nurses (Carried)**

I MOVE that this committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services examine the costs and benefits of hiring our own nurses to deliver the programs that are presently provided by nurses employed by the Capital Health Authority. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. I do not recognize a quorum. I will now ring the bell.

-- Ringing of Bells

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Question has been called. All those for the motion? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$103,466,000. Page 6-18, program delivery, details. Page 6-19, health services programs. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Mr. Chairman, on page 6-18, there is a significant increase in the total program expenditures, almost \$10 million. What are the biggest drivers of this increase?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, with all the rustling of paper, I missed the question. I am sorry.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Mr. Dent, repeat your question, please.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering if the Minister could tell us, what are the biggest cost drivers that have led to the nearly \$10 million increase that we are looking at on page 6-18?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a little over a million dollars for collective agreement adjustments for boards; \$1.4 million dollars to increase the standardized physician contracts; \$1.4 million for the medical clinics' operating costs; \$3.9 million for forced growth for boards; enhancements for the primary care health services delivery model, \$840,000; and the third internist at Stanton, with associated support for the whole team, of \$400,000.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you. Also under health services programs, there is a significant increase in the contributions to boards of management for health services programs. I am wondering, I know there were three boards that had significant deficits in the past couple of years. Can the Minister outline what is happening with the resolution of those deficits? Have they been resolved? Have the budgets been accepted that the boards have put forward? How is the department dealing with the deficit issue?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if the Member is asking about the accumulated debt prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> of this last year, then I can indicate to him that we are working with the boards to come up with a shared response in terms of trying to deal with that accumulated debt. The anticipated plan of attack is that from here on in, the boards will be required to cover off any year to date deficits as they occur at this point, other than forced growth items that may occur. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you. Just so I get a better understanding, for instance, I know Stanton had a significant deficit. Can the Minister outline to us how specifically we are going to deal with the deficit at Stanton and have them in a balanced position going forward?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the agreement I am operating on as Minister is that for the accumulated debt, the department will cover 60 percent. The boards will be expected to come up with recovery plans to deal with the remaining 40 percent and we are just working out those details with the health boards, so that we make sure that service levels are not negatively impacted. At this point, that is the plan. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How is the 60/40 split arrived at?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, that was the figure that I put on the table with the boards. There was some movement, but the figure that was settled on was 60/40 as a way to resolve the issue and as a way to recognize that up until April last year, the board budgets may not have been accurately funded and there were some costs that were not anticipated. It was a number that I agreed to as Minister. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the Minister has said that this is an arbitrary figure that he happened along and felt was fair. He said that he made this offer to the boards. Was this offer made to all of the boards that were in deficit, or was this an offer that was made to Stanton alone?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, This 60/40 split is on the table for all boards with committed debt. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** I am just wondering about the process. Was the process where the Minister wrote to the boards and suggested this split so that the boards could consider that at a board meeting, or was this something he discussed with the board chairs of the three boards involved?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This was something of a process. It was an issue that needed addressing. There had been some ongoing protracted negotiations with the various boards trying to come to a resolution. When I became Minister, it was one of the items I thought was important that we try to resolve, so it was put on the table. It was put on the table with all the board chairs as the approach that I was hoping to take. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister just said that he put it on the table as the approach he was hoping to take. Was that really the approach, or was it a take or leave it, this is it, my final offer sort of approach?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I met with most boards, in fact, all the boards, individually. I also met collectively with the board chairs. It was what I put out as an offer and what I wanted to proceed on, and it was agreed to. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Obviously the reason for my questioning is that no matter how or what process we follow from here, this is a totally arbitrary figure. There is some danger that the boards being offered this were seriously under-funded and the 40 percent they are now expected to shoulder may impact on services that they can deliver to their service area.

My concern is that we have not been able to come up with a process that identifies what boards can really afford in terms of making up the deficits. After all, once you have accumulated a deficit, if you have to take the monies out of your ongoing budget, it has to have some impact. I would have expected that the monies that boards were being advanced would be monies that the department required in full by them to deliver the program.

I am having trouble understanding how these boards are going to make up that 40 percent. I am trying to get a sense from the Minister, is that a final offer? Are they going to have to come up with that entire percent? Or are we still looking at making sure, as he has said, that there will be no negative impact on programs and services? It may be impossible for a board like Stanton, for instance, to come up with 40 percent of that accumulated debt without negatively impacting the services that they deliver.



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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the figure I have quoted, the 60/40, is the one we are proceeding on. In fact, we are going to be having a conference call with the board chairs and the JLC on March 6<sup>th</sup> to review this particular issue. We are going to just confirm how we are proceeding. We are going to be looking very carefully at the deficit reduction plans to ensure that we address the issues outlined by Mr. Dent. We are proceeding on a 60/40 split. I am confident that by working together, we can do that and still maintain full integrity of the service delivery. Thank you.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no further questions. It is an area that concerns me and I will be watching very carefully just to make sure that we are, in fact, dealing fairly with the boards, because I am concerned about the impact on boards in having to come up with that 40 percent of their funding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Page 6-18, program delivery.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 6-19, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$85,147,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 6-20, supplementary health programs, activity description. Page 6-21, supplementary health programs, budget summary, operations expense, total operations expense, \$13,396,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 6-22. Page 6-23, supplementary health programs, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$9,270,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 6-24, community health programs. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A question for the Minister under community health programs. I am assuming this is where we would find the social worker expenses. I know we heard in the budget speech that we are going to have an increase in funding for social workers. Could the Minister advise us where the new social workers that are going to be funded in this budget will be placed? Could he advise whether or not those placements follow explicitly the recommendations of the Child Welfare League report? Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For 2002-2003, the following communities will be getting social workers; Fort Simpson, Fort Resolution, Wha Ti, Fort Smith, Lutselk'e, Yellowknife will be getting two, Stanton one, and two are not assigned to Inuvik yet.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What does that mean, two are not assigned to Inuvik yet?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand it to mean that they are assigned to the Inuvik Health and Social Services Board but not to specific communities yet.

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

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister did not advise me though, does this now take us to where we were recommended to be by the report done by the Child Welfare League in terms of staffing? I know, for instance, that report suggested Yellowknife was down by about 10 social workers at that time. That is almost two years ago. They told us that the Deh Cho were down by almost as many. Those were the critical areas for investment. Have we seen those two regions brought up to where they should be according to the Child Welfare League?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is year two out of the three-year plan. Another 11 PYs are scheduled for 2003-2004, which have not been approved. I can give the Member the proposed numbers, if he is interested.

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

**MR. DENT:** I think Members would find that of interest if the Minister is prepared to share it with us. It is not particularly relevant to this year's budget, I guess, but I certainly would be interested in knowing it.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe it would be most helpful if I just gave this copy to be copied. It has the three years, last year, this year and the projected year for next year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. We will have that copied and circulated. Mr. Dent.

**MR. DENT:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no more questions on this page.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I had wanted to ask some questions regarding Metis health benefits to the Minister, which was raised by a number of the Metis groups in the Territories. I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell us what his plans are for the Metis health benefits, for any portion of the health benefits that will be tendered out? What are his consultation plans in regard to dealing with the different Metis health groups out there?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have written to the Metis organizations, the South Slave, the North Slave Metis Alliance and the Northwest Territories Federation. I have committed to a meeting in March to bring in

the three Metis organizations to look at how the Metis health benefits are structured and how they are delivered. The initial program was done in the days when there was a Metis Nation, which no longer exists. I have written and copied the MLAs to that meeting.

We also are in the process of having the administration side of the payment of the benefits, once they have been determined, which has been done through Blue Cross up to this point, had been put out to tender. That process is still under way. It is just an administrative function that does not affect the eligibility or the policy of the Metis benefits that have been agreed to.

Those are the two particular areas, but the big one being that I have committed to the meeting with the Metis organizations, given the interest in some areas of, for example, the South Slave Metis have indicated very clearly that they are very interested in possibly delivering the Metis benefits to their own members. Given the concern and the fact that there are now three organizations, we are bringing them all to the table to see where we go from here. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. We are on health programs. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is blatantly obvious, I guess, that the Minister has certainly changed his position from when he was sitting on this side of the House and insisted that this program stayed intact and no changes be made to it. Now that he is Minister, he has indicated to us that he is planning to break the program, at least the management component, apart.

Are the aboriginal, the Metis groups being given a heads-up that is what he is in fact going to be presenting to them when they meet with him in March? Is he telling them "Come here prepared to take your portion. We are planning to break this up?" Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am saying no such thing. There has been some interest expressed in some quarters to look at the possible delivery of this program by the South Slave Metis, for example, to their own members. There is the concern that was raised over the Blue Cross tender, which was just an administrative function on the payment side. Given the concern and given the fact that this program was initially developed a number of years ago with the Metis Nation, I am inviting all representatives of the Metis representatives to the table to discuss this issue. There have been no commitments made. I am not telling anybody what they have to do. This program exists now. It was approved by Cabinet and there will not be any changes that are not sort of agreed to and then have to go back through Cabinet and hopefully whatever changes, if any, would have to follow due process.

It is an opportunity to bring the Metis representatives to the table to talk about this program. I know there are concerns about the level of service as well, which is also there for discussion. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod, your questions are on supplementary health programs and that was

page 6-22. We are now on page 6-24, community health programs. Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Mr. Chairman, I request that we go back to page 6-22.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Do I have an agreement here? Mr. McLeod.

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for correcting me. I apologize. I have one more question regarding the Metis health benefits. The biggest factor that was probably to the demise of the Metis Nation of the Northwest Territories was that the definition of a Metis was something that could not be agreed upon by the northern organizations and the South Slave Metis and the North Slave Metis and what is now the Northwest Territories Metis Federation.

By considering breaking out the different portions of the Metis health benefits, I really question what is going to be utilized. What definition is going to be used as the determining factor of what is a Metis? How does the Minister plan to address that? I would like to ask that question, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is obviously a very critical question, the definition of what is a Metis? I do not have a clear answer. I know there are different definitions used. To a certain extent, it has cost implications. It also has other program implications. It is obviously going to be one of the items that we have to look at as we look at how this program evolves. Thank you.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister if he is planning to let the groups make their own definitions? Is that something he is considering, to let the South Slave Metis define who is a Metis in their membership and the Northwest Territories Metis Federation to define who is in their membership and the benefits will apply accordingly?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, thank you. I recognize there is debate over what constitutes a Metis. My understanding is, what is used right now, one of the key criteria is the 1921 date, with other elements included. For myself as Minister, I would hope and work towards a definition that is standard, so we all know what we are dealing with in terms of the definition. At this point, we do have some criteria that is used, one of the key ones being the date 1921. Thank you.

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

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is also on supplementary health programs on page 6-22. Specifically, it refers to those that are not covered by the supplementary health program and end up paying the co-payment, I think we are referring to it as the \$250 co-payment that these folks must come up with on their own. I am wondering, for those residents who do not fall into one of the categories, they are not an infant, they are not a senior, they are not indigent, Metis or status, those folks slip through the cracks here. It ends up

being primarily employees of small businesses who do not work for one of the governments, who do not work for a large employer with a supplementary plan that they can pay into and have their own coverage.

I am wondering if the Minister would consider looking at a supplementary plan for those who are left out, something that they would have to contribute to the way the Metis plan works, as I understand it, on this 80/20 basis. I think there are contributions made. I wonder if the Minister is open to exploring some of these areas to cover those who are left out. It does not seem to me that there are a significant number of the population who are not covered, so it seems strange that we would not do something to help these people. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are going to be doing an in-depth briefing with the Social Programs Committee, but as I indicated earlier in the House, we have struck an internal group within the department and within government to take a review of the supplementary health benefits program.

I would fully anticipate that issues such as the one raised by my colleague, Mr. Bell, would be reviewed as we pulled together a package of recommendations of how to deal with this particular program area and to make sure that it is the best that we can possibly afford. Thank you.

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

**MR. BELL:** Thank you, then I am hoping that at the time that we get this briefing, the Minister will have the cost implications of something like this analyzed and specifically look to the amount of money that we are currently collecting in the form of co-payments from residents who are not covered.

I would be curious to know. I would think that it is not probably that much money on a yearly basis. I think that is something we should know going into this briefing so that we can analyze the costs. Clearly there are cost implications and I think it makes sense for us to look at those when we are analyzing the prospects of a program like this. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will come armed with all the numbers and projections and costs that we have at our disposal. It was a good point and thank you.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** I want to ask a couple of quick questions because I have some concerns regarding the supplementary health programs. I have run into a number of problem areas. A lot of times when there is a problem in the system, or problem with the program, people in the communities will come to the MLA for assistance. When you start to track some of these things and start to work down the line to find where the glitch is, it becomes very difficult. In most cases, there is no paper trail.

Would the Minister take a look at, especially when it comes to non-medical escorts and the requirement for them, if it is a recommendation coming from the physician that we have some kind of paper trail, so that we know that these doctors are

suggesting or recommending that the patient find an escort to accompany them? At least in one case in my riding, it has been a problem.

The other problem I have run into is where people are asked to translate, especially in the southern hospitals, and they stay there for additional days at the word of the doctor stating they will be compensated, only to find out they are in fact not going to be compensated. There is no written agreement and no contract, no real solid arrangement that they can fall back on, only the doctor's word.

In both cases, it is one person's word against the other. I think it should be clear out there for the people in the North that if they are going to look at some sort of compensation to cover some of their costs, especially in the cases of non-medical escorts, or if they spend any time translating, they should not expect to get their costs covered. They do not have any written authorization.

Is there a way the Minister can look at incorporating some kind of policy, so that if the doctor is going to say, "Stay for a few days and we will cover your costs," is it in writing? If a doctor is going to recommend to a patient that they provide a non-medical escort, is it in writing so that we know?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will check to ensure that there are no gaps and that there is proper documentation. If there is not, we will ensure we will make the arrangements without jeopardizing this broad process, but to deal with the issues that my colleague has raised. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Because we have returned, we will have to start back on page 6-21. Supplementary health programs, operations expense, total operations expense, \$13,396,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Page 6-22. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on page 6-22, under non-insured health benefits, in the main estimates of 2002-2003 and revised estimates of 2001-2002, the main estimates of 2001-2002 show a blank under the non-insured health benefits, whereas in the actuals of 2000-2001, there was \$5,512,000. Can the Minister explain to me why there are no numbers for 2002-2003 and 2001-2002? Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That money was moved to vote 4/5 and is found under page 6-33, I believe, work done on behalf of others.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you. Why was it moved, when was it moved and what was the justification of moving it to work done on behalf of others? Is there some kind of master plan that has been developed that I am not aware of? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is just an administrative reallocation of money that is more appropriately accounted for, since it is work that is done on behalf of the federal government for Inuit and status Indians. It was initially in vote 1, but it is in fact, we believe, more appropriately accounted for where it is currently placed. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When was that administrative decision made?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was made last year.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would this administrative decision have any effect on the quality of the programs and services under which this budget is administered? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Absolutely none, Mr. Chairman. This is an accounting move that has no impact on services provided. We feel it is a better way to account for the funds and the work done. Thank you.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe if the Minister could be so kind as to share how this change in accounting reporting is going to make the job a little easier, especially for the clients of the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, this is strictly a bookkeeping arrangement for the benefit of doing the main estimates and accounting for the funds as we come before the Legislature. It has no impact on the services provided or the way they are provided. It is just in the main estimates, they are laid out now where this money is accounted for under vote 4/5 under page 6-33, as opposed to where they were placed. Thank you.

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

**MR. MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I need some clarification on the handout provided by the Minister regarding the staffing of social worker positions. In all cases for the year 2001-2002, it is referred to by board. Then underneath that, the different communities that will receive the allocation. However, for 2002-2003, the ten positions, the assignments, the Minister indicates the Fort Simpson board. Could he explain to me if there are plans for a new board in the Deh Cho? Underneath that, it shows them going to Fort Simpson, yet the board is shown as Fort Simpson. Is this going to be a community board that we are looking at and breaking away from the regional health board? Or is that a mistake? Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct. Under board, it should actually be Deh Cho.

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

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Referring to that same blue sheet, I want to ask the Minister on the social worker positions. He has different years identified under the positions available to the communities. In my riding, they have the Deninu Kue, one position for 2002-2003 and another position for the same year, but nothing for 2003-2004. Why is that, Mr. Chairman? Does the department feel they need the child welfare worker for only one year and they may be able to solve all the problems within one year? Are they confident in their positions that this works? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. The Minister may answer now and we are just jumping back and forth here. I would like to stay with the activities please. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is a three-year process based on the Child Welfare League of Canada, and these are adjustments to the base. These are positions that are going to be added in an incremental way, based on need and community size and some other factors. If they are there for 2001-2002, that is a permanent addition, as is 2002-2003, as is 2003-2004, should that be approved. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Let us please try to finish the supplementary health programs, and then we will go on to community health programs. Supplementary health programs, page 6-22. Page 6-23, contributions, total contributions, \$9,270,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Community health programs, page 6-24. Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to get a better understanding, I have this sheet that shows me one position for one year, 2002-2003. If I understand the Minister correctly, he is saying that this is a test pilot project, or something that is to be approved next year. Who is going to be doing the approving? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is money in this year's budget for the 10 positions identified for 2002-2003 through the business planning process and based on the recommendations made by the Child Welfare League of Canada review. If the Legislature approves the budget, then the positions as outlined, based on the Child Welfare League of Canada review, will be put into place based on the funding approved by the Legislature. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So it is up to us. If we approve this one this year, then we are going to have to approve it again next year. Is that the direction the Minister is trying to take here, Mr. Chairman? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** The Minister of Health.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, what we have are the three years of this particular initiative. The year 2001-2002 has already been approved and the positions, I believe, are all staffed. The current year, 2002-2003, is what is now being approved. Should 2003-2004 be approved next year through the business planning and main estimates process, then what we have laid out on the top here for 2003-2004 will be dealt with next year. What we are dealing with this year is 2002-2003 funding approved, and the positions as laid out on this particular sheet of paper. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko):** Mr. Nitah.

**MR. NITAH:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am still having a hard time understanding what the Minister means here. I see that there have been other communities. I will give you an example here. Hay River, for example, had a position for 2001-2002. I imagine that budget was approved last year with one position for Hay River in 2001-2002, as I said. However, this year there are no positions in Hay River for 2002-2003 identified, but for next year, there is another position that is identified. Are we putting people in place in these communities and then pulling them? There is no consistency or commitment here from what I am reading on this piece of paper, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, maybe the point I have failed to make is that these positions are building on in addition to the existing staff complements that are in the various communities. To use the example that Mr. Nitah raised, in addition to the current count in Hay River, in 2001-2002, they received another social worker position. If we follow through to 2003-2004, should that be approved next year, then they would in fact be adding another position as well, based on the Child Welfare League of Canada review. That is the same in all cases. We are building on the existing complement and adding two. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Thank you. Community health programs, page 6-24. Community health programs, operations expense, total operations expense, \$50,954,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** Mr. Krutko.

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with regard to the community health programs as we were going through earlier, we could see the number of vacancies. It seemed like a lot of them are in communities. One of the problems we have in our communities is the lack of professionals, people with different educational backgrounds, such as mental health workers and social workers. Plus, with the high turnover rates we seem to see with the nurses and doctors in our communities, there are no real long-term support mechanisms in our communities.

Is there room within this budget to allow for or to ensure that we have a full slate of people in our communities, so that we do not have the problem with vacancies in the different areas because we are not able to find accommodation, or because there is a lack of capacity between the wages of, say \$50,000

for a mental health worker where you can get \$85,000 working in Yellowknife, or even Inuvik?

There also seems to be the different specialists all in the regional centres. Is there anything being done to ensure that we have the ability to develop our capacity in our communities? Have the resources and the people, so they can provide services with respect to family violence issues that may arise in our communities, or looking at child support matters. We deal with those matters in our communities so that we do not have to see our children or family members having to leave the communities and go elsewhere because we do not have the resource people in our communities.

I would like to ask the Minister whether there is anything in this budget that allows for this, to ensure we have the people who are needed in our communities to carry out those responsibilities. What are you doing to ensure we have a full slate of people without having all these vacancies affecting the delivery of program services in our communities?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the positions identified for the communities are all funded. What we are faced with, as the Member has pointed out, is a recruitment issue and, as I have tried to indicate over the last number of days, we are working with all the boards and the department to try to improve how we recruit. Not only how we recruit, but how we retain staff in all areas. We recognize this is a very complex issue and one we have to become very efficient and effective in.

There are some very specific issues as they relate to the smaller communities, as the Member mentioned as well. Things like housing. We are trying to work with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to determine the best way to try to bring some stability into that area as well. We are looking at ways to retain staff with career opportunities, staff training, mentoring. We want to make sure we work very closely with the communities so that we have a work environment and community environment that is the most appropriate and the best that the community and the staff can come to rely on.

We are doing a number of things and the money is in the budget for all of the positions.

The Member has touched on the difference in wages between some of the communities that he has indicated. We are also having to deal with the difference between government pay ranges and what is given to NGO's for salary dollars. That is an issue that we are dealing with. It is on the list, but it is one that has not been resolved yet and it is one that is not fully funded in this particular budget. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister, in regard to the whole area of family violence and concerns from communities asking for community shelters, for women who may be in a violent situation or have to leave their homes, or even having treatment programs such as healing programs in the communities. It seems like because of the lack of involvement by communities to really have an active role to play in developing programs in their communities...I use the Tl'oondih Healing Centre, for instance. It is a \$2 million facility. They have

run programs and services out of there in regard to funds that were received through the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, but again it is not in here and I am wondering exactly...

We realize we have all these problems and what not in our communities, but I think the communities have the will to work with it. It seems like the department or the government has a real reluctance to change the way they do things. I think because of the amalgamation of health with social services, you see a real breakdown or lack of focus on the different specialized areas.

One is dealing with the social aspects, one is dealing with the health aspects, but because you have moulded these two together, it seems like we are not able to carry out as many of the areas as we can.

You talk to the social workers and what not, they seem to spend a lot of time dealing with the child custody issues and matters dealing with the courts themselves. Then there is very little time to deal with the elders or the alcohol and drug side of things. They do not seem to be a priority anymore with the government.

I would like to ask the Minister, exactly when can we see this government allowing communities to have a more active role in developing those different areas and see, if it does not work, is there a possibility of changing the way we deliver programs and services to small communities?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, working with the department and with the health boards in the communities, we are as interested as the Member in seeing what is working effectively and what is not. If change is required and things need to be done differently, then working together, we can determine how that is to be done.

I would also just like to restate what I mentioned in the last couple of days, as well. We recognize in the action plan that there are significant socio-economic impacts due to major resource development. The Member and I have discussed this issue before.

The plan to move ahead with the impacted areas on a project-by-project basis tried to anticipate and deal with some of those impacts, those negative impacts, some of which the Member has touched upon. We are running, as I have acknowledged, somewhat late on this, but we are moving fast to be responsive and we are interested in sitting down once again with the boards in the communities in the impacted areas to see in that particular item as well how we can be responsive to deal with some of those very important issues. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think one thing that is needed is, we have to have a long-term commitment from the government when we talk about the different areas.

As you know, the biggest problem that is facing employment in the oil and gas or even mining sector is the whole area of dealing with alcohol and drugs, in regard to the different drug tests and what not. Where does a person go that fails the test?

Right now, there is no real avenue for them. Once you fail the test, you fail the test and you are not allowed to get back into the workforce until the following year, unless you go to a private contractor, then go in through the oil companies.

I think it is important as a government that we start allowing communities to deal with some of the problems at hand. What we are seeing is there is no real effort or priority put on this government. Like I mentioned in this house before, the number of suicides in our communities. In Fort McPherson alone there was something like 22 attempted suicides. In regard to Tsiigehtchic and other communities, we had some people who did succeed with a suicide.

I think it is a fundamental problem in our communities. I think we have to find ways of dealing with these problems, suicide and alcohol and drug abuse. No one is going to deal with it except the communities, because this government showed that basically with the closures of all the alcohol and drug centres. Even for us to consider the amount of resources we put into the alcohol and drug programs or suicide prevention, child care and what not, we are lagging in other places in the country, especially eastern Canada or even Alberta.

I would like to ask the Minister, how much long-term guarantees can we get from this government, that once you get into these programs, you know you will be around three to five years down the road? You do not just put a band-aid on it and say, "Okay, well, you are okay until next year and we will deal with you again next year." Could I have a long-term commitment from the Minister regarding these community health programs?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Health and Social Services has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in all communities in infrastructure and programs. We recognize that while some of the programs, as the Member indicated, may not be as relevant as they once were, there is a full commitment from this government and this department to stay actively engaged with the communities and with the health boards, with the representatives to provide the services necessary.

We recognize the need to respond, as we intend to do, on the impact of major resource development. We are not in any way trying to indicate, nor should it be implied, that we are in any kind of cost-cutting mode here. We want to provide the best services possible. We want to work with the communities and the health boards and authorities to make sure that the services are the most responsive and the community plays a key role in determining exactly how those services are structured. Thank you.

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

**MR. KRUTKO:** Mr. Chairman, I move we report progress.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty):** There is a motion to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The House will come back to order. Item 21, report of committee of the whole. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

**ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF WHOLE**

**MR. LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 2 and Committee Report 3-14(5) and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. We have a motion on the floor. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent, seconds the motion. The motion is in order. Question has been called. 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 tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight, as well as Cabinet House Strategy, and Caucus at 10:30 a.m.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 26, 2002:

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

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 2, Appropriation Act, 2002-2003
- Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
- Committee Report 1-14(5), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
- Committee Report 2-14(5), Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
- Committee Report 3-14(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the 2002-2003 Main Estimates
- Motion 1-14(5), Establishment of a Special Committee on Rural Community Affairs

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. By the authority given the Speaker by Motion 2-14(5), I order that the sitting hours be set on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. until March the 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002. All other sitting hours stand as established by the Rules of the Legislative Assembly. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 26, 2002, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

