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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Jim Antoine, Honourable Goo Arlooktoo, Honourable Charles Dent, Mr. Enuaraq, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Honourable Samuel Gargan, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Miltenberger, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Honourable Maniok Thompson, Honourable John Todd.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

Oh, God, may your spirit and guidance be in us as we work for the benefit of all our people, for peace and justice in our land and for constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve. Amen.

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Good morning. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Arlooktoo.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 51-13(4): Plan 2000 - A Positive Solution to the Public Housing Shortage

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

(Translation) Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Members about a serious concern for many individuals, families and communities in the north, the need for adequate and affordable housing. Accessible, affordable and quality housing is an ongoing and indeed a growing problem for the north where, because of our climate and our geography, the cost of building or purchasing a home is out of reach for many families based on their household income.

As a result, a high percentage of our population relies on the assistance of the government through income support programs and through the NWT Housing Corporation to ensure they have a roof over their heads, or somewhere else to call home.

Compounding the day-to-day reality of housing costs, as Members are aware, the federal government has stopped funding the construction of new social housing units. In the Northwest Territories, this translates to an annual loss of about \$50 million, which in turn means that several hundred housing units cannot be built each year.

Mr. Speaker, the combination of increasing demand and the decreasing resources has had a devastating effect on the Northwest Territories. (Translation ends) Lower income families who need a place to live are unable to access rental properties, and middle income families who would like to purchase their own home are unable to do so because it is beyond their financial reach.

The NWT Housing Corporation has tried, with some success, to deal with the growing demand for social housing through programs such as the purchase or owner-build programs and the Downpayment Assistance Program. In the process, it has been able to meet some of the need for housing in many communities throughout the north. It has also provided jobs for northerners through housing maintenance and construction and business opportunities for local and northern contractors, suppliers and manufacturers. But, despite these good efforts, the demand for housing continues to increase, and every day the waiting list for access to housing grows longer.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, looking at these circumstances, we can all agree the housing situation in the NWT is at a crisis point. And at a point where we must now take drastic measures in order to prevent the situation from getting worse.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce today that this government believes it has found a way to help address this current housing crisis. Our initiative, which we call Plan 2000, will provide more opportunities than ever before in the history of the NWT for families to become home owners, or to have their homes repaired or expanded. It will also address some of the territories' long-standing housing problems, such as the hundreds of rental and privately-owned property units that do not have proper water and sewage systems.

Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to make detailed presentations to the appropriate standing committees of this House. In the meantime, however, I would like to highlight a few of the things this plan will do to address the housing crisis.

First, the intent of Plan 2000 is to enable the NWT Housing Corporation to provide a more focused use of its funds to ensure it reaches as many people as possible. Mr. Speaker, with Plan 2000, the NWT Housing Corporation is getting out of the mortgage business and into the business of helping families find

and access suitable, healthy and affordable housing, no matter what their income level.

Under this plan, we will assist people in shifting their mortgages to lending organizations at a rate and level they can afford. This will be done through the expansion of the DAP program and by marketing the Corporation's current mortgage and loans portfolio to lending institutions. With Plan 2000, we will be proposing an amendment to the NWT Housing Corporation Act to allow for the Corporation to provide banks

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with mortgage underwriting or guarantees to assist clients wishing to build homes or access bank financing.

Mr. Speaker, we believe this initiative will not only open new opportunities for home ownership, but it will also have a positive effect on the northern economy as well. As designed, Plan 2000 will provide a boost to the northern and local construction industries by creating up to 1,000 additional, seasonal construction, supply and manufacturing jobs a year.

Mr. Speaker, Plan 2000 is an innovative solution to a large problem. We believe this new approach to housing is one of the most positive and effective things this government can do to affect the very heart of our communities and our society. However, as with many other initiatives facing this government today, we must continue to look to the future. We view Plan 2000 as a short-term measure that will help us improve the quality of life for people prior to division, and address the immediate housing needs.

We cannot ignore the fact that the Territories has the highest population growth rates and unemployment rates in the country. Plan 2000 cannot replace the need for the federal government and the two future territorial governments, after division, to address the long-term needs for low cost housing. For today, however, this government believes that Plan 2000 is the best alternative to address the housing crisis. It gives us the opportunity today to make a direct and vital difference in the lives of individuals, families and communities throughout the entire Northwest Territories. And that to me, Mr. Speaker, is good government. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Ms. Thompson.

Minister's Statement 52-13(4): Progress on Community Empowerment Initiatives

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Mr. Speaker, today I will provide Members with an update on community empowerment and the progress our government has made in working with communities.

Last summer, extensive consultation on community empowerment took place and we found positive support for the initiative. In October, Members of this Assembly discussed community empowerment and its implementation. Members were assured that community empowerment is community-driven. That means communities set the pace and communities decide when they want to pursue greater opportunities.

The motion of support for community empowerment is proof that Members are behind this initiative and willing to help it become a reality in all of our communities. I thank you for this support. I want to assure Members that we are committed to continuously improving this initiative as it proceeds. Your suggestions are important and help influence the thinking and ideas that lead to positive change. Community empowerment is delegating an appropriate level of authority and control from the territorial government to the community level of government. With authority and control comes accountability.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Government Operations recommended that the Auditor General of Canada undertake an independent review of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to assess and determine the financial health of communities through their municipal reporting processes.

I am pleased to report that my department has begun work with the office of the Auditor General to identify and address the accountability issues. Meetings, including a full day presentation by my department on how we monitor municipal financing, have been held with the Auditor General's staff. These meetings have already proven beneficial to both parties and we look forward to receiving and sharing their report on our municipal processes.

Mr. Speaker, my department is updating its Community Development Strategy which will outline the community and government process for reviewing and approving proposals for transfer. A lot of work has also been done on the issues associated with the transfer of infrastructure to communities. While some issues are still outstanding, implementation is proceeding.

Infrastructure transfers will result in communities owning additional infrastructure that they will have control of. With ownership, Mr. Speaker, comes additional responsibility. Regional infrastructure workshops are being planned to assist communities with these new responsibilities. At these workshops, community leaders will have an opportunity to discuss infrastructure transfer issues related to community empowerment.

Mr. Speaker, departments have identified a number of social programs that can be made available for transfer. These include community supervision, Education Act provisions, child and family services, Aboriginal Custom Adoption Act, community wellness funding and social housing programs, including rental and home ownership programs.

Other outstanding issues include financing community empowerment, liability and labour relations issues. Sorting out all the outstanding issues is a complex process, but I am pleased to report that the work is progressing and being prepared for Cabinet's review. I look forward to discussions with Members on these matters.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to working with communities to ensure that community empowerment is successful. We have developed a community development approach to help communities identify where they need to develop expertise, skills and capacities to take on greater control, authority and responsibility. Mr. Speaker, I will soon be making another statement explaining the good work that has been done to prepare the community development tools.

To highlight, Mr. Speaker, successful community development starts with planning. Community-based planning is a way for people to work together to improve the existing and future conditions of their community. It is a tool communities can use

to establish a vision of what they want to achieve and how to achieve it.

To determine if a community has the resources and capacity to successfully delivery community programs and services, a community assessment is done. Assessments help communities to identify existing community resources, skills, capacity and training needs required to reach their future goals. For those communities with identified training needs, training opportunities are also available.

Communities that are not ready to pursue community empowerment can still benefit from community based planning, assessment and training. We encourage communities to take advantage of these community development opportunities. Regional interdepartmental teams are available now to facilitate the planning and assessment work in communities.

Mr. Speaker, over the next week I am going to speak more specifically on how we are working with communities to build community capacity to take on more responsibility from the territorial government. I will also share with Members examples of our community empowerment successes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Ms. Thompson. Ministers' statements. Mr. Kakfwi.

Minister's Statement 53-13(4): NWT Protected Areas Strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the most interesting challenges for governments throughout Canada and around the world is to define and maintain a good balance between economic and industrial development, and the protection of the environment. This is particularly challenging here in the north, as we have vast amounts of both natural resources and natural beauty.

I am pleased to report to Members that this government is making progress on the development of a "made in the north" Protected Areas Strategy aimed at finding the right balance that respects the needs of all northerners. The development of this Protected Areas Strategy follows through on a

commitment made by this government in 1994, with the signing of the Whitehorse Mining Initiative Accord.

The accord expresses a strategic vision for mining in Canada. The signatories, including this government, with representatives of the mining industry, environmental groups, labour and some aboriginal organizations, made a commitment to advance its principles and goals. The accord is intended to establish a framework for dealing with issues related to mining in Canada in a co-operative and collaborative manner.

The Whitehorse Mining Initiative Leadership Council agreed to a number of principles and goals, one of which related to protected areas. The Leadership Council agreed

"protected area networks are essential contributors to environmental health, biological diversity, and ecological processes, as well as being a fundamental part of the sustainable balance of society, economy, and environment."

Mr. Speaker, they envisioned the development of a protected areas network based on the use of good science, taking into account appropriate economic, environmental and social information and consultation with stakeholders.

The accord covers much more than protected areas. The Leadership Council set a number of principles and goals, too numerous to list here. It should be noted though, that a number of initiatives being undertaken by this government fall within the principles and meet the goals established. As a matter of principle the signatories agreed that "access to land for exploration and development is a fundamental requirement for the industry".

This government agrees and is committed to collaborate with aboriginal organizations and the federal government to pursue continued industry access to lands. The protected areas strategy will further this commitment.

The participants in the Whitehorse Mining Initiative agreed in principle that "the mineral industry requires readily accessible investment capital on a globally competitive basis". We agree. This government is committed to improving the investment climate in the Northwest Territories. We are embarking on a regulatory reform initiative with the view to reducing regulations which create an unnecessary burden on

the private sector. Regulations we have respecting the mineral industry will be reviewed as will others,

The Whitehorse Mining Initiative also recognizes that "the success of Canada's mining industry depends on the continuing availability of a skilled, well trained, and mobile workforce operating in a healthy and safe environment". The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is preparing a labour force development strategy, to ensure that our northern workforce can take best advantage of these opportunities.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, we are working on initiatives, in addition to the protected areas strategy that represent follow through on the Whitehorse Mining Initiative. Those who signed the Whitehorse Mining Initiative Accord agreed that protected area networks are essential contributors to environmental health. So, how do we do it? We need a way to protect those areas northerners feel need protecting beyond that which can be done with general laws of application. The development of a protected areas strategy will formally begin in Inuvik at the conference on the week of March 3rd. The first order of business will be to meet with all users of the land and determine what steps are required to develop a territory wide strategy, to seek commitments to the development of the strategy and to identify people to work with us throughout the process. Representatives from all users of the land have been invited to participate.

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

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Member for Sahtu is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his Minister's statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Kakfwi, you have unanimous consent.

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you. There seems to be a great deal of concern about land withdrawals. The process we are undertaking is not one to immediately alienate land. Inevitably there will be land withdrawals. The strategy will help us determine why, when and how land will be withdrawn and which geographic areas are candidates. All land users have been invited to participate with us in determining how this can be done to best meet everyone's needs.

There seems to be a great deal of concern that individuals and organizations not from the Northwest Territories will be participating in the Inuvik meeting and in the development of the strategy. Mr. Speaker, this is true. In private meetings I have invited Cominco, Royal Oak, Canamera, BHP and Diavik, all of whom have head offices elsewhere. The Nature Conservancy has also been invited, as has the World Wildlife Fund, which is an international organization. There is no apology to be made here, Mr. Speaker, as I believe we all want the best advice possible.

There is this myth in the minds of some people that the agenda for the Protected Areas Strategy is being driven by non-northern interests. We may be seeking advice and assistance for non-northern sources, but let me assure that this strategy will be designed to meet our needs.

Many people, allegedly with opposing interests, have been asked to meet, reach agreement and initiate a process to control events that will impact their lives in some way in the future. Perhaps more important, a process that will respect and accommodate the needs and interests of all northerners. Mr. Speaker, if people are concerned, they should ask about the Protected Areas Strategy and what it means. By that I mean that my office is open and I am available. If people have concerns, I would be very pleased to take their calls and to make myself and my staff available to answer concerns and questions and issues that arise as a result of the initiative.

So, how can we accommodate various land uses while protecting environmental habitats and maintaining our unique natural and cultural heritage? How can we make this strategy work in a way that balances the needs and interest of all northerners? I believe by continuing to work in the spirit of respect and co-operation I am more than confident that we will find the right answers to the questions that we have now and we will find the answers that we seek. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Arlooktoo.

Minister's Statement 54-13(4): Minister Absent From the House

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Don Morin will be absent from the House for the remainder of the week to attend the Council of Fisheries Ministers on behalf of the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi in Ottawa, and to attend a personal matter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Again, I will remind the Ministers to seek unanimous consent to go back to Ministers' statements, when you wish to make further statements after the 20 minutes are up, Mr. Arlooktoo. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Nunavut Leaders' Summit

MR. NINGARK:

Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, Members of the Nunavut Caucus have just returned from the Nunavut Leaders' Summit in Ikaluktutiak. The two day meeting was aptly titled, Decisions 97. While we did indeed make decisions on a number of issues, there is still a lot of work ahead for all leaders in Nunavut as we move closer to April 1, 1999 and division. Much of the discussion on the opening day involved the composition and design of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. Leaders agreed that the Assembly should have a minimum of 20 Members and a maximum of 22. Agreement was also reached on the election, electing the Premier of Nunavut at large. If it is possible within the timeframe before division, Nunavut's leaders also want to ensure that a Legislative Assembly is in place to take over on April 1, 1999, and have therefore decided that the first election will be held in January or February of 1999. As you know, Mr. Speaker, gender parity has been one of the most contentious issues in discussion on the design of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. I wish to report to the House that the people of Nunavut will decide, by plebiscite, whether or not their Assembly will be elected on the basis of equal representation of men and women. To date, there has not been a clear indication of whether or not the majority of the residents in Nunavut support gender parity. The plebiscite will tell us clearly what the people want. We as a member of Nunavut Caucus, feel it is crucial to protect the democratic process by letting the people who elect us have a say in such a fundamental change, in the way Members of a Legislative Assembly are chosen officials.

From the three signatories to the Nunavut Accord, Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Natilikmiot is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Ningark, you have unanimous consent.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues. From the three signatories to the Nunavut Accord, we will be working on the detail of the plebiscite. More information will be released soon. The three signatories also agreed, in principle, with the design and scheduling for the Nunavut government, as proposed by the Nunavut Implementation Commission in the Footprints 2 Report. Further to this, the three parties have agreed to co-operatively cost the model being proposed by NIC.

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I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, that while all three parties, the federal government, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the territorial government through the Nunavut Caucus agreed on some points, many issues remain outstanding, including the transfer of current staff to the new Nunavut government. The Government of the Northwest Territories maintains that current GNWT employees in the western Arctic be transferred to the Nunavut government. Leaders from the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated agree, but they want the transfer to be based on individual employee's evaluations. This is one of the areas that needs further work and will probably be one issue that the interim commissioner, once appointed, will have a key role in addressing.

Mr. Speaker, this meeting was critical. While we did not reach consensus on all issues, I feel that we have taken some positive steps to work forward on the road to Nunavut. Many challenges still lie ahead. There are many substantial issues, including finances, infrastructure development and employment, that need our attention. I encourage all parties to deal responsively when considering these matters. Mr. Speaker, with little more than two years ahead until division, we have to move decisively and efficiently if we are to reach our goal. It is going to take the co-operation of everyone involved in the process.

Finally, I would like to once again, on behalf of all Members of Nunavut Caucus, to thank the mayor, Mr. Wilcox, the people of Cambridge Bay, and all the leaders and staff who have participated in the meetings. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement On Drug and Alcohol Program Reductions

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement today is on the issue of drug and alcohol reductions. Everyone has to make decisions. These decisions, in this day and time, are difficult. I think that when we make these decisions, we look at the pros and cons of any of the decisions we have to take part in. What are the options? And, after looking at all possible angles, decide where we are heading with these decisions. I hope that this approach is taken by the Minister of Health and Social Services when it comes to the area of drug and alcohol reform. I was told that when they had met with the treatment directors, they were using those meetings and the experiences of the past as to what worked and what did not work in making these decisions. I knew the Minister was looking at shutting down an alcohol and drug facility and assumed that he had carefully looked at all the pros and cons and weighed those out. Since the announcement of the Delta House closure, many questions have been raised, such as basing decisions on an average number of treatment beds in comparison to other jurisdictions, especially when the NWT alcohol and drug abuse is far beyond southern levels. Also, with all the higher problems we have, there is a greater need for treatment. The project team stressed the importance of having treatment and support close to home. I question this when we are shutting down the only facility operating in the region of Inuvik. If regional beds are not being used, should you not address the referral process, which allows people to by-pass local facilities, before shutting things down?

Mr. Speaker, these are questions that I feel need to be addressed. The example you used for closing Delta House was the financial aspect of running these facilities. I think there are things that have to be looked at in this. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Inuvik is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Roland, you have unanimous consent.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I believe this is the first time I have asked for that. Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the cost of the facility to operate and maintain was used as part of the reasons for closing the Delta House facility. I believe the cost of transportation to send these people to other places and the cost to maintain this unit, versus newer, larger ones elsewhere, when the total amount being funded to this facility was \$650,000. That ran the whole operation, employees, people coming to the facility, rental of the unit itself. I would like to know if this was taken into consideration. People in Inuvik are saying that the reason they shut Delta House was a cost issue, that was what they were being told. When they questioned it, they did not seem to have the hard numbers to justify the costs. The people in Inuvik already questioned what these were and there were no numbers to back it up. I am also concerned how the decision was made and the logic that was used. I hope the Minister has answers when we begin the budget for Health and Social Services today. I also hope he will work with the community of Inuvik to find options for the alcohol and drug centre to support the structure already in place. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Members' statements. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Member's Statement On Seal Hunting Public Image

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many of my honourable colleagues have talked about the damage caused by TV programs about seal hunting. These community programs show seal hunters as violent people. These programs hurt the reputation of the Inuit people. We have always hunted, but do so with great respect for the animals we share the land and water with. We are not violent people. We hunt to support ourselves and our families.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Evaloarjuk. Members' statements. Mr. Ootes.

Member's Statement On Congratulations to Tara Hamer

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to pass on congratulations to Tara Hamer of Yellowknife who, over the past few weeks, was a member of the winning team in the Canadian Junior Ladies' Curling Championships. She will be off to Japan soon representing Team Canada in the World Championships. Tara established a Canadian record for most appearances at the Canadian Junior Ladies' Championships, and she is the first lady to represent two entities, namely the Northwest Territories and Nova Scotia. We have never had a northerner win a Canadian curling championship before, Mr. Speaker. Tara was born and raised in Yellowknife. She is the daughter of Ter and Julaine Hamer. She graduated from St. Pat's High School here in Yellowknife, and is now a student at Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax. Obviously, she is an awesome curler, and my congratulations go out to her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Members' statements. Mr. Enuaraq.

Member's Statement On Clean-up of PCB Sites

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning colleagues. I want to talk about diseases that are acquired from PCB. PCB has been a major concern in some of the communities in my riding, particularly in Clyde River and Broughton Island. There is a place called Cape Christian and some scientists have found some PCBs in this area, in as many as 40 barrels. There was some work done on cleaning up PCB sites. Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that, as I was visiting Broughton Island, I have had the opportunity to go to a DEW Line site and see this for myself. There are some older buildings on this site and these older, abandoned units have not been cleaned up. There has not been any cleaning up on these sites. During question period, I will be asking the Minister

responsible for the environment with regard to the clean-up site on the DEW Line. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Foster Parent Training Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week there was a lot of talk about heart in the House. Today I would like to speak about a group of people who open their hearts every day, that being foster parents. Mr. Speaker, in a perfect world, every child would grow up in the loving and caring arms of their parents. However, sometimes that just is not possible. Across the north, foster parents fill this important role for many of our children. They open their homes to children whenever they are needed. As of December, 1996, about 280 children were being cared for in 140 foster homes. As a government, we try to support the efforts of foster parents. I believe that we could, and should, be doing more. Foster parents are provided with a modest allowance to cover the cost of caring for each child. This allowance ranges from \$24 per day, depending on the community's cost of living, and the special needs of the child. Fostering is not easy and foster parents need support. Social workers have the responsibility of providing support to foster parents. Some regions also have designated workers to provide general support.

Mr. Speaker, it takes a special person to open their heart and home to a young person who needs them, maybe for a week, for a day, for a year. I would like to say thank you to all the foster parents across the Northwest Territories for all they do for our children and for this government. Later, I will be questioning the Minister of Health and Social Services with regard to the training provided to our foster parents.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Members' statements. Mr. Henry.

Member's Statement On Protected Area Strategy

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have heard about the Protected Area Strategy over the past few months, and the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development spoke as recently as today in the House about it. He also talked about the upcoming conference to be held in Inuvik next March. Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but remain concerned on what impact the strategy will have in many areas. Specifically, the negative impact of this process on the money markets which are the greatest source of mineral exploration and development funds. Now, more than ever, we need a welcoming, investment environment which encourages job production and the development of these resources. We would be sadly mistaken if we relied on tourism only as a means of producing growth in our economy. We must look to the mining industry as a significant producer of jobs in our economy.

Mr. Speaker, common sense also forces me to wonder what impact this Protected Areas Strategy will have on land claim agreements. Will the beneficiaries of settled land claim areas have a say in designating protected areas in their claim area? What about other areas that have been staked, drilled, and investment dollars spent on? The Protected Areas Strategy makes reference to identifying protected sites, which will effect future generation and interested resource opportunities that may come our way. Later today, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Honourable Mr. Kakfwi questions on the strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Members' statements. Mr. Picco.

Member's Statement On Nunavut Youth Conference

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend while the Nunavut leaders met in Cambridge Bay, the next generation of Nunavut leaders, the youth, met in Iqaluit. Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that a jurisdiction, a country, a territory, or a province, is judged by its present and future leadership. Mr. Speaker, Nunavut is blessed with the work and quality of leadership shown by people like Raurri Alsworth and Jimmy Onalik. I invite this House, with the people of the Northwest Territories, to check out a program called the n-files, prepared by the various youth counsels on the present and future view

of Nunavut from their perspective. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate our youth for the direction, and as Mr. Onalik demonstrated so ably in Cambridge Bay, wisdom beyond their years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Member's statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Question 178-13(4): NWT Diamonds Project Environmental Agreement

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been some time since I had to do this. This in regard to a question asked by Mr. Henry on January 30, 1997. It is with regards to the NWT Diamonds Mine Project on the environmental agreement. Under this environmental agreement, BHP is responsible for providing adequate funding to the environmental monitoring agency. The monitoring agency will be formally established on April 6, 1997. During the first two years of operation, BHP will contribute \$350,000 per year to the monitoring agency. The federal government has agreed to provide \$100,000 to the monitoring agency during the first year of operation and thereafter has no further obligation to provide funding. The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development has agreed to provide \$100,000 to the monitoring agency during its second year of operation, and thereafter has no further obligation to provide funding. Therefore, for the first two years of operation, the monitoring agency will have an annual budget of \$450,000 per year. For the third and subsequent years of operation, the environmental monitoring agency will prepare an operating budget for BHP's approval. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Evaloarjuk.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 335-13(4): Seal Hunting Public Image

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Recent TV programs about seal hunting in southern Canada have hurt all hunters of seals, particularly the Inuit in our communities. The pelts from the seals are a means of income for people in Nunavut. What is the government doing to let people know at the international level how important seal hunting is to the Inuit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Evaloarjuk. The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 335-13(4): Seal Hunting Public Image

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, on an overall basis to protect and promote the fur industry and the trapping and harvesting of furs, this government initiated a few years ago a minimum price program that allows us to guarantee minimum prices for certain species that our people have traditionally harvested. We are also looking at trying to establish Asian markets, an alternative market for some of our furs, particularly seal, as well as the traditional pelts that we have harvested. Instead of focusing solely on European markets to buy these furs, we are now at this time looking at ways to establish a market in Asia as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Evaloarjuk.

Supplementary To Question 335-13(4): Seal Hunting Public Image

MR. EVALOARJUK:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a need to educate people in our area and in other parts of Canada as well. What steps are the government taking to inform other Canadians about our way of life? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 335-13(4): Seal Hunting Public Image

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, it is not always possible to take out centre page advertisements in the Globe and Mail the way that the animal rights activists are able to do. They have budgets that are in the millions. It is sometimes difficult to match them on a specific initiative. However, we know that the Government of Canada, the Ministers, Minister Sheila Copps, Sergio Marchi, Anne McCullum, as well as the Prime Minister are very well briefed on this file. They have taken every opportunity they can to support the trappers and the harvesters within this country. We have done extensive work in Europe to educate Europeans about the lifestyle of our people. We have funded groups to travel over there to do just that. We also have tentative plans to continue lobbying individual countries in the European community to continue to promote the importance of wildlife harvesting to those countries, so they do not move to ban the importance of wild furs to their countries, as they now threaten to do. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 336-13(4): Broughton Island DEW Line Site

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MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my Member's statement, I spoke about PCBs, and when I visited one of my communities we visited one of the buildings. My question is directed to Stephen Kakfwi. I would like to find out what is being done with the old buildings in Broughton Island in the DEW Line site? Thank you. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Resources, Wildlife, and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 336-13(4): Broughton Island DEW Line Site

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, the DEW Line sites and the assets and buildings that sit on these sites, are currently the

property of the federal government. The Department of Public Works is looking at ways to dispose of these assets. Many of the buildings on the DEW Line sites contain paint with a high level of PCBs. The federal Department of Public Works is looking for buyers for these assets. They are also looking for agreement with aboriginal groups on finding a mutually acceptable way of disposing of these assets that contain the paint. How do you take these buildings and equipment apart, and dispose of them in a landfill site without causing an environmental concern? That is the situation today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Enuaraq.

Supplementary To Question 336-13(4): Broughton Island DEW Line Site

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you also to the Honourable Minister, Mr. Kakfwi. In Broughton Island, the DEW Line site, I have a concern about the building. I have a concern about whether it is spreading around the area. Can the Minister get his officials to review or look at how far the damage has gone? Thank you. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 336-13(4): Broughton Island DEW Line Site

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year there was an agreement amongst Ministers to agree to a complete ban on land filling waste with materials that have a concentration of PCBs in excess of 50 parts per million. We had originally suggested that more thought be given to this before implementation, however, it was implemented. Now, the Department of National Defence is asking for an exemption, so they can take these buildings and put them into landfill sites since we know that most of these have concentrations as high as 10,000 parts per million. There is no scientific evidence that shows that there is any leaking of these toxins into the environment when you leave them mostly intact.

There is a suggestion that it can be done in an environmentally acceptable way. The Department of

National Defence is seeking an exemption from the Minister of Environment at the federal level. They are engaging in discussions with aboriginal organizations to seek potential landfill sites. They are looking for people with a degree to help them dispose of these materials and landfill sites. They are prepared to accept liability for the possible future contamination as a result of this undertaking and would agree to do the monitoring. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Picco.

Question 337-13(4): Re-Structuring the Canada Pension Plan

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal Finance Minister, Paul Martin, recently announced the restructuring of the Canada Pension Plan, or the CPP. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Finance from the Northwest Territories Government update this House on what is involved in this restructuring and how it affects us here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 337-13(4): Re-Structuring the Canada Pension Plan

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have the fine details with me, with respect to the changes under the CPP, but I can give my colleague a general comment on the discussions that took place over the last eight to ten months. There was an overall effort on the part of the Finance Minister to make sure that the CPP is funded appropriately, so we can continue with pensions for generations to come. I think it would be fair to say that, what we call the baby boomers, have put a tremendous strain on the Canada Pension Plan. There were a number of suggestions brought forward by the federal Minister as to how we could determine some fiscal stability to this long term plan. Suggestions such as: moving up the contributions, increasing the years of eligibility, reducing the company pensions that we have, and a variety of other measures that I do not have at my finger tips at this time. It is my understanding that the consensus has been reached by a number of provincial

jurisdictions, and as my colleague pointed out, the federal Minister of Finance made an announcement on Thursday that he was going to proceed with those changes. I apologize, I am not able to provide as detailed a response as my colleague would like. I can provide him with a full briefing on that issue later on next week. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 337-13(4): Re-Structuring the Canada Pension Plan

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the Minister does not have the full details. I do have a supplementary question though. I do understand that a couple of provinces have actually opted out of buying into the new restructure of the CPP. Has the Northwest Territories bought in? If so, what is the impact then for us on buying into the program?

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MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 337-13(4): Re-Structuring the Canada Pension Plan

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, I thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have supported the federal Finance Minister in the changes that he recommended that were necessary to sustain the Canadian Pension Plan for now and for generations to come. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 337-13(4): Re-Structuring the Canada Pension Plan

MR. PICCO:

My final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit next week to providing a briefing to this House and people of the Northwest Territories in this forum so that we can be updated on this situation. There are some Members in this House who are reaching

pensionable age, who would be very interested in knowing what is going to happen with the CPP over the next 10 to 12 years, the honourable Minister included. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 337-13(4): Re-Structuring the Canada Pension Plan

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am assuming Mr. Picco is talking about himself. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I do have a full briefing on this and I inadvertently left it in my office. I will provide the undercovering letter to all Members so they understand the ramifications and the changes that will be put into place to sustain the Canada Pension Plan for generations to come, including Mr. Picco's generation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions, Mr. Roland.

Question 338-13(4): Improvements to After Care Services

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will directed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, in the area of drug and alcohol. Mr. Speaker, a couple of years ago, a Special Committee on Health and Social Services provided some clear direction to start dealing with health and social issues. In that report, they stated alcohol and drug abuse was identified by front line workers as being the largest concern we face. The report raised concern over lack of certain services. One of the services was inadequate after care. Can the Minister indicate what has been done since early 1995 to improve after care services?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 338-13(4): Improvements to After Care Services

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would say that there would be a limited amount of work that had been done since that report came out. That is one of the reasons that we have undergone a major reform of the alcohol and drug treatment programs, and funding throughout the Northwest Territories that was initiated late last year and is coming to a conclusion early this year. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Roland, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 338-13(4): Improvements to After Care Services

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on that. In the report, it also stresses the need for more detox services to ensure people are ready for treatment. Can the Minister indicate what his department is doing to address the suggestion that there is a need for more detox services to support the efforts of the treatment centres?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 338-13(4): Improvements to After Care Services

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the area of detox services it is an issue. There is not the accessibility throughout the Northwest Territories on a consistent basis. I think it is one of the areas that require some more work on trying to level off or equalize some of the accessibility factors for detox services, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

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Supplementary To Question 338-13(4): Improvements to After Care Services

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has indicated that Delta House needed to be shut down because we have too many treatment beds; however, there is a clear indication that more detox spaces are needed to make effective use of treatment time. Would the Minister be willing to consider the use of Delta House as a detox facility, in cooperation with other treatment centres? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 338-13(4):
Improvements to After Care Services

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be hesitant to commit to that at this time, because of the fact that, similar to alcohol and drug treatment dollars, the detox dollars for the Northwest Territories is a flat amount. If we were to offer those services outside of the current programs that we fund for detox, it would create a ripple effect throughout the system. Again, it would have to be taken in the overall context of the alcohol and drug reform throughout the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 338-13(4):
Improvements to After Care Services

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have heard a number of times that we are waiting for the conclusion of this alcohol reform paper. When will we see that? Will it be in the near future, so that everybody in the territories, in the facilities, the community alcohol drug workers will know where we are heading? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 338-13(4):
Improvements to After Care Services

MR. NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe a lot of organizations, communities and treatment centres have had an opportunity to see the discussion paper that is out there. The thrust of some of the major initiatives is to put the dollars for alcohol and drug treatment to the communities, whether it is through a regional board structure, or directly to the communities to allow them that flexibility to make the decisions in respect to alcohol and drug programming. I think it would be safe to say, Mr. Speaker, that for all intents and purposes, we are almost there as far as a conclusion. I am looking forward to some of the discussions with committee of the whole on this issue, so that I can get a feel of the acceptability, or the issues that would surround it not being concluded. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 339-13(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Education, Culture and Employment, in regards to the seniors' fuel subsidy. I raised the issue on Friday and the Minister adroitly and tenaciously stick-handled around the issue with a level of skill that could have put him in the NHL. I would just like to ask if, over the weekend, he has had a chance to ponder on this particular issue, and reconsider whether he would be prepared to say, very simply, that the fuel subsidy program will be included for next year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 339-13(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, looking at the Hansard for Friday, it appears to me that I have answered this question. I have said that I will ensure that the program will be available to seniors in the next year, and that we will do everything we can, once we have our budget approved, to find out where the funds will come from. I am not certain that we will be able to follow the direction provided by the motion in this House to get the funds from rents, but I do believe that once our budget is approved, we will

have the ability to find some area from which to reallocate funds from within, to ensure that there is a program this fall for seniors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 339-13(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Minister was an ordinary MLA, I recollect him coming to the communities on a Special Committee for Social Programs, where he was characterized with a straight shooting, John Wayne kind of manner. It took a bit of work, but can I ask the Minister to confirm, as I sift through his comments today, that ensure means yes?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 339-13(4): Seniors' Fuel Subsidy

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I do not happen to have a dictionary in my holster at the moment. If my recollection is right, ensure, does mean to make sure, which is very close to saying yes, if not exactly the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 340-13(4): Detail on Plan 2000

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation. In the Minister's statement this morning, he indicated that the proposed Plan 2000 will provide for approximately 2000 families to be accommodated into adequate housing. Mr. Speaker, that is probably the best news that we have heard in this House all year. I realize that the Minister indicate that there will be a more technical and detailed briefing forth coming. I believe this type of good news is worth repeating. My question to the Minister is: Can the Minister be more

precise, and bottom line just how this will be accomplished? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Arlooktoo.

Return To Question 340-13(4): Detail on Plan 2000

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, the initiative that I announced this morning is doubling of the number of houses that we build and fix up each year. One of the ways we plan to do it is to convert the mortgages that are held by clients now through the Housing Corporation system and get back financing. In other words, instead of the Housing Corporation acting as a bank and lending out money, we will facilitate it, and act as a backup to certain clients. We are expanding the Downpayment Assistance Program to encompass more people. We are also planning to install water and sewer systems to at least 240 units during this time, to replace on the old northern rental units.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 340-13(4): Detail on Plan 2000

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MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one final question. When does the Minister anticipate the target date for this proposal to be commenced?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Arlooktoo.

Further Return To Question 340-13(4): Detail on Plan 2000

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, as we have received the green light from Cabinet to go ahead with this, we will be preceding immediately to implement the plans. Due to the shipping season, I think it would be too optimistic to say that the new houses would be in this year's sealift. It would have to be in the next one. In the western Arctic, with the road system, the extra

houses, extra materials needed to start this program will be done later this year.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 341-13(4): NWT Protected Area Strategy

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. The Minister presented a document in the House today, and talked about the strategy. I would like to congratulate the Minister. I think that he talked about many positive initiatives in this document, and about this strategy. I believe it is extremely timely, as we have a resource development industry that is extremely nervous. I think it is fair to say that the concern from that constituency, is that this project will be hijacked by environmental groups and so forth. I would suggest that the Minister's comments this morning have gone a long way to alleviate those concerns.

My question to the Minister is; I have read other documents from jurisdictions on how they have developed their protected areas, and I understand that there has been financial compensation given to individuals and businesses who can prove a loss of revenue due to the protected areas being designated. Could the Minister inform the House how this strategy that he will develop will determine compensation, if any, to those affected? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 341-13(4): NWT Protected Area Strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for all stakeholders, including the mining companies, to remember that it is the federal government that announced a requirement to develop a Protected Areas Strategy by 1998. It was the mining industry as well that called for a Protected Areas Strategy when they signed the Whitehorse Mining Initiative Accord. The aboriginal organizations all called for some sort of a protected area strategy in their submissions to the BHP hearings. This government has consistently said that we also

support the need to come up with a Protected Areas Strategy. What is important for people to remember is that it is the federal government that has the jurisdiction over lands and inland waters in the Northwest Territories at this time. It will be the federal government that will be concerning itself with the liability that would arise, if third party interests are unduly compromised as a result of a strategy. It should be very clear that the Protected Areas Strategy conference is being done in partnership with the federal government. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that every effort will be made to recognize existing third party interests, which the mining companies have a great concern about. If third party interests are not respected and are being compromised, then the question of liability will come up. It will be the federal government that will be answering those questions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 341-13(4): NWT Protected Area Strategy

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to hear that the federal government will have to take on any financial obligations or fall out from areas that may potentially be removed from development. I think that we have all heard the horror stories of the British Columbia government. What they had to pay out in the Windy Craggy situation to Royal Oak. I do not believe that this government could afford to even consider that. Mr. Speaker, I talked about the positiveness of the Minister's statement. That is public record. The Minister did make additional information available to MLAs on protected strategies a couple of weeks ago. I believe there is excellent information there. My question to the Minister, will he make this information available to the public? I believe it would put additional information out there, and provide much better assurances to all parties. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 341-13(4): NWT Protected Area Strategy

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. We have provided the updated information packages to the participants and the stakeholders who have been invited to take part in the conference in Inuvik. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 342-13(4): Impact of Communications Privatization

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services. It is regarding the privatization of voice communications responsibilities and how this has affected the internal GNWT switchboard and the green book, as it is called, which was the government's telephone directory. I have received a message that these services are no longer available due to privatization. I was wondering if the Minister could give us an update on what is happening, particularly with the green book and GNWT switchboard?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Arlooktoo.

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Return To Question 342-13(4): Impact of Communications Privatization

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Speaker, I saw that same message that the Member is referring to, which was on the e-mail system for all to be seen. I do not have the details in front of me. I will take the question as notice and provide an answer to the House.

MR. SPEAKER:

The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 343-13(4): Foster Parent Training

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Following up on this government's many statements declaring that our youth and our children are our most valuable

resource, and the recognized importance of early intervention where children may be at risk, children requiring foster care are amongst the most vulnerable and defenceless in our society. The ability of foster parents to meet the needs of these children is dependent, in part, on the level of preparedness and knowledge of foster parents. What training opportunities are made available to existing and potential foster parents by this government? Mr. Speaker, it is a well known fact that many good homes are lost as foster parenting homes, out of frustration. I notice that recently the Yellowknife newspaper is advertising for more foster homes. I would like to know what the government's position is on training and preparing these homes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 343-13(4): Foster Parent Training

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the social workers responsible for child welfare work, on a limited basis, with the foster parents that are recruited. I know it is an issue that we are fully aware of. That is why one of the initiatives in the current budget, within the social envelope, frees up a lot of social worker time in communities. I am speaking of the community supervision initiative with the Department of Justice that will free up that supervision aspect that social workers are currently carrying out in many of our communities. The income support initiative, which will free up that aspect again of the duties of social workers, to allow them to spend more time on child welfare issues and support issues and working with the foster parents and with parents generally in the communities, to try to bring up that level of child support. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 343-13(4): Foster Parent Training

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of a more defined training framework, I am wondering if the Minister, or his department, is aware of the Alberta model, which I

understand provides training to foster homes. Then subsequently, when the training has been received, gives them some form of accreditation on a level of one to four, which would then identify them for appropriate placements in their home. I am wondering if the Minister is aware of that very structured training program in Alberta. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 343-13(4): Foster Parent Training

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the specifics that the honourable Member is referring to. I can speak on the matter in that the early childhood intervention consultant within our department has been doing some work with the Yellowknife Foster Family Association. In fact, I am pleased to report that they have organized for March 17th to 20th, an intensive training program for foster parents throughout the Northwest Territories that have children with FAS/FAE. That is one of the support mechanisms that is out there, along with any others that we would be working on, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 343-13(4): Foster Parent Training

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am questioning what kind of co-ordination there is for the resources in training amongst the various departments. I recently ran into a fellow in the Hay River airport, who advised me he had just been down there providing a workshop on abuse. I further checked with some of the foster parents in Hay River to find out if they had been invited to that presentation, and in fact they had not been. Is there someone in the department that actually co-ordinates the activities of someone as capable as this individual was, to make sure that everyone who deals with children that may be affected by abuse would be able to access and take advantage of such workshops and training?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 343-13(4): Foster Parent Training

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would say that yes, we would try to work with our partners in trying to have it as co-ordinated as possible. In the specific example that the honourable Member has mentioned, I am not sure about the details of that. It may have been for staff, and it might not have been. If it was, it was not meant to be specifically geared towards staff, and certainly it should have been accessible to all interested members of the community, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 343-13(4): Foster Parent Training

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MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister alluded to the extra dollars that were identified in the budget address under early intervention. Am I to understand that some of those dollars are going to be accessed, or could be accessed for additional foster parent training? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 343-13(4): Foster Parent Training

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot really get into the details of that yet, because it is a joint initiative with Education, Culture and Employment. The Honourable Charles Dent has a lead on that. I know the framework is still being developed, and has not been finalized yet, although we are getting closer to the April 1 implementation date. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. We have 19 minutes and 34 seconds left in question period. The next Member will be Mr. Ootes. We will recess to 1:30 p.m.

-- Recess

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come to order. Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 344-13(4): Mining Regulatory Review

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Speaker, we need to encourage the mining and exploration industry. I was very pleased with the statement that the government agrees with and is committed to, collaborate with aboriginal organizations and the federal government, to pursue continued industry access to lands. Access to lands is a prime need for exploration and mining companies. I was also glad they see the need for a regulatory review identified in the statement this morning. The mining community needs that. Mining companies need harmonization of regulations and an efficient, single system. They also need land claims settled quickly and fairly, so mining groups can approach land claim groups. They need a data base for geoscience information, access to such a library infrastructure to house human resources and a trained workforce.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is in several areas here, one being on the regulatory reform. I wonder if the Minister could tell us when the department will start working on regulatory reform. Secondly, how long this may take so that the mining industry can have some indication of what program is being instituted? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 344-13(4): Mining Regulatory Review

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, I cannot tell the Member at this time, exactly what the timeframes for the review are, specifically the review of those regulations that affect

the mining industry. I will take the question as notice and prepare a more thorough response to the question.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The question is taken as notice. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 345-13(4): Incremental Costs for Division

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance who is looking after division-related issues. Could the Minister indicate, as a result of his meeting in Cambridge Bay this past weekend and time with Mr. Irwin, whether there was any discussion on finances, in regards to the incremental costs? I do not want to interrupt the conversation between you and the Deputy Premier, but if the Minister could indicate what kind of discussions he had with Mr. Martin in regards to costs related to division, specifically incremental costs? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 345-13(4): Incremental Costs for Division

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An electrifying question. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately in terms of the public discussion, I think it would be fair to say that I felt a little disappointed that there was not more discussion on the fiscal framework, as to the new Nunavut government. However, in terms of my discussions with Mr. Irwin, I think there is clearly a recognition on the part of the federal government that we have to move as quickly as we can to start the discussions. The one thing there was agreement on at the meeting, which I was pleased with, was that NTI, NIC and ourselves concurred that we would, in partnership, move quickly to cost the NIC model, which is showing a decentralized model of government. We would hopefully, when we work out the details, sign off on the costs, in terms of what we think it is going to cost. Then we would move quickly to the negotiating table with the federal government. I think it would be fair to say that there was not as much debate or discussion on the fiscal side of things than I would have liked to have seen. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 345-13(4): Incremental Costs for Division

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate whether Mr. Irwin gave any indication at all, that would dissuade people from thinking that it is a blank cheque, when it comes to the costs of running the two new territories, and that incremental costs are going to be there for the taking and, in fact, that probably will not be the case? There is going to be a limited, fixed pot of money. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 345-13(4): Incremental Costs for Division

HON. JOHN TODD:

I hate to disappoint my colleague, because I was equally disappointed, I guess. It really did not get to that level of debate. The agenda was preoccupied with

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other matters, and I think that it was unfortunate. I think there was a general consensus, though, that the fiscal requirements of Nunavut are extremely important, by all parties. At the risk of repeating myself, I was encouraged with the fact that all parties had prepared to cooperate in quickly funding the NIC model, with some modifications that NTI has recommended, so that we have got a number that is clear. We will be able to identify the incremental costs within that number, and we will then be able to move to the federal government and see if, in fact, the political and fiscal will is there to finance the model that does have the support of all three parties. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 345-13(4): Incremental Costs for Division

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Out of this particular discussion, which is gratifying to hear was one of cooperation and good fellowship, were there any timeframes put to that plan to move along, hand in hand, down the road to division, putting figures to the various types of models put forward so that we will have an idea, at some point in the near future, what kind of money we are looking at? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 345-13(4): Incremental Costs for Division

HON. JOHN TODD:

As we speak, Mr. Speaker, my staff are drafting letters inviting the NTI, as our partner, and the NIC, as our consultant advisors, suggesting that they designate officials to work with our officials, the FMBS and the Division Secretariat, to move as quickly as we can to determine what the costs are. If we get a good spurt of cooperation, I was advised by Mr. Voytilla just moments ago, that we feel we could probably put the costs attached to this model by April. We will move from there to see if the federal government and others are prepared to cooperate, and find the appropriate fiscal resources to pay for it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 345-13(4): Incremental Costs for Division

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister and his staff are embarking upon this most productive exercise, will they, as well, be looking at a similar exercise in the west? I would suggest it would be easier to establish the benchmark costs that would help clearly determine, for the people of Nunavut, what are reasonable expectations in terms of the dollars required. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 345-13(4): Incremental Costs for Division

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, my colleague must have been involved in the drafting of the call letter I sent out to the Ministers and to the deputy ministers. That is the approach we want to take. We have a model; we will use the status quo for the time being, because that is what we have in place in the west. You cannot cost the east without costing the west. You cannot go east unless you go west. The intent is for us to cost both of these as we move forward. We have consensus now on an acceptance of the NIC model, subject to our position, of course, and subject to the federal government providing adequate resources and, more importantly, adequate incremental resources to move forward on this creative decentralized model that we all support. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 346-13(4): Utilidor System in Inuvik

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister responsible for Finance, FMB. Mr. Speaker, I raised in the House, during this session, questions on the high/temp system, or the hot water temperature system in Inuvik in the utilidor, which is owned by this government. Mr. Speaker, I have done some work in this area, and I have concerns with the proposed rate increase there. A rate increase of approximately 60 percent is being proposed, due to the number of customers that are coming off the system. The rate increase will affect not only private people and businesses, but government as well. In this day of user say/user pay, I am concerned some facilities will have a difficult time in making their payments. Seventy percent of the people on the system are GNWT facilities. There have been a number of studies done by this government. I would like to know if the Minister of Finance is aware of any of the studies and work that has been done on this system? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Finance. Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 346-13(4): Utilidor System in Inuvik

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My honourable colleague, always vigilant with his constituency in Inuvik. Of course, this is a very reasonable question. Mr. Speaker, I did receive a letter from my colleague on the issue. What we are doing is looking at options that may be able to assist the community of Inuvik with this difficult, fiscal problem. There is less utilization of that utilidor and, of course, the associated power plus system. I do not have an answer today in terms of where we are going to go on this. I want to assure my colleague that we are looking at alternatives, and are keenly interested in ensuring that affordability of housing, and the ability for people to pay the associated costs of the operation of the houses et cetera, is of fundamental importance to us. At the same, trying to find alternatives for the householders. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at alternatives. I do not have the answer today, but we will get there soon. We will work it in conjunction with my honourable colleague who has raised this important issue with me. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

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Supplementary To Question 346-13(4): Utilidor System in Inuvik

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that options will be looked at and that it will begin shortly. I would just like to know from the Minister, once this work begins, will it include the community of Inuvik, the leaders of Inuvik, to be tied into this process? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 346-13(4): Utilidor System in Inuvik

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with community empowerment and the philosophical approach of this government of joining our partners in seeking solutions to difficult problems, I am sure that once we

have some framework for what we think some of the solutions are, we will join with our partners in Inuvik in trying to reach a satisfactory conclusion to this very difficult situation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 347-13(4): Restructuring of Library Services

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment. Mr. Speaker, over the past several weeks, there have been petitions filed in this House and statements made, advertisements in newspapers, concerning the restructuring of library services. Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister, is there a plan underway by this government, to restructure libraries for the '97/98 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 347-13(4): Restructuring of Library Services

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the only restructuring that is proposed in the library system for '97/98 is the elimination of the two regional librarian positions, one in Iqaluit, and the other in Rankin. There is no proposal for any change to the contributions to community libraries from what they have received in '96/97. Those are proposed to be kept exactly the same in the next fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 347-13(4): Restructuring of Library Services

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it seems that the controversy, or the misinformation that is going around, concerns the contributions that the Minister just mentioned. My question to the Minister then is,

before these contributions may be changed, propose to be changed, will the Minister be doing a consultation with the library groups, the NWT Library Association and the communities that have libraries? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 347-13(4): Restructuring of Library Services

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said last week, Mr. Speaker, we need to take a look at redressing the inequity that is found in our system right now. Some communities get money for libraries, others get none. It is felt that it is important we provide some equity across the Northwest Territories, and we must look for some way to do that. As I said last week, before instituting any changes, we will commit to consulting with Members of this House, interested people, including hamlets and library operators, and the standing committees. We will undertake a fairly broad, public consultation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 347-13(4): Restructuring of Library Services

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on this issue again, one of the problems seems to be the misinformation that occurred because of a document that was being sent around. Can the Minister confirm that this document is just a consultative first kick-at-the-can, as it were, that it in no way reflects the policy or strategies of this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 347-13(4): Restructuring of Library Services

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have said previously in this House, the document which has led to much of the concern among the public, does not represent the position of this government, nor the plans of this government. It was an initial document to be sent around to staff, asking for their suggestions for changes to a discussion document, that could then go out for public discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 348-13(4): Preventing Infant Mortality

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Health, Mr. Ng. Today, the Minister responded to a question I had raised in the House regarding infant mortality rates in the north. I was appalled to find out that second hand smoke was determined as the most significant factor in infant mortality in the north. My question to the Minister is, what measures are being taken by the Department of Health to deal with this preventative factor? Mr. Speaker, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

Return To Question 348-13(4): Preventing Infant Mortality

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HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, measures are taken in continuing to develop preventative programs to try to address the issues. Particularly some of the anti-smoking campaigns that have been taking place, in respect to that issue. In respect to the overall improvement of health for live births, there are some of the early intervention initiatives that we continue to be working on. That will be where, hopefully, a lot of the initiative will be undertaken, in trying to develop those programs to allow the preventative end aspect of things to take place, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Supplementary to Question 348-13(4): Preventing Infant Mortality

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if we have laws in place prohibiting the sale of tobacco to persons under 18 years, is there any legislation that could be enacted that would prohibit minors from smoking in public places? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 349-13(4): Law Preventing Minors From Smoking in Public

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am aware there is federal legislation prohibiting sales of tobacco products to minors. I am not exactly sure about what legislative authorities are in place for actually dealing with minors smoking in public. I will check into that matter and advise the honourable Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Question period is over. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to go back to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

I have to get unanimous consent. Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to go back to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Natilikmiot is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Ningark, you have unanimous consent.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize my son up in the gallery, the one with the white t-shirt, and his friend from Lake Harbour, Tomasee Keeneinak.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, written questions. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like unanimous consent to go back to item 3, Members' statements.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 3. Do we have any nays? Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, you have unanimous consent. Members' statements.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Men's Junior Championship Curling Team

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Ootes spoke earlier about one of our young ladies, Ms. Hamer, who had been on our winning curling team in the junior national championships. I also wanted to indicate that a Yellowknife team won the bronze medal in the men's junior championships. That team is composed of Jamie Koe, Kevin Whitehead, Terry McDermid, Kevin Cymbalysty and the coach is Doug Bothamley.

---Applause

This team squared off against the junior men from Ontario in the semi-finals, and they were winning 6-5 in the 10th end. They forced Ontario to draw to the button. Otherwise, they would have went to the final. I would like to offer my congratulations to this fine team. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Members' statements. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Mr. Picco.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition, Petition No. 14-13(4), dealing with the matter of the proposed reductions to the Nunavut library services. Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 104 signatures from residents of Iqaluit, Fort Smith, Cape Dorset, Hall Beach, and, yes, Yellowknife. The petitioners request that all Members should work to preserve the public library service, which currently exists, and to cancel the lay off notices which have been issued. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 6-13(4) Standing Committee on Social Programs. Review of the 1997/98 Main Estimates

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MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present the Standing Committee on Social Programs review of the 1997/98 main estimates.

General Comments

Prior to the review of the 1997/98 business plans, the Minister of Finance warned all Members that the plans were living documents and would change over time. As a general statement, we found this to be true. In a number of cases, departments were unable to provide clarity on proposed changes. Studies have not been completed and plans are only in the development stage. The Committee understands that all government departments, including those in the social envelope, have been under tremendous pressure with decreased resources. We have tried to recognize this in reviewing the information provided.

Reviewing the Proposed Changes

However, the Committee still reviewed all proposed changes with a critical eye. Last year, we supported initiatives based on the general information given. Unfortunately, some of the changes were implemented in a different way than was presented during the review of the 1996/97 Main Estimates. We approved an overall package of changes last year. We looked for balance and fairness. Changes were approved based on other changes. When reductions and changes were not implemented, the package didn't make sense any more.

As a result of our past experience, we were more judicious in giving support to changes proposed by departments. We looked for key indicator:

- that the actual program changes would be well thought out;
- that changes would be based on the principles and goals the Committee Members talked about during the review; and
- that there would be appropriate consultation with affected groups.

We wanted adequate information before we were able to support specific initiatives. We looked for results rather than just focusing on spending. In most cases, the departments provided the information we needed to make informed decisions.

Social Envelope Subsidies

The issue of subsidies came up in every department. Until there is a clear understanding of the various subsidies, at least within the social envelope, how can the government determine the connections and potential overlap between the subsidies? Without this big picture, we are not comfortable continuing to make changes to subsidies without a sense of what other programs or subsidies might be affected, directly or indirectly.

The social envelope partners have established a working group to review and possibly revise the range of subsidies for seniors. There are currently 21 seniors subsidies spread over nine boards, agencies, and departments. This review is a good start. However, we believe the social envelope partners also need to review the comprehensive list of subsidies they provide. There are a number of areas of inconsistency and overlap which should be addressed. As a start, there should be a list compiled of all subsidies available through the social envelope.

Recommendation No. 1

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that a comprehensive list of subsidies available through the social envelope should be provided to the Committee by September 1st, 1997.

Review of Seniors' Subsidies

In October, after looking at the seniors' fuel subsidy, we asked the Ministers to develop a long-term plan which would address a number of concerns raised about subsidies for seniors. We think there is a need to look at the big picture. If the seniors' fuel subsidy were eliminated, how many of the 400 people who received the subsidy will move into social housing where they will cost this government far more in the long run? How many additional applications will be made for income support from seniors who just can't make it in the winter months?

The Minister indicated that there is a Social Envelope working group looking at the array of programs and subsidies available to seniors. This group may recommend that the fuel subsidy be eliminated and replaced with a comprehensive package of programs and subsidies for seniors. However, there is no indication of when this working group will report. In the future, when the Social Envelope has rationalized the array of programs and subsidies available to seniors, there may be new solutions. However, for now, the Committee will not support the elimination of the wood fuel subsidy.

The Minister of Health and Social Services has provided a summary of the twenty-one programs and subsidies currently available for seniors. These programs are delivered by nine different departments, boards, and agencies. The summary also highlights inconsistencies in the eligibility requirements, particularly in age and income, for the various programs. It is clear that there is a need to complete a comprehensive review and reform of programs and subsidies for seniors.

Recommendation No. 2

The Standing Committee recommends that a plan to integrate the various GNWT subsidies and programs for seniors should be provided to the Committee by September 1st, 1997;

And further that the seniors' programs and subsidies integration plan should:

- be developed in consultation with the NWT Seniors' Society
- address the idea of consolidating all programs for seniors under one authority
- contain an action plan for implementing the reform of seniors' subsidies and programs.

Preparing for Division

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In each of the department, there will be hundreds of tasks, both big and small, to prepare for division. After this budget process is complete, we expect Ministers and their departments will turn their attention to these tasks. We look forward to the departments' division plans coming to the Committee later this spring.

Standards

In each department, we looked at the standards for service. In the past, this government had the dollars to provide a cadillac service. It is time to review whether we can still afford this level of service, particularly in the social areas where a high birth rate and extreme levels of social problems are driving programs to the limit. As a government, we need to look at whether we put our money into top of the line facilities, or whether we are now ready to live with more modest surroundings but more direct services. We have to look at the standards for qualifying for a facility. When does a community qualify for a community learning centre? What population is needed for a long-term care facility? These are the kinds of questions we will be asking and we hope the departments will also consider.

Departments also need to be more flexible in looking at alternate uses for infrastructure. We were pleased in particular with the openness of Health and Social Services to considering alternate uses for facilities. Times have changed and we have to be more creative in how we look at facilities and what can be done with them. For example, a building may not look precisely like a community learning centre we are used to, but that does not mean it could not function as one.

Use Pay/User Say

In each of the business plans, there is additional responsibility as a result of user pay/user say initiatives. In most cases, the funding transferred was first reduced, so departments will have to be more

efficient than the departments with the original responsibility and economies of scale. As these initiatives take place, we are starting to hear about the difficulties and implementation details which were not thought through. We are very concerned that there has not been sufficient analysis before proceeding with this major initiative. The Social Envelope departments are already struggling to meet the demands for services. We will be monitoring the impact and potential additional costs they may have to carry as a result of user say/user pay. We hope this will not be another initiative where we have to pick up the pieces in the end.

Recommendation No. 3

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that each department in the social envelope provide an analysis of the financial and operational impact for each user say/user pay initiative by October, 1997.

Mr Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague for Yellowknife North to continue with the report.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Cooperation in the Envelope

For a year, we have been emphasizing the need for the Social Envelope partners to work together at all levels. The Ministers have provided assurances that this cooperation is growing. We encourage the Ministers and their management teams to continue to develop a partnership approach. Hopefully this will be reflected in regular meetings at the Minister and Deputy Minister levels and in increased cooperation among community level staff.

Financial Presentation

The Committee had concerns with the financial presentation. These concerns included:

- the lack of detail at the activity level for the Housing Corporation, and the Departments of Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment
- the restatement of prior years' expenditures
- the lack of prior year information for certain capital items.

The very broad accounting structure used by Health and Social Services, the Housing Corporation and Education, Culture and Employment in the Main Estimates makes it very difficult to comment in any useful way. It is hard to have meaningful discussion and hard to approve financial activities which are this broad. We do not believe this level of public financial presentation is sufficient for departments which are responsible for almost 50 percent of the total GNWT budget.

Committee Members understand the accounting principle behind restatement of prior years. However, the Main Estimates is a document that serves as a reference point for Members and the public. There is no easy way to track from year to year in the Main Estimates what has changed in terms of the size and scope of departmental authority. You cannot tell what activities or programs have been added, transferred or deleted. In a sense, financial history is rewritten.

The limitations on when prior years are shown for capital projects is also confusing to the reader of the Main Estimates. Members know, for example, that there were prior year expenditures for items such as Building and Learning and BCC renovations/repairs. However, these show as new items in the 1997/98 Main Estimates. This reporting practice does not allow tracking of at least year to year expenditures for ongoing items.

Population Issues

Last year, when the Committee looked at the forced growth numbers in the Social Envelope, Members made fleeting references to the population growth. This year, it is becoming even more clear that our population is growing beyond our ability to provide services. This will be the single most important factor affecting our ability to live within our resources and maintain the level of services currently available. There is a strong need to take some immediate positive action in raising public awareness of what effects rapid population growth will have in the future.

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With Health and Social Services taking the lead role, the Social Envelope needs to become proactive in education and information about what forced growth is doing to our services. We need to get this information to young people and to their parents and grandparents who welcome new family members. People want good education opportunities, they want housing, they want to be healthy, and they want jobs.

Children having children and a birth rate three times the national average will affect our ability to deliver these items. They will bring more stress to a system which is already pushed to the edge.

The high number of births to young mothers also indicates an acceptance of sexual activity among many of our youth. As the committee responsible for overseeing the Department of Health and Social Services, we are also concerned about the potential to spread disease, particularly AIDS, in our communities. A recent national study shows an increase in HIV in young people. The median age of those with HIV in Canada is now 23 years of age. This means almost half of the people now affected are only teenagers. An increase in HIV infection and AIDS in the NWT will bring a heavy cost in pain and suffering, in addition to the medical cost.

This booming population places heavy demands on all parts of the social network. The housing shortage in many communities is compounded. Health services are stretched, schools are filled to overflowing, and the demand for daycare spaces increases. Children who are still dealing with their own efforts to become adults need extra support to be competent parents. There is no new pool of funding to build the houses and schools we need. There is no funding to hire more social workers, health care workers, teachers and child care workers.

The Committee is concerned about the societal impacts of a dramatic birth rate. We are also concerned about the consequences of children having unprotected sex and the resulting potential for both sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancies. We believe that people should make informed choices and decisions, while recognizing the impact their decisions will have on themselves and their communities.

Recommendation No. 4

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that the Minister of Health and Social Services, in consultation with the other Social Envelope Ministers, prepares a list of current services available to address the booming population, both pre- and post-natal, as well as the locations of these services.

And further, that the Social Envelope partners develop a joint approach to deal with the fundamental issues causing forced growth in social programs.

Response to the Committee

Recommendation No. 5

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that, unless a specific date for response is given in this report, the government should provide a response to all recommendations in this report within 120 days.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the Report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs. Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the Report of the Standing Committee on Social Programs on the Review of the 1997-98 Main Estimates be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Your motion is in order. To the motion. Question is being called. All those in favour. All those opposed. Motion is carried. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4), and to have Committee Report 06-13(4) of the Standing Committee on Social Programs moved into committee of the whole for today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, the Member for Yellowknife North is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4). Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Erasmus, you have unanimous consent, and accordingly Committee Report 06-13(4) is moved into committee of the whole for today. Reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 13: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like table a copy of a letter I have received from the Mayor of Yellowknife, Tabled Document 51-13(4), addressed to the Honourable Charles Dent, regarding the national standards test for students in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. Bill 8, Committee Report 2-13(4), Committee Report 3-13(4) and Committee Report 4-13(4) with Mr. Ningark in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to call the committee to order. Item 19, we are considering a number of items here. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That we consider Bill 8, Committee Report 2-13(4), Committee Report 3-13(4), and Committee Report 4-13(4), concurrently and that we proceed with a review of the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I believe that the committee report is 06-13 (4). Agreed? Mr. Ootes, do you want to take a break now? No. We carry on? Mr. Minister, do you have an opening remark on behalf of your department, in this case the Department of Health and Social Services, Mr Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you regarding

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We are strengthening our ability to monitor the effect our programs have on health status to help us control our spending and to make well informed decisions. Our stake holders have told us that addictions, home care, facility based care, and medical travel are four main areas that need to be refocussed and redirected. During the upcoming fiscal year we will go forward with a draft strategic plan that will weave these complex areas together and provide a long term vision for sustainable Health and Social Services systems in each of the two territories. Looking

towards the future we will be reviewing the opportunities for sharing services considering different options.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ootes, point of order.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry to interrupt the Minister, but I would appreciate it if we could have copies of the Minister's remarks as he is making his speech. If we could have them from each Minister before they start their comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. There is a request from the committee that the Minister should supply the Minister's opening remarks. There was no point of order, I am informed. The Minister has indicated that he will distribute the copies of his statement after the conclusion of his opening remarks. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, copies have been provided to the staff. I do not know what the process of distribution is. It does not matter to me. I will continue. Should I continue on, or should I wait, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I believe the copies of your opening remarks are in the process of being distributed. Carry on, Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. There was no point of order. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we do not have these notes now, we are going to have to read it later on while other people are speaking and we are going to miss what everybody is saying. We can not do our job properly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. As the Minister indicated he has a copy. It is being distributed to Members, and I believe there was no point of order, no point of privilege. I think two honourable Members know the rules. If they do not, then I understand that. I think two honourable Members were trying to gain the floor in an appropriate manner, if they did know the rules. If they do not, there was no point of order, no point of privilege. I will allow the Minister to complete his opening remarks. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, looking towards the future, we will be reviewing the opportunities for sharing services, considering different options for out-of-territories arrangements, determining whether the needs of the systems in the east and in the west will require different ministries' structures and functions, and whether the ministries of boards in either territory will offer services to the other territory. In the short term, Mr. Chairman, we have already had to make some difficult decisions in planning our budget. We have had to close facilities and reduce funding for programs. However, with the help of our stakeholders, we have also been able to strengthen our support to some urgent areas of need and to continue our emphasis on ensuring a continuum of care based on home, community, and regional resources.

One of our major challenges in the NWT is support for people dealing with addictions, particularly young people who use alcohol, drugs, and inhalants. In 96/97, we outlined a funding plan for treatment centres that will give the centres much more flexibility in program design and delivery and allow communities an opportunity for more control over treatment for people with addiction problems.

Phase two of this funding plan will provide 50 percent core funding to treatment centres, the balance will be based on occupancy. One treatment centre, Delta House in Inuvik, will lose its core funding. Funding to Northern Addiction Services in Yellowknife has also been reduced. While NAS has the flexibility to determine where program reductions will be made, it is anticipated that the major reductions will be in the detox area.

The problem of youth addictions continues to be a major concern across the Northwest Territories. However, the federal government withdrew its pilot program funding for the Youth Inhalant Abuse Program. Because this is such a critical area of

concern, I have directed the department to support that program for 1997/98. In trying to reduce the problems resulting from addictions, the prevention and support programs provided by community projects are critical. To support this, the overall level of community project funding will continue,

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although the department will ensure a more equitable distribution of resources among communities.

Community control and participation is also important in caring for people who need help living independently. By strengthening our home care supports, people can stay in their home communities longer with less reliance on facility based care. The department can no longer maintain small hospitals whose beds are not effectively used. Consequently, the Fort Smith and Fort Simpson hospitals will be reprofiled. As well, the department will evaluate all eight to ten bed, long-term care facilities.

We have already concluded that 24 hour residential programs are unsustainable in three to five bed facilities and will be moving towards closing them. Consistent with our effort to provide a coordinated continuum of care and an integrated delivery system, work on the Inuvik and Iqaluit hospitals will only proceed when their respective roles within an integrated health system are clarified. Our objective in introducing these changes ensure the availability of care as close to home as possible, to strengthen home supports and, by reducing inefficiencies, ensure the long-term sustainability of the system.

The Community Action Fund was initiated in 1995 as a one year funding arrangement to provide resources for community groups to develop action plans for community wellness. This fund was extended for an additional year in 1996 to allow communities more time to progress with their planning activities. Many communities responded and have developed broad based plans for community action. However, it is now time to move from the more general planning activities to focus better on the areas where the most long term benefit can be realized. Consequently, the Community Action Fund has been eliminated from this year's budget.

A major new initiative designed to produce long term benefits by focusing on helping young children, the Early Intervention Initiative is being introduced in the coming fiscal year. Some of the activities funded under the Community Action Fund will qualify for

funding under this new initiative. My colleague in the social envelope, the Honourable Charles Dent, will be speaking to the Early Intervention Initiative in his budget. It is an area where, by re-directing funding, we know long-term benefits can be gained.

One other area of continuing concern is the cost of medical travel. While most boards have managed to reduce the rate of growth, costs continue to climb. The department will give some relief to boards for medical travel. We will address the current funding shortfall and anticipated force growth next year. Despite efforts that have already been taking to reduce the inappropriate use of travel funding it is still apparent that we must press further. To accomplish this, the department will withdraw a portion of their funding for non-medical escorts. Mr. Chairman, with regard to medical travel as well as all other expenditures, it is important for spending decisions to be made at the point where the money is spent.

In the past, the department has held medical travel and other monies, while regional and front line staff have decided how these funds would be spent. This division of responsibility and accountability does not work. To rectify this, a funding allocations system is being developed so the department can fund boards equitably. This funding allocation system will also pave the way to an appropriate sharing of resources between Nunavut and the western territory.

Introduction of a formula based approach to funding will increase the accountability of boards for their expenditures. For the boards to be fully accountable for their decisions, they must also take responsibility for deficits and must be allowed to retain surpluses.

In addition to having greater authority over their budgets, boards also need access to timely and relevant information. To improve this capability and to help the departments and boards make good decisions, the department is improving its monitoring and compliance systems.

This will have the result of ensuring that community, regional, and territorial information is available on which decisions can be based. Mr. Chairman, I have highlighted some of the actions the department has taken in the 97/98 budget by working together and by taking responsibilities for health as individuals and communities. I am confident we can ensure residents of the NWT continue to receive high quality health and social service programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I believe the Standing Committee on Health and Social Services is the committee that has reviewed this particular department. Mr. Enuaraq, do you have an opening remark on behalf of the standing committee? Mr. Ootes.

Point of Order

MR. OOTES:

On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to express a concern about the fact that we did not get this report until the Minister was into commenting upon it, but additionally no translation was provided. I would like to request that, in the future, all Ministers provide their reports ahead of time to us, along with translation. One of our Members was not able to follow this, I am sure that even through the translation service, it was moving fast. I do not know how the Member could follow this. I had a tough time following it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I believe that the Minister wishes to respond to that and I will allow the Members who wish to speak to a point of debate. In this case I have Mr. Deputy Premier.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, I understood that the documents were at the Clerk's table before Mr. Ng had started to speak. We will ensure that all departments, all Ministers, after Mr. Ng, will distribute the opening remarks at the same time as the Minister starts to speak on the matter.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, passing out of the documents, we just want to point to the point of order by Mr. Ootes, which I think is a good one. It was

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not translated and I think every Member here has the opportunity to be treated equally. If Mr. Arlooktoo

gave a statement, for example, all in Inuktitut and passed it out in Inuktitut, I am sure all the Members would have raised a point right away and said that was not fair to them. We should not be infringing on anyone's rights just based on language. I would appreciate that, if there are any statements coming out that, they are translated. Maybe it was just an oversight, but it is not acceptable. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Deputy Premier, Mr. Arlooktoo.

HON. GOO ARLOOKTOO:

Mr. Chairman, just to clarify that the Department of Executive gives the statements to the Legislative Assembly and then it is the Legislative Assembly's responsibility to get them translated, I believe, or else we use the same translation services. To that end, on behalf of the Legislature, I would like to apologize to Mr. Evaloarjuk if he was inconvenienced. I would point out to the non-Inuktitut-speaking Members too that, because of the sentence structure, et cetera, it is impossible for anyone to follow through reading Inuktitut, while someone is speaking in English. It just does not work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Point of privilege. Mr. Ootes.

Point of Privilege

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Chairman, I think Mr. Arlooktoo has stated it is almost impossible to follow it while reading. All the more reason to have a translated version available, because it is very difficult to be able to translate simultaneously. It is very inconvenient for the Member, in this particular case, who was left out. We certainly would not accept it if it was reversed. I appreciate Mr. Arlooktoo's commitment to have this problem solved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. We agree. What has been said has been noted. Thank you. The honourable Member did not have a point of order, but it was a good point to raise here in this forum. We will take the matter under advisement at this point. I thank the honourable Member. On behalf of the Social Programs

Committee, Mr. Enuaraq, do you have any opening remarks? Thank you.

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (Translation ends)

Health and Social Services

Strategic Planning

The department provided a very good overview of its strategic planning process. Members of the Committee were pleased to see this work and believe that a strategic approach to the health and social services network is long overdue. We like the approach the department is taking in reevaluating just what is possible and what services the department should be providing. Although this plan is still in the developmental stage, Members at least have a sense that there is care and attention going into developing the options to be presented along the road.

We were also happier with this year's main estimates. Although it was not as fiscally ambitious as last year's plan. We believe it is more realistic and achievable.

As part of the main estimate's review, the department's project teams provided extensive briefings on the strategic work which is under way. These briefings were an excellent way to allow Members to understand and contribute to the overall departmental strategic direction, as well as more specific program directions. We believe the approaches outlined in the the briefings were fairly concrete. We have since discovered, through alcohol and drug funding allocations, that the project teams' work is still incredibly fluid. The Committee hopes that this year the department will be able to translate these projections for reductions and program changes into reality. We cannot afford to have the degree of slippage that occurred in 1996/97.

As the project teams carry out their work, there are some points we would like to raise. First, the Committee is supportive of the overall shift of emphasis from treatment to prevention. We recognize that, in the first few years, there will be additional costs before the impacts of the prevention efforts are seen in reduced treatment costs.

Second, we are concerned about the use of national averages in determining an appropriate level of health care, such as the number of beds needed for long-term care. While these averages give a starting point,

we must also remember the extremely high levels of social problems we face here in the north. While we can work towards national averages in areas like bed space, we need to get our social problems down to the national average first.

Third, there are great advances in technology in the health field. The department is pursuing some of these opportunities such as telemedicine, while others, like electronic eye examination equipment, are still to be considered. The Committee encourages the program teams to view any and all options with an open mind, particularly if it can improve the quality of health care in a cost-effective way.

The Committee generally supports the strategic direction outlined by the Minister. However, this direction will require a major shift in the way health and social services are provided to northerners, and in how northerners think about these services. If this approach is to be successful, it must be understood and accepted by the public, the practitioners and the boards. Communication will be the key to allowing these fundamental changes to happen.

Alcohol and Drug Treatment

The Committee expressed the concern last year that there was a need for a new direction for alcohol and drug treatment. The department is now working on that new direction. The department indicated that at least one facility would be shut down to encourage greater use of the remaining facilities. Committee Members suggest this should be done carefully, addressing the current need and maintaining the current

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capacity in use. As the department addresses the surplus, it is crucial that it does not over-compensate and close too many beds. This is particularly important as centres are looking at their programs and determining what new approaches would make better use of their space.

For the treatment centres which remain open, there must be some core funding to provide them with stability. While we supported the move to a partial per diem rate, we do not support 100 percent per diem funding. As part of the program review, the issue of core funding needs to be considered along with other elements such as regional parity and rationalizing facility closures.

Although we think the idea needs more work, we are supportive of the initial suggestion to look at mobile treatment. The Committee agrees that there will be clients who stand a greater chance of success if programs are delivered closer to home. This would link all of the support network for an individual together to give long-term backup after the initial treatment is over.

In the past, northern treatment centres have not had the same degree of success as southern facilities. The lack of success often stems from the referral and follow-up services for clients. One of the current rehabilitation program's downfalls is the lack of proper client assessment. We need proper assessment and after-care to maximize people's chances of successfully completing treatment. It is important, as a starting point, for communities to enforce the existing policies requiring sobriety and community counselling before a referral can take place.

We also believe more thought is required before implementing the various funding pools for alcohol and drug programs and treatment. While there is a desire for regional autonomy, there must also be continuity in the use and established programs and services. The allocation of funding must ensure that continuity.

While there may be no reductions to the overall budget for community alcohol and drug funding, the department is proposing a more equitable allocation between communities. Some communities will see a significant increase in alcohol and drug funding, while others will see a decrease. While we support the move towards greater equity in funding distribution, we also encourage the department to be aware of the impact of this change on existing alcohol and drug services in some communities.

As a final component in ensuring stability in alcohol and drug treatment, we need to ensure that alcohol and drug workers are properly trained and compensated. The level of wages for these workers has been a concern for a number of years, which Members believe must be addressed in some way. The strategy for reductions and changes in alcohol and drug direction and funding has been in constant flux since we began reviewing this budget in October, 1996. The Minister recently indicated to the committee that further changes are being made. Given uncertainty of the final direction, we find it difficult to approve the alcohol and drug strategy.

Recommendation No. 10

The Standing Committee on Social Programs recommends that the alcohol and drug strategy in the Department of Health and Social Services should not be implemented until the final strategy is reviewed and approved by the committee.

FAS/FAE Strategy

The committee would like the department to pursue the two key priorities of the FAS/E strategy team. These priorities are:

- to pilot a comprehensive treatment program for pregnant women with substance dependency issues; and
- to develop and deliver a standardized, modular training program on FAS/FAE with materials in plain language.

The recommendations fit into the program reviews and priorities of the department. In particular, we see opportunities in the alcohol and drug programming reviews and in the early intervention program for supporting the key priorities of treatment for pregnant women and education/training on FAS/E.

Recommendation No. 11

The Standing Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services support the two key priorities identified by the FAS/FAE strategy group.

Home Care

The department is suggesting home care as the entry point for all long-term care. We support this approach which is consistent with supporting people to live independently. As the planning proceeds on this program, we expect to see clear standards developed for the use of long-term care and the role of home care. This is a program where we can see great opportunities for productive choices for those accessing income support. It is one more thing which can be added to a list of possible choices in the material provided to income support workers.

Inuvik/Iqaluit Hospital Replacements

There has been significant confusion about the status of the Inuvik and Iqaluit hospital replacements. The Minister has indicated that the need and use of both of these facilities is part of the project review of the health network (hospitals and health centres). There is a need for concrete, decisive action on these

facilities. We hope the Minister will be in a position to honour the commitments to build these facilities no later than 1998/99.

The Minister provided written confirmation that the agreement between the GNWT and the Federal Government will not be sunsetted on April 1, 1999. The Committee has asked the Minister for written clarification of the Federal Government's share of the funding and we hope that will be provided shortly.

We encouraged the Minister to consider alternative funding sources and methods of funding capital projects to allow these projects to proceed as quickly as possible. If the Minister determines it is possible to look at alternate funding, it may

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also be possible to use a similar approach to address projects which have been delayed such as the health centre in Arviat.

Recommendation No. 12

The Standing Committee recommends that a decision be made on the Inuvik and Iqaluit hospital replacements to allow the projects to begin no later than fiscal year 1998/99.

Mr. Chairman, if it is okay with you, I would like to ask my deputy chair, Michael Miltenberger, to continue with the report.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Health Boards

Members have questions about the cuts to the health boards. In 1996/97, the department proposed a \$9 million reduction to health boards over two years. At that time, boards were encouraged to implement as much of the two year cuts as possible in the first year. The department has now decided not to proceed with the \$4.2 million reduction for 1997/98. The Minister indicated that there may have been inequitable base funding for the various boards, so an across-the-board reduction would not be appropriate. There may be reductions as a result of the health care reform

studies but there will be no overall reduction to the boards.

We were pleased to learn the department was able to meet its targets without further cuts to the boards. The Minister indicated that boards which did not meet their reduction targets in 1996/97 will still be required to make these reductions. This leaves us with unanswered questions about the 1996/97 reductions.

- Which boards achieved their targets for 1996/97?

- Which boards did not make the necessary reductions?

- Will all boards be required to make the level of reductions identified for 1996/97?

- Did any board make reductions beyond the amount budgeted for 1996/97 in anticipation of future year cuts identified last year by the department?

The Committee supports the new approach to funding these boards. The move away from very specific line item control to more responsibility for boards is consistent with the direction suggested by the Committee. With the definition of core services, regional boards will have a framework within which to design programs and services to address their clients' needs. We will be looking for accountability and monitoring standards to ensure boards are providing the services they should.

This emphasizes the need for clear reporting systems, both within the department and in the boards. Information must be collected which allows for vigilance and monitoring of practices and procedures.

The department indicated that it intends to institute a surplus/ deficit retention policy for the boards beginning April 1, 1997. While the implementation details were not available, the Committee sees this as an important step in encouraging boards to be more efficient in their operations. On discussing the transfer of regional positions to Boards, the Minister confirmed that all associated funding would be transferred, not just salary and benefit dollars, but additional O and M dollars associated with the position such as office space and equipment.

Health Care Facilities

Following on our comments last year, we strongly believe that we need to consider alternate uses for existing facilities rather than just building new

structures. There needs to be a common sense approach to the construction of any new facilities. In the review of care facilities, the Fort Simpson hospital is being considered for reprofiling. Given the status of this review, the two capital projects for Fort Simpson should be held in abeyance until final decisions are made on the future use of the hospital.

We understand that there are a number of reviews going on within the department. We hope these reviews are being coordinated to ensure that there is a consistent approach across all program areas.

Recommendation No. 13

The Standing Committee recommends that work on the proposed capital projects for Fort Simpson: Adult Group Home and Family Violence Shelter, not proceed until final decisions have been made on the future use of the Fort Simpson Hospital.

Foster Care Rates

As part of the overall review of foster care, we will be looking for evidence that the need for culturally appropriate foster placements is emphasized and a strategy developed to address the need. We will also be looking for monitoring mechanisms. It is crucial that foster placements are safe, healthy places.

During our meetings, the department provided the results of their consultation with the Yellowknifer Foster Parents Association to revise the foster care rates. We are disappointed that the consultation took place after the budget changes were approved. However, the new approach to defining and supporting special needs foster children should be more equitable for all foster parents and should provide greater clarification for those who administer the rates.

Human Resources

In the area of human resources, the department is talking about creating more multi-disciplinary teams in the communities. This could involve new roles for community health representatives and the potential for an increase in the number of physicians. We look forward to the results of this program review.

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Under the human resources briefing, the need for promotion of health and social services careers and education of northerners for those careers was highlighted. The Committee agrees with this need.

We will be looking closely for concrete action by the department to make this a reality.

Organ Donor Program

Finally, the Committee noted that Stanton Regional Hospital is going to provide an organ donor program. We encourage the department to support this initiative and expand it where possible to other centres. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I will be inviting the Minister as to whether or not he will be wanting witnesses after we take a 10 minute break.

---Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would like to call the committee back to order. Mr. Minister, would you like to bring in witnesses?

HON. KELVIN NG:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I have to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring in the witnesses. Could I ask the Minister to introduce his witnesses, please?

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, to my right is David Ramsden, deputy minister. To my left Derek Elkin, manager of corporate and capital planning. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I now open the floor to general comments on the departmental estimates by Members. Are there any general comments? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am glad to see that the department is working with boards, professional associations, and other stakeholders in starting a full review of the health and social services in the NWT. It has been a while now, I imagine, since this type of thing has happened. I think it is important that we do have some new blood doing this. One of the things that struck me from the Minister's opening remarks, was the fact that the department is striving to achieve an integrated system of care that is financially sustainable. I am just wondering what financially sustainable means. I do not imagine that this would mean that it is fully financed by the people of the Northwest Territories. I know that at one point, there was some thought put towards implementing premiums for health care, like Alberta, where I went to school for a couple of years. I had to pay \$30 a month, I think it was. I guess I need an indication of what that means. Also, the Minister indicated, under care givers, the department is finding creative ways to involve more local and aboriginal people in the delivery of health and social care in the NWT. I believe that this is an honourable goal, but this particular item needs further explanation, so that people who are not on the Social Programs Committee will have a better idea of what this means. The Minister also indicated that the department is strengthening its ability to monitor things in order to help us control our spending. I think that this is also a very laudable goal and something that needs implementation. I certainly hope that it is successful. Considering the fact that spending has not been held under control in the past, it would be good to find out what type of monitoring is now being put into place.

In the area of addictions, I have had the opportunity to speak with people who work in the field. It was their feeling that the problem with the rehabilitation programs is not necessarily the way that the rehab programs themselves have been run. It is actually the assessment of the people going into rehabilitation and the aftercare that is put into place once a person comes out of rehab. We understand that the department has looked at the success rate. I am not exactly sure how they measured success, but I guess one of the measurements is the number of times a person has to go back to a rehab centre in order to finally stop drinking. I understand that there are some people who have gone numerous times and they still have not stopped. I am not sure if there has been enough thought gone into the problem, that there never has been proper assessment done before a

person goes to rehab. We have heard of problems where people wanting to go to rehab and people who actually go to rehab, say in Yellowknife and Hay River, increases dramatically when Caribou Carnival is going on or if there is a huge bingo, that type of thing. I think that the commitment of the people that have gone into rehab in the past has not necessarily been there. That has been a big problem that this proposal, to me, does not seem to address. Unless this is addressed, whatever we put into place will be unsuccessful. Similarly, with the after care, it is absolutely essential that, after a person gets out of rehab, there is a support system in place for that person. Otherwise, it is very easy to fall back into the same trap that the person was in before, hanging around with their friends, perhaps going to bars, going to parties, that type of thing. Once you start doing that, it is very easy to start drinking again. It is very important that after care programs are put into place in the communities to ensure that people who come out of rehab are more successful. I just want to stress the importance of that.

Similarly, under the addictions, a new plan calls for providing 50 percent core funding to treatment centres, and the balance will be based on occupancy. I believe that this is a good move. It could make the centres more accountable as to help them to strive for a greater efficiencies, the rest of that type of thing. There seems to be an indication that it might go beyond, that they might get less than 50 percent core funding in the future. I could not support this type of move, Mr. Chairman. The treatment centres need some type of stability. They need the assurance that they will be getting enough money, so that people can get paid every two weeks. Without that assurance, it is very difficult to hold your staff. This is a very delicate area to begin with and if people cannot be assured that there is going to be a pay cheque four months down the road, then you could be losing good people to go work in the south or wherever. I understand that the money will be going to the regions. I need some kind of an assurance that money that is supposed to be for rehabilitation remains for rehabilitation.

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Meaning that, if the three centres that we are supporting in the Northwest Territories, in Iqaluit, Yellowknife, and Hay River, if those three require a million dollars, then that million dollars has to remain in a kitty specifically for those three centres. It should not be allowed to be spent on other things. If it is allowed to be spent on other things, then we are

theoretically setting up every one of those treatment centres for failure. For instance, if money goes to the smaller communities so they can set up rehab programs, one week things or whatever, and also for mobile treatment, then I understand that there are mobile, for instance, in High Level. Now, if communities bring in mobile teams from High Level, then there is going to be less money in the kitty for these three centres. We could wind up in a situation where everyone of those three centres winds up in a deficit. I do not think that is the intent of this program.

I sincerely hope that the Minister and his cronies have a plan in their hip pocket to ensure that the money is always available for the three centres that are eligible, so that they can receive 100 percent of the money they are eligible for if they maintain their numbers. Mr. Chairman, I seek consent to conclude my opening remarks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. There are two ways we could do this. One, we could allow the other Members their ten minutes and then you can ask for unanimous consent to finish your remarks or you may request the consensus of the committee to finish your remarks now. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying, I think we need some type of assurance that the three government treatment centres that we are sponsoring that they are...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Erasmus, what I said was you either have to request consensus now or you would have to wait until the other Members have had a chance to speak and then request that you finish your statement. Which would you prefer?

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Chairman, I am getting an indication from the Members here just to continue. I request that I would be allowed to continue now.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Do the rest of the Members agree, Mr. Erasmus can finish his statement. Thank you. Agreed. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, I believe that we have to put some type of mechanism in place to ensure that these three government sponsored alcohol and drug treatment centres will have that pot of money available to them, if they are able to meet the numbers that they are supposed to put through their centre over the course of a year. The Minister also indicated that Fort Smith and Fort Simpson hospitals will be reprofiled, and I think that it is important that Members as well as the public find out now exactly what reprofiled means. The work on the Inuvik and Iqaluit hospitals will only proceed when their respective roles within the integrated health system are clarified.

We need to know, what does this mean, when their respective roles are going to be clarified? Does this mean, for instance, the Inuvik hospital, they have to feed people to the Stanton Hospital so they can only get a small hospital? I think we need a better indication of what this means. In the Community Action Fund, I have received a complaint as well. I know at least one other Member has received a complaint, that the money that went to Yellowknife, once again, there was not a penny that went to the aboriginal groups in Yellowknife. We had asked the Minister to look into this last year. I do not know what types of things were put into place to try to ensure that aboriginal people will get their fair share of the money.

We now know that 20 to 25 percent of the population in Yellowknife are of aboriginal descent. This makes it the largest aboriginal community by population in the Northwest Territories. There are over 4,000 aboriginal people here. It does not seem right that none of the money would go for aboriginal programs. Under medical travel, Mr. Chairman, I understand that our students are being asked to travel by excursion. Is there a plan to put some type of similar limitations on medical travel as well where it is feasible if a person is not going to be harmed by going on excursion fare and possibly going a day late. Would we be looking at that type of thing?

Also, the air miles points that people receive for travelling, I am assuming at this point in time if they go by regular airfare that those points pile up on their own Canadian Plus. I would think that these types of things should go to the government, and similarly, for government staff, it is time that all government travel, all air miles went to the government and we could use this to fight our deficit.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister had indicated that they are going to be directing medical travel monies towards the boards that this would pay the way to an appropriate sharing resources between Nunavut and the western territory. I agree that this is a good start and I sincerely hope that this leads to move into other areas as well, where we can split the monies, and perhaps we should be looking at a split for the next budget, something along the line of population, 60/40 or whatever it is. Each side could then use their money as they see fit for their programs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. General comments from Members. I have Mr. Ootes and Mr. Ng. Before we go on, I would like to remind Members that you will have opportunity to speak directly toward program delivery, services, and support on health service administration, policies and procedures when we reach that activity. I believe what we are doing now is general comments from the overall budget. I recognize Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments will be very general and fairly brief. I am pleased to see there will be a review to reform the Health and Social Services system. This is obviously needed, we need to refocus and reform. Once the department has some documentation on this, we as legislators need to sit down and dialogue on this whole issue of the social network that we have here in the territories. I think it is a lot of people's opinion that we can not continue to do things in the same old way. We need to debate the future of these

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programs from many perspectives. One is are they effective, are they doing any good, what is the cost of them, are we getting value for our money, can we use our money more efficiently?

We all want a strong public health system and efficient social services. However, I think it should be noted that we have, over the past many years, raised and given people a great deal of expectations in the whole area of social services. I think what we need to do is give a picture to the public as to what they can expect and what they cannot expect, what the government can provide and what it cannot provide. There has to be some realism because of the dollar problem. Right now the social envelope occupies

apparently 62 percent of the total budget. The Health and Social Services Department is \$247 million, which is slightly less than a quarter of the budget. While this needs control, I understand the need that the public has. The problem that we have is that we can not continue to take money from different areas and allocate it all to the social network. We do need to keep money in other departments, and other programs throughout the territories as well.

One area of concern in that is the whole area of forced growth. I understand it is because of Legislative needs, but I would like to try to get some specific clarification from the Minister later on as we are going through the budget. What is forced growth? What is causing this? It is adding tremendously to our cost.

I would like to take a moment to express some comments in perhaps two or three areas. One is the whole area of addictions. We have programs, but I do not believe we have a real program that attacks the root of the problem. We have programs in place for instance, alcohol and drug addictions, whereby individuals, they are at treatment centres. Even here, those particular areas need reforming as well. We really do not have a great assessment system prior to people going in for treatment. As my honourable colleague, Mr. Erasmus, stated earlier, we do not have a support service once people come out of the treatment centres.

I think there are a lot of repeat individuals in these centres. We have to start asking the questions, are we solving the problem? More important, are we even attacking the root of the problem? Do we have programs in place to attack alcohol problems, educational systems to discuss in schools, alcohol difficulties, addiction difficulties? One other area that I have heard of with regard to costs is the whole medical travel problem. I understand it is escalating and that we again need to obtain several million dollars extra over what was budgeted last year. This whole area is of concern. We do need to control it and we need to know. Again, as Mr. Erasmus stated, some of the travel can be done on a basis of prebooking, whereby we get better value for our dollars.

Mr. Chairman, those are my very brief comments on a department which has tremendous impact on a lot of people in this territory. It is a department that consumes and requires a great many dollars. Again, going back to my earlier comments, I am very pleased to see that the department is initiating a review to

reform the whole Health and Social Services system.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. I have Mr. Ningark, and I apologize for earlier referring to him as Mr. Ng. I presume the committee understands that the Minister would respond to the general comments after we received all the general comments. Is that agreed?
Mr. Ningark.

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I forgive you for getting mixed up with the names. I do not blame you. We are from the same region, we are about the same height, and we are about the same age. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the people of Natilikmiot area, (inaudible), I would like to thank the government for giving concern beyond, in some cases, our expectation. I would also like to thank the staff at the Stanton Hospital for treating people from my area as well as the hospital in Edmonton. There are many concerns that I have under this department and one concern that seems to prevail over others for my communities that I mentioned earlier is in the area of medical travel.

Mr. Chairman, there are times when a unilingual elder is required to travel for medical reasons either by the charter aircraft or by scheduled airline. In many instances, Mr. Chairman, I have people coming over to me, in three of my communities, that at times did not have adequate escort or in some cases, none at all that speak the language. I am not saying that translation services at Stanton Hospital is incapable of translating. On the contrary, Mr. Chairman, I think the translators at the Stanton Hospital are very highly capable given the language. But in the eastern Arctic there are in fact different dialects from one region to another region, in some cases even in the same region. Inuktitut, for instance, Natilik, Pelly Bay, Gjoa Haven, Taloyoak speak about the same dialect. West of Gjoa Haven, Coppermine and Cambridge Bay also speak a slightly different dialect from that same region.

Mr. Chairman, imagine any of the Members here going to a hospital from point A to point B, between your community and the medical centre community, that you do not understand the language, either of the crew of the aircraft, the people that are meeting you at the airport, and then, subsequently, people at the residence that you are going to be staying at, finally

the medical profession at the medical centre. I think when the patient is put through that kind of stress, it may not help the patient. In most cases, I am told, from my community, Mr. Chairman, there are times when the patient, even an English patient, is not really able to understand the interpreter/translator. Again, I would like to stress that I am not saying that whoever that person is is not capable, they are very capable, but the problem is the dialects are different between the interpreter and the patient. Mr. Chairman, I think lacking the appropriate escort and interpreter for a patient, even an English patient, may in fact prolong the recovery of that patient. There has to be a dialogue between the medical profession and the patient. I think that is rule number one. In order for the doctor to diagnosis the patient, he has to be able to understand what the problem is, where the pain is coming from. By the same token, for a patient to be able to be comfortable with the doctor, she or he has to understand the doctor. Every bit of communication along the process is very important. I would like to stress that to the Members here. Mr. Chairman, I think, we have talked about cutting services, we have talked about reductions. I understand that concept. I

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think the public in the territories understand that. But, on the other hand, when the patient is not having an appropriate translator, that is not able to speak his or her language, that may prolong the recovery as I indicated before. I think there is a money saving in this area, of having an escort for the patient, an appropriate translation service for that patient. That is one of the issues that come from my area. I am not only speaking for those people because they have spoken to me. I know of cases where the patient was not able to relate to or understand the language. I would like to stress that the important point is the communication, the dialogue between the doctor and the patient. That should be understood. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ningark. We are on general comments under departmental estimates. Are there any further general comments? Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin my general comments on the Department of Health and Social Services, bringing up some points that I have noted in the report

from the Standing Committee on Social Programs that I was researching a few minutes ago and from the general comments made by the Minister and from the department's work over the past 12 months.

I would like to start off by simply talking about the reforms brought up by the Minister and the Social Programs Committee. Reforming does not mean simply abandoning, downsizing, and reductions. Some have said that we are moving too fast on the reductions that we have seen in this department. I guess we do not want to be concerned with every criticism, unless they are valid. Mr. Chairman, I think that criticism is a valid one. I do not think that we want to be compared to southern jurisdictions where health care has taken a beating, where they are moving toward more privatization of health care. Mr. Chairman, I would note that the current major review being done by Med-Emerg, and again I have to reiterate our concern that the Nunavut hospital located in Iqaluit, and the Inuvik hospital construction proceed post-haste, following on the heels of the memorandum of understanding in the agreement that was placed by the federal Department of Health Canada in 1997/98, when they transferred the responsibility for health to the Northwest Territories, at that time had promised funding for the construction of these hospitals. I hope this initiative moves forward and I will be asking the Minister later today or tomorrow on that initiative.

There is a major concern with the Department of Health and Social Services having relinquished its responsibility for social assistance. Although the name is Health and Social Services, social services has fallen now under the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, and is being called income support. Income support or social assistance causes a cross-pollination of departments and responsibilities. This causes confusion, not only for the Members, but also for the public at large who are asking questions and seeking information at the local level. The confusion here is who do you address the questions to? Do you go to the town social services department, or do you go to education, culture, and careers about income support? Do you ask a question in the House to the Minister of Social Services or do you ask the question to the Minister of Income Support? There is confusion not only at this level, but at the local level. Thank you. I see the Minister acknowledges that there is a problem. The high rates of infant mortality, FAS/FAE, and other health matters have to be shown and demonstrated that the root

cause here, Mr. Chairman, is the social economic problems of the Northwest Territories.

Reforming our health strategy is not going to address those, unless we look at the total package, the total situation regarding housing. The stop gap measure that was announced today is a step in the right direction, but it is a small step. The social economic problems that we are dealing with at the community level, at the regional and the territorial level, have to be addressed.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister, Mr. Ng, has taken on a difficult challenge with this department over the last 12 or 14 months. It has been reflected, I think, and demonstrated over the past few weeks with the announced closure of Delta House and some other facilities. It demonstrates the tough fiscal situation that this territory has found itself in, because of the mismanagement and the largesse of past governments. With a short 18 months left before division, there is very little concrete that you can plan in a five to 10 year strategy, because you cannot tie one government into carrying out the wishes of another government in that successive right. That is something that has to be addressed.

Mr. Chairman, I understand the Minister and the work that he has put in. The Social Programs Standing Committee of this government, of this House, has done a lot of work in addressing some of the concerns and needs of the constituency at large. The recommendations following out of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, I hope will be taken seriously by the Minister, and implemented as part of the policy and programs and ongoing operations of this government.

Mr. Chairman, the time for rhetoric is past. Concrete measures and initiatives need to be taken now. Although, we live in the envelope of reductions and downsizing, we have to remember the people that we are here to serve. As legislators in this Assembly, we are here primarily as law makers. But we also have to look at the public purse and hopefully provide programs and policies that are beneficial to all residents of the Northwest Territories. I think that after reviewing the Social Programs Standing Committee report and the address and the budget of this envelope of Health and Social Services, we are moving toward that goal. I also see that there is a lot of pain to come, and there is no way that you can look at the budget of this department, or ECE, or any other of the major departments under the social envelope, without looking at the social economic conditions that

have caused the problems that we see right now in our society. With that, I would like to end my opening comments, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to reviewing this budget in some detail with the Minister and the departmental staff. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Before I recognize Mr. Roland - on behalf of Jake Ootes, Member for Yellowknife Centre, I would like to recognize in the gallery,

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officials from Canada Post, Marc L'Anglais, general manager of northern service division, Keith Miller, manager of northern retail sales, and Hank Klassen, vice-president of administration. Welcome to the Assembly.

---Applause

Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a Member of the Social Programs Committee, we had an opportunity to get briefed in these areas of reform and the strategic plan of the Department of Health and Social Services. Although we were able to take part in these and initially thought it was very good to find out where the department was planning to head and what changes might be coming about as a result of some of these decisions, but, as stated in our report, we found that certain areas of this department's budget seemed quite fluid. That is my area of concern, especially when it comes to the area of consulting with communities with affected delivery agents. Although we are making some big changes in the near future, and as we heard today in the Minister's statement about the closure of Delta House, I have concerns that those people who are affected by these decisions are feeling that they are left out of the consulting process. I think that needs to be addressed, as we go down this road to try and map out the health system we will have in the years to come.

As I stated in my Member's statement earlier today, we have to make some difficult decisions, some of them unfavourable. In my case, I found out from the community that there is grave concerns with the decision made. I share those concerns, especially when it comes to the area of division. We have talked about division, but when the western territory is left, we have to look at the map and see where everything

is located. The people in the Inuvik region are quite concerned when division comes, in the western territory, where are the facilities located and what cost will it be to get the people from the Inuvik region down to that facility? I am concerned especially since I have been elected to this Assembly, I have voiced the issue of fairness and equity when it comes to representing the people of Inuvik. The blow felt by the closure of Delta House just adds to the concern, because we are far enough removed, that the concerns being voiced will not be heard to a great degree here in Yellowknife.

I have spoken to the Minister on a number of occasions and let him know that is one of the areas of concern, not only accessing the treatment, but also at the end of the day when we go down the road to division, what will be left in our region in Inuvik. I guess that goes to the concern of the proposed new hospital. In the Minister's statement, he says that "consistent with our effort to provide a co-ordinate continuum of care and integrated delivery system work on Inuvik and Iqaluit hospitals will only proceed when their respective roles within an integrated health system are clarified." I would hope that this integrated system takes into account the agreement with the federal government that states that Inuvik will have no less than it has now. I am a little concerned I guess in the areas of these reductions when it comes to a western territory after division and what is going to be left in the Inuvik region. I hope the Minister and the department are looking at these areas when the reports are finalized in this area of the strategic reform. I would hope to find out throughout this process that there is still some form of programming that can happen in the Inuvik region, whether it is in after care or through early intervention, that some of these people who are trained in the area of drug and alcohol treatment will still be able to provide a service to the residents of Inuvik, including the residents within the Inuvik region. I will be voicing the concern and questions that were raised in a public meeting about some of the factors in making the decision of which facility would close, in light of the feelings of our resources and where they are located. Also, in light of comments made that we need to try and become more equal to southern provinces, where they have a certain number of beds available for a certain number of people. As I have stated earlier in our report as well, before we can start matching those numbers and come in line with the rest of southern Canada, we need to get our problems under control as well. I will save the rest of my questions for details. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. For the record we are on Bill 8 Appropriation Act, 1997-98. Health and Social Services, program summary and we are on general comments of the Members. I have Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been involved in the business plans and budget for this department for about nine months now. My concerns are pretty well voiced in the report that has been provided. I just wanted to underline the critical importance of this strategic planning process that is now underway for this department, and how long overdue it is, and how fundamental it is to shaping the direction that the department has to take. I think that we have an obligation as legislators to come up with a plan that will go to division and beyond. Then it will be up to the two respective governments in Nunavut and the west, to decide if they wish to take the good work that is done and proceed with it. But we should not be faulted for not having a plan and a vision of where we are trying to go, as we try to restructure this very important department.

I also want to underline the need to increase the co-operation among the social program partners, that we have to get even more involved with each other. The departments have to go beyond the Minister, deputy minister level, at all levels throughout the length and breadth of the various departments from the communities up to headquarters, if any kind of co-operation is going to be meaningful. If we want to be able to say that we are integrating our services, and that there is a working relationship that is relevant. Those, Mr. Chairman, are my general comments, and I will conclude with those. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. General comments. We are considering Health and Social Services. Are there further general comments? If not, do we agree that we go into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, on page 6-12, directorate, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance is \$1,446,000. Agreed?

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SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total expenditures, \$1,446,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Next page, Support and health services administration, operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance is \$98,587,000. Mr. Picco, you had better get in your seat if you want to be recognized. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question, I will start with the health boards. On this area, we have heard of medical travel being very expensive. I would like to know from the Minister, what the dollars were for each health board when it comes to medical travel?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Minister for Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Medical travel for the Stanton Board, 1997-98 these are the estimates \$2,039,883. For the Baffin \$4,656,110, Inuvik, \$2,549,854, Keewatin, \$5,193,354, Kitikmeot, \$2,719,844, Fort Smith, \$339,981 and unallocated \$4,406,974. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

We have been reviewing support and administration of Health and Social Services. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The unallocated, what would that be used for, was it \$4,406,000.?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is the forced growth amount that would still have to be distributed through the boards. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How will that be distributed?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will ask Mr. Ramsden to speak to that, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, we are still reviewing the results that each board has been able to achieve this year, in terms of managing the volume of traffic. We are still assessing the price increases that have recently been put in place in the major carriers. We will use those factors to finish doing the allocation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do you have the numbers of previous years spent on medical travel by the boards and what are they?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I have Mr. Roland and Mr. Picco in that order. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have that information here, but I could provide that to the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. Question number five, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The information would be very useful, especially in this area. This seems to be an occurrence that happens every year, where medical travel dollars are insufficient to cover things. I think it would be important in the management of this, to find out where those dollars are going and what they are being spent on. For example, I know that health boards contract out for their own services when it comes to emergency flights. That plays a very important role as to what expense they go through, to what level of service they have. For example, the Inuvik region's regular air carrier they have scheduled with a special plane. I think that plays a big role as to the cost of transportation per flight. I would like to have that kind of information available to me. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Minister. We will provide as much of the detail that we have on that to the honourable Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I have Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca and Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under support and health services administration, I would like to bring up several different areas. I will begin with the Med-Emerg contract and role study, which follows on the policy and planning and evaluation section of the page we are on. Maybe the Minister could just

update me and the House. I want to know specifically, on the Med-Emerg contract, is it specifically centring on the health care in the Nunavut region and the Inuvik region of the Northwest Territories, or is it for encompassing the total Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, the honourable Minister for Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is incorrect. Med-Emerg is not doing any role studies for any of the capital facilities in Iqaluit or in Inuvik. What they are doing, as I have indicated before, is doing some strategic planning work, reviewing the programs within Health and Social Services with a multi-disciplinary team of professionals. They are soliciting input right now throughout the territories, to try to identify where some of the problems may be in the Health and Social Services delivery throughout the Territories. They are

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going to make recommendations to the Department of Health and Social Services on what they see as the plan of reform, which we will look at and see whether or not it is viable to proceed with accelerating some of the reforms that may be recommended, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. The honourable Member for Iqaluit, Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I love being corrected when I am wrong, but I do not like being corrected when I did not mention, to begin with, any capital projects. I never did say capital projects, I am sure the Hansard will back me up on that statement. After saying that, Mr. Chairman, the Minister mentioned the delivery problems, the scope and reform of the same. When we talk about program delivery, what specifically is Med-Emerg looking at? Are they looking at the facilities that are in place, delivery of those? Are they talking about community-based services through nursing stations or health centres? Are we talking about delivery or scope from the administrative end of things? Exactly what is Med-Emerg looking at?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, they are reviewing and analyzing information on all our current programs and services that are provided through the Department of Health and Social Services. They are doing this through research of reports and documentation that we have provided to them, through individual and group interviews throughout the territories, and analyzing the information they receive. They are also analyzing the reform initiatives that we have already started to undertake before they became involved in this strategic planning exercise. The alcohol and drug reforms, the long-term care reform, the facilities reviews and those human resource reviews, those types of things that the department already had under way, Mr. Chairman. They are going to recommend some strategic goals and priorities and program standards to us, and identify any areas where we could have some potential savings. I would recognize a lot of Members have spoken about support for this initiative. I know there is a large interest out there. There was a written question by Mr. Henry to provide the terms of reference and the scope of the whole project, and we were trying to get that together before today but I did not realize we would get into the details so quickly on the department. So I will provide copies of the terms of reference for all Members as soon as we can before tomorrow. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We are reviewing the main estimates of the Health and Social Services activity. In this case it is the support and health services administration. Mr. Picco. Thank you.

MR. PICCO:

Under health services administration, Mr. Chairman, it provides the health insurance services, which also includes the supplementary health benefits, non-insured health benefits, out-of-territories hospitals, the physicians inside the Northwest Territories, the physicians outside the Northwest Territories, and medical travel. In addition, services are provided to native residents under contract with Health Canada. There has been some concern and controversy in our region of the Northwest Territories, and that specifically being Nunavut, on the non-insured health

benefits. Can the Minister update us at this time, what is happening with the non-insured health benefits and maybe alleviate some of the concerns that have been brought forward?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, honourable Member. The honourable Minister for Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the non-insured health benefits is a federal program providing additional services for aboriginal people. We, the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Health and Social Services contract out the delivery of those services on behalf of the Medical Services branch of Health Canada. Our term of the contract expires March 31, 1997. Medical Services branch had been in discussion with some of the aboriginal groups about the possibility of the aboriginal groups taking on the contract for delivery of these services directly. Our position was that there would be no problem with that. We were supportive of that.

The one cautionary advice that we gave, was the fact that there was a ceiling on the amount of the dollars that are available under the program. There was an administration requirement for reporting expenditures under the program to Medical Services branch. Where there were some economies with the GNWT having two individuals that administer the entire non-insured health benefits for all aboriginal people throughout the Northwest Territories, there were individual aboriginal organizations trying to take it on on a regional basis.

I understand the Baffin at one time was looking at it. It is my understanding they are not as active on this now, but the Keewatin Inuit Association was the most proactive recently. They have had some meetings with myself and their MLAs in trying to further this pilot project in trying to assume the responsibilities for delivery of the contract. We are supportive of that. It is our understanding that the federal Medical Services branch may be reconsidering their position right now, on whether or not to go ahead with any pilot project or turning it over directly to the aboriginal groups, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The details of work performed on behalf of other parties is on page 6-27 and subsequently 6-28. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It also falls under support and health services administration. If you look at the fourth paragraph on page 6-13 you will see the quote as I read it out. Population health and board development provides direction and professional consulting services, and also monitors boards of management for compliance to acts, policies and standards. I wonder, on the compliance to acts, policies and standards, does this mean the policies and standards of both the territorial and federal governments?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Minister.

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HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is primarily for territorial policies and legislation, although there is some involvement on the federal level because of the non-insured health benefits program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Support and health services administration. You have a final question at this point, Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Am I up to my maximum questions now? Am I up to five? Thank you, Mr. Ningark. I do have several more questions, but maybe I can return. My final question on this area of policies and standards, does that include the contracts and tenders or RFPs issued by health boards, so that they would have to follow the policies and standards as outlined on their support and health services, administration 6-13?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I have Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Erasmus and Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it would depend on the circumstance. This would be more in line with medical requirements, health care requirements. If there were specific things, for example medevac contracts, then that would be determined through the policy requirements through our finance and administration division, supported by Public Works and Services, that does those types of contracts, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. For the record, we are on page 6-13, support and health services administration. We have Mr. Rabesca.

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Referring to the Minister's opening remarks, regarding his comment on the medical travel. " The department withdrew portions of funding for non-medical escorts." I was wondering what he was referring to. Is he implying that the medical escorts funds are cut?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member is correct. Through some of the funds that we will be disbursing directly to the boards, some of the non-medical escort funding will be reduced. As many Members know, a lot of the compassionate travel was reduced last year. There is a need to take another look at some of the other non-medical escort travel. If I can use for an example, sometimes you have somebody come down that needs an escort. They come down with the escort and it ends up being an extended stay, and the escort gets tired and wants to go back to their home community. They send down somebody else to accompany that individual. Those types of situations have to be tightened up, with an understanding that if you come down, you would have to stay for the duration. If somebody chose to go home, there would not be another escort sent down. For example, sometimes an individual coming out of day surgery, because they might have been under anaesthetic, the doctor would recommend they have an escort. We would look at possibly eliminating that and having somebody, not necessarily come to escort them, but to see them through that time period until they are

able to travel back to their community, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. We have Mr. Erasmus. Thank you.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if the support and health services administration has hired any staffing officers that were released from the Personnel Secretariat when it was downsized last year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we did, Mr. Chairman. There were two individuals that were hired from personnel. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it possible to get the positions that they moved into?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you. We can get that information for the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We have Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Henry, and Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Would the Minister have available how many positions there are in management?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will provide that information to the honourable Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the same time could the Minister provide the amount of people that are affirmative action candidates in the management area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I will.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry. I forgot to include that I want a breakdown of the level of management and their priority status, P1 or P2.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. That was final according to my tally, my list. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

No problem, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I think we should follow the example of Mr. Erasmus. His questions were short,

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direct, and concise. Thank you. Right to the point. I have Mr. Henry and Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try and follow suit. On medical travel, I wonder if the Minister can give us

some information as to the degree of control that the department has, as far as the authorization of medical travel? Or is it mainly a personnel decision, I mean from the medical profession? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the responsibility for medical travel was, starting this year, given out to the regional boards and they have travel co-ordinators within the boards that administer that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Operations and maintenance. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would still like an answer to the question. At the board level, will the board have any control over it or will it be doctors or medical personnel, nurses and that, that will be making the decision?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is primarily a medical decision on whether or not to send out a patient and there is normally a medical referral unit in each board that makes those types of decisions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Operations and maintenance. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like if the Minister could, I know he had responded to Mr. Roland that he did not have the information from previous years, but would he at least have the cost in this medical year? What was budgeted for medical travel in the present fiscal year we are in as opposed to what he is proposing for the new budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will give the total amount for the '96/97 year budget was \$17,499,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Minister, your microphone was off. Could you repeat the last line, please. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

\$17,499,000 for the '96/97 year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Support and health services administration. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was \$17 million the Minister tells us in the '96/97 year in the main estimates. What is it projected to finish up at, by March 31st, after supplementary appropriations and so forth. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will let Mr. Ramsden speak to it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

I think what would be appropriate for tomorrow, we can provide some information that shows the projections by board. It was recognized early on in the fiscal year that the amount of money that we allocated each board was insufficient given that we obliged them to seek significant price decreases in each of the areas of medical travel. In order to reconcile to the numbers in terms of activities summary, we have to look to the costs that are included in the medical travel area for group homes, Larga, the referral service that is included in that area. I think it would be appropriate to provide some projection, board by

board, which we do not have with us, but we can provide for tomorrow.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance is - I have final supplementary, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to that information tomorrow. I think there are some questions that need to be answered, as the government has to look at ways to control this expenditure. It just keeps going and going. On the question of the Med-Emerg contract, I had asked at least a week ago a question in the House for information regarding this contract, and the Minister alluded today that he would try and get that information for me tomorrow morning. I was hoping that it would be a matter of photocopying the information. I would suspect the terms of reference were prepared before the contract was let. I would hope that an explanation of how the decision was arrived at to use outside consultants and the cost. I would hope that would all have been available. I look forward to receiving that tomorrow morning. I will wait with those questions that I have in this particular area until that information is provided tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I take it that that is noted by the Minister and his officials. I have the honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to make the comment that though it has been made in our reports as well, just to emphasize, when you look at this particular activity, support and health services administration, the only information in the main estimates is \$98 million. It would be very difficult for anybody that does not have access to the background information that we have, and that we have provided to ask anything meaningful. I know the Minister is only following the direction of FMBS, but I want to make the point again that this is a public document, we are a public government, we should be providing enough information for people to have a meaningful understanding of the kind of money we are spending. Hundred million dollar chunks of cash is a lot of

money to just have no information on. My question, Mr. Chairman, is in relation to the Tabled Document 30-13(4) tabled on January 31st which details activities by

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task. In particular, I would just like the Minister to explain the increase under information systems, task 6913, from '96/97 to this current year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will ask Mr. Ramsden to speak to it please. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The deputy minister, Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This increase is specifically related to the roll out of the community based information collection and data management systems, primarily in the areas of encounters with the health and social service system. The system that we are calling Wellcom, which is intended to be a health centre based system that will allow for the collection of information on each encounter by a patient, and track the services that are provided to that person, linked to medical travel, so that we can provide linkage to both the cost of travel and the reasons for travel, the services provided to the person when they are out of their community. It also includes the initial stages of implementation of the child welfare information system, and some amount of equipment in both the Baffin and Inuvik to support the initial pilot programs in telehealth, telemedicine as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a government informatics strategy, there was a government wide initiative. Could the Minister indicate whether there is a departmental strategy that links these different areas that the deputy Minister touched on? The

Wellcom system, the start for the child welfare system, in the attempt to integrate social service in the medical side of the department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I am getting a signal from the honourable Minister that Mr. Ramsden will respond. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The informatics plan that the department submits is primarily a numbers based document. It is supported by a strategy that we refer to as network 99, which outlines the implementation of new information management systems and has begun to map out the systems job that we have to twin the various systems that we will need to accomplish before 1999. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This whole area of information systems, especially in Health and Social Services where it is, I think, clearly recognized that the systems we have now are not adequate for the task that is being demanded of them. I think it is very important and it is long overdue. I was wondering if the Minister or Mr. Ramsden could indicate, is there a time line in this network 99 plan and has that document been shared with us? It rings no bell, but it sounds like it is very interesting and important. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I generally go through the Minister but in this case I am getting another signal from the Minister to recognize Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

The strategic document that we are using uses a two-year time frame and it is linked in large part to the roll out of the digital network that will provide essentially the information highway that is needed to support the transmittal and collection of data. The work is set to begin in both the Baffin and Inuvik in April or May of this year, depending on timing. Some of the initial training events have already taken place for our regional staff in those two regions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Will this electronic 99 system, since it is tied into the digital network, be able to tie in when it is all over and done, in terms of construction with all the other government-wide systems so there is an ability to transfer information? Is there a paper available on Network 99? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Ramsden. I will refer it to Mr. Ramsden to finish off this topic, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Ramsden. Thank you.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, there is a document that we are using to support the discussions with each of the boards. It has not been released publicly, if you will, but it certainly has been on the table to people between the department and boards and the people that are supporting us. Very much one of the goals that we have set for ourselves is to accomplish the linkages that the Member referred to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question on this issue would be, would that information since it is being shared with health boards and since, though we are a public government we are not public in the strictest sense of the word, would we be able to have access to that document. I would be very interested in seeing that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Minister. No problem.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I am told that the Speaker is now in the building. We have some business to do that we have not finished with the Speaker. I think that we had better step out of this House to do that. So we will take a 15 minute break.

-- Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I would like to call this committee back to order. We are dealing with Health and Social Services 1997/98 main estimates. Particular activity is support and

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health services administration. We have Mr. Ootes. I have some questions I wanted to ask the Minister. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am looking at the tabled document, which was tabled on January 31, 1997, and the areas I noted were support and health services administration. There were four specific areas where the main increases have taken place. One was the information systems \$5 million, the other was the territories hospital increase from \$18 million to \$19 million and physicians outside the NWT \$14 million to \$15 million and medical travel benefits from \$21 million to \$26 million. On the medical travel benefits program, that is a dramatic increase, and I assume that 1996/97 was a substantial increase from the year before. I am making that assumption from earlier discussions. Could the Minister tell me what steps have been taken to try and analyze this whole area of medical travel, and what steps are being taken to try and get some control in that area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister?

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct. It does increase yearly. Primarily as a result of forced growth issues that were spoken of earlier. We are trying to put in place some more monitoring to see whether or not the validity of travel is required, and to try to stem some of the growth in those areas. Some

of the boards have put in place requests for proposals or medevac services, to reduce the charges when it comes to the unscheduled travel. There are some actions to address this issue. I have mentioned earlier about the non-medical travel. The escort travel is another area that has been reduced to try to alleviate some of the pressure on this growth area, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

I take it this is a budget projection and therefore, with the programs that the Minister has outlined, it still is a \$5 million increase. I would hope that the Minister can really enforce and try and do what he can in this particular area. It is the biggest budget item in the whole support and health services administration. The concern, Mr. Chairman, are those four areas represent the \$12 million increase in the budget. The request I have, looking at the whole budget for this particular area, support health services administration, it is \$98 million this year, that is larger than many of our departments, in financial terms. I would hope that the Minister could supply further information on this particular area, specifically for next year's budget. This is very summarized into one page and it certainly does not tell me a lot about where the expenditures have taken place. I wonder if the Minister could commit to providing more detail in future budgets in the business plans?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister?

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The budget information is prepared based on Financial Management direction for consistency throughout the government, and will continue to take direction from them. On that, as far as some of the more detailed information in our business plan preparations, that takes place through the Standing Committee Review. Not all Members have access to that information, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Operations and maintenance. Total operations and maintenance, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have a question. I want to make a comment to see if you would agree. A call for a quorum. I think it is unfortunate when we identified Health and Social Services as one of the major departments that we wanted to discuss, we have been spending most of the afternoon with maybe four Members in the House, discussing this issue that we have been working on for nine months in this department. It affects every one of our constituents. I do not think we have a quorum, Mr. Chairman. I think people should be here for this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I will take your advice and ring the bell.

-Pause-

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Chair recognizes the quorum. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some time ago, I believe in the fall session, I asked the Minister about the mammogram program for the Northwest Territories. I wondered, at the time, if the Minister would look into the possibility of providing literature throughout the territories on breast cancer. I wonder if the Minister could update me about the committee that was established to look into this particular area of concern. I believe there was a committee the Minister made reference to, that was looking into the concerns of breast cancer throughout the Northwest Territories, and the distribution and creation of literature. Could the Minister advise us on that, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, kindly. Mr. Minister.

MR. NG:

Mr. Chairman, I have not had an opportunity to review any of that information that was coordinated or compiled, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. For the benefit of Members, we are on page 6-13 of the Health and Social Services activity summary. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you. I wonder if the Minister could just confirm that there is a committee in existence to look into this and what the mandate of that committee is?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Minister for Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

The last time Mr. Ramsden responded, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, the deputy minister of the department, Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the committee that the Member refers to, is the NWT Working Group on Breast Cancer Screening. There is a surgeon that is

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currently working at Stanton Regional Hospital that has agreed to take on the responsibilities of chairing this group. They have been working to develop guidelines that are useful in the NWT, to guide breast cancer screening. Dr. Kinley is the surgeon. He also represents the NWT on the National Committee for the Canadian Breast Cancer Initiative. In addition to the development of guidelines for breast cancer screening, they are working on areas of information exchange and how to develop appropriate information in addition to the information that is currently available in all communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Yes, that is the committee I was referring to. I wonder if the Minister or deputy minister could tell us, is there a published guideline for this committee?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will refer it to Mr. Ramsden again until it is finished, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a guideline that is available. The department has yet to adopt it or enforce it across the Northwest Territories. It is in common use in some, but not all of the regions. There is a dialogue between the Working Group and those boards who have yet to adopt the guideline, to discuss the relevance and priority issues surrounding their adoption and use of the guidelines.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the concerns I had expressed last fall, was the need for literature to be made available in the communities in the appropriate languages. It is not necessarily needed to create our own documents from scratch here in the north. We could probably take documents from the south and have them translated. I wonder if any initiative has been taken on that end, because I had asked about that in the fall. I think it is important to many people here in the Territories. Women, who are very concerned, would like to see as much literature and promotion of this medical problem as possible, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the Minister or deputy minister could advise us if literature has been provided to the communities in the appropriate aboriginal languages?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, each board has put a different priority on this. I would have to do some consultation within the department and boards and come back to the Member. I am not current on the extent to which plain language information has been shared in each area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am confused, Mr. Chairman, as to the purpose of this committee. What is the purpose? Where are they going, and when are they going to conclude some discussion on this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is an ongoing issue. It is not as high of an issue with some boards as with others, I believe, because of the statistics in respect to breast cancer. Different boards put different priorities on it. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Support and health services administration, I have Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have been talking about a dismal record of this government to increase the amount of affirmative action candidates within the government. I was wondering what types of measures the Minister has implemented to ensure proper implementation of affirmative action in his department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Under the administration, Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, it would be through our human resources people that we picked up from personnel in maintaining the Affirmative Action Policy of this government through our on going hiring. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have there been any workshops for instance, to ensure that affirmative action has been consistently interpreted and applied?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will ask Mr. Ramsden to address that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Deputy Minister, Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, the human resource staff within the department have a regular conference call with all of the human resource people in each of the boards and regional offices. Issues around improper support for the department's affirmative action plan are often discussed in those sessions to ensure consistency. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad to see there is some type of networking system. However, has there been any formal work shops or training sessions to ensure that affirmative action is properly understood and properly implemented?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, the activities of the department are more appropriately described. We have had

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formal discussions between the department and the human resource people that staff each of the boards. As well, it is a matter for discussion at our senior management group as well, where the human resource people discuss issues around proper support for our affirmative action plan. There have not been separate work shops than what I have described

in the teleconference approach that we have pursued.
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do the health boards have to comply with the affirmative action policy?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Minister.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Yes, they do, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I believe we have final supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What measures have been taken to ensure that the health boards are not making qualifications for jobs too high?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, the classification of jobs, and therefore, the review of job descriptions and the classifications within them are monitored and made consistent across the NWT. All boards and the department have an identical process to review the appropriateness of qualifications. As well, the department compiles statistics on both staffing and the overall compliment of staff, that work in the health and social service system, with respect to a success at changing the proportion of aboriginal people in our work force. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations. For the record, we are dealing with Health and Social Services in 1997/98 main estimates. We are on support and health services administration. Operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance is \$98,587,000. Agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of branch and contributions, there has been an increase of \$8,250,000 from the previous year. Can the Minister inform us of what is included in this \$8 million plus?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is primarily the funding for the social workers going over to the health boards. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Were those positions transferred to the health boards or were they transferred to the department?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, those positions were with the department and they have been transferred out of the department and into the boards now with the amalgamations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe the Minister can clarify for me then, if that was primarily for that approximately \$8 million, would there not have been a corresponding decrease in salaries and wages?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the reductions would have come from a different activity summary, because they were under community programs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If that is the case, and I have just flipped the page, there is approximately a \$2 million reduction in that item. Where is the other \$6 million going?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we can provide the reconciliation if the Member wants tomorrow, because it goes back and forth between tasks and activities, which makes it complicated to explain right off the bat. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is complicated, but I see three activity levels here. It is hard to say where it is coming from. I will just go with the earlier comments. It would be much easier if it was laid out differently in our document. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, are you taking that under advisement? Thank you. Total operation and maintenance fees is \$98,587,000 agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When I asked about the qualifications for new positions, the answer indicated that they were keeping statistics of aboriginal people. Do they keep statistics for all affirmative action people or just for aboriginal people?

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

We keep statistics for all the priorities in the affirmative action category, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, could we get an indication then of the amount of affirmative action people that have been hired at the Stanton Hospital in the last year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we will provide that information along with the other affirmative action statistics that were requested earlier. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Health support and health services administration, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, could we get an indication of the amount of positions that were filled, and the amount of affirmative action candidates, as well as what type of position was filled?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Erasmus, on your last note question, the microphone was out. Could you repeat the last line please?

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just indicated that I am interested in the type of position that was filled, meaning senior management, middle management, that type of thing. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we will.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleague from Inuvik raised an interesting point in regards to the grants and contributions especially in relation to the Minister's initial comment that the \$8 million increase reflected the transfer of positions to the health boards from the department. When they are doing the reconciliation they indicated that they would do, I would ask that they also keep in mind that there was an accompanying \$12 million increase to grants and contributions to community programs and services which is where I would assume the money for the transfer to health boards would have gone, not into support for the health administration. The funding for board and managements is under the next activity. It is a confusing issue, especially with the kind of information we have at our fingertips, to try and sort that out.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I have indicated, we will provide a reconciliation of all the moves of the social services funding, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister is indicating that the supporting document will be provided. Total operations and maintenance, \$98,587,000. Mr. Steen. Thank you.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am having the same type of problems sorting out just where my question would apply, regarding the regional health boards. I wonder if it is appropriate for me to ask here, what is the amount of funding given to the Nunavut region health board?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Since we are covering the board here as well, I will allow the Minister to respond. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, for the Inuvik health board, \$24,966,006. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How does that compare to last year's contribution?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

We will provide that information along with the reconciliation of the social services, tomorrow. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, I presume that is social services for the Inuvik regional health board? Is it going to be reflected in the \$24 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it would be.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance is \$98,587,000. Agreed? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just, once again, to try and address the area of which activity this would fall under. Is the area of when budget targets are set to all the different health boards, would this be covered under this area, or would it be covered under community programs and services?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Minister. Again, if you want to assign it to your officials, it is up to you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are different programs that are applicable to the health boards under both activities summaries, so it is a combination of both. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Then I will ask this question of the Minister. With a budget target set last year for all the health boards, how many health boards actually achieved their budget targets?

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will ask Mr. Ramsden to speak to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, based on our current set of projections, there are two boards that are anticipated to, at least in a marginal term, exceed the savings, and therefore, essentially balance their budget. There are three boards, so that those two are the Stanton and Kitikmeot boards. Three boards are projecting balanced, the Inuvik regional board, the Hay River community board, and Fort Smith. Three other boards, at this point, are projecting some amount of deficit. One being, like I said, a board that is not the Mackenzie group together, but not in effect a board. The Baffin regional board and the Keewatin regional board have a small deficit projected. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Kitikmeot happens to be, Ministers, my region. Thank you. Total operations and maintenance is \$98,587,000. I have Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister had indicated that two staffing officers from Personnel Secretariat had been hired. Does that number include the amount of people that may have been hired by the health boards as well?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Minister for Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that is just for the department itself. Boards have always had their own staffing personnel on staff. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is it possible to get an indication of staffing officers who are hired by the Stanton board?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Bit of detail, Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can try to find out that information for the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Support and health services administration, total operations and maintenance is \$98,587,000. Do we agree? Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Public Works announced user say/user pay to come into force this year, and I understand that it is going to be reflected in all departments. Is the funding for all the maintenance of the facilities, hospitals and nursing stations, whatever, going to be transferred to the boards?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Minister, Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, does the department know how much that might be?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we do not have that here, but we will provide that with the reconciliation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I get the impression that the Minister is aware of the figure. I guess what I might want to know is, is the funding the boards will be receiving equal to the funding it cost DPW last year to maintain those buildings?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will ask Mr. Ramsden to speak to it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The numbers are not finalized yet, and there is some discussion right now about how the actual maintenance function will be transferred, if and when. The discussions we have had so far with Public Works would suggest that there has to be the same amount of money come across. With the discussions around utilities, there has been an initiative taken to reduce the amount of utilities by some percentage, as a responsibility to pay the bills transferred over. In the maintenance side, that is not the approach that has been taken. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, part of my question is, the overall maintenance costs, not just the cost for the utilities, but the overall maintenance costs, in other words, are the boards going to be expected to do the same job with less personnel, or contract out the service cheaper than DPW was doing it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. While Mr. Steen is speaking, through the microphone we hear side conversations. I would like to remind the Members to show respect when the Member is speaking. We can hear you through the microphone from Mr. Steen's. We know exactly what you are saying, so please keep that in mind. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will ask Mr. Ramsden to speak to it again. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Ramsden

MR. RAMSDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not have the numbers and the boards do not have the numbers right now. It is our view that the approach that Public Works will take on the maintenance itself for assets, that there will be the same amount of money that they are currently using.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen. Total operations and maintenance is \$98,587,000. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have there been any employees asking for, for want of a better term, a buy out package in these recent rounds of cuts?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I am losing my patience with the extended conversations over in the corner over there. I think it should take place outside the Chambers here. Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as you know, a majority of the reductions for Health and Social Services were undertaken by the reorganization prior to this fiscal year. Those buy outs that would have taken place, have taken place. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Have all employees that are effected by the 1997/98 year proposed budget, have all employees whose positions that will be effected, have they been notified, have they received notices of layoff at this time? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will ask Mr. Ramsden to speak to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, within the department, that is the case. With respect to the decentralization of Mackenzie Regional Health Services, that is not the case. We have not worked through the issues around the positions effected in total in that area yet, so we are not able to get to that position. It is not being done from a point of reduction, but there are people potentially effected in Yellowknife because of the decentralization. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How many positions within the department are vacant at this time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

I can not answer that at this time, Mr. Chairman. We will have to come back tomorrow with a snapshot of it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. I have Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My questions concern the utilities, as I have been questioning in the House lately, on the possible increase of rates to the high temp system that will have a severe impact on places like the Inuvik Regional Hospital. I would like to know if the department is aware of this and how are they preparing for it? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will have Mr. Ramsden to speak. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, we are aware of the issue and certainly have made it clear, both on the part of the board and ourselves, that there is no way for better management of utilities, at least on the heat side, to affect any change in the bill that comes in every month for the hospital. There would have to be complete funding in that area. It is essentially a fixed rate and they can not exert any management effort to change the bill. We are certainly aware of that issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. I have Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of the former staffing officers from the Department of Personnel that were hired in this department, could we get some details as to their situation as to when they were hired? When they were hired, did this add two extra people working in that particular area of human resources?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman. It added one. One was a replacement and one was an incremental change. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can we get an indication of why they had to add this extra person?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

We added the incremental resource to make sure that we could properly respond to the responsibilities that

we took on in terms of personnel issues and labour relations issues, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The people involved in human resources, were they consulted on the appropriateness of doing away with most of the Personnel Secretariat and the human resources people within the department for them to take on those added responsibilities? Were they consulted?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

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MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, they were consulted extensively as we took on the different responsibilities because they came on incrementally. It brought the department, in many respects, into line with the boards, because the boards have been doing their own staffing for some time now. To my recollection, the changes were viewed very positively, without exception. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance is \$98 million. I have Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that the boards will be taking on the responsibility and maintenance of their buildings. Does this include the buildings within smaller communities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, they have not taken on the responsibility yet. The discussions are leading to that, and certainly the responsibility for maintenance of community based facilities outside of our regional centre is part of the discussion. Also, part of the discussion is having that maintenance responsibility

carried out by a local authority, as opposed to the boards formerly employing people. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, if the boards have not taken on the responsibility, then I presume that the money is not in this budget?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct, the money is not in this budget yet. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

On a different line of questioning, Mr. Chairman, would the boards be responsible for recruiting their own doctors and nurses for the regions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, did you get the question? Mr. Steen, would you please repeat for the Minister?

MR. STEEN:

Would the boards be responsible for recruiting their own doctors and nurses for that particular region?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

The boards are responsible for recruiting their own personnel, except in some circumstances, there are doctors up there that operate out of private clinics, and that would not be recruited by the board, but they might use their services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. By the way, Mr. Steen you have two more questions coming up. Are you okay on that now? Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. Mr. Ootes. Yes, Mr. Henry, I apologize.

MR. HENRY:

Of the employees that were laid off last year, how many of those employees would have been affirmative action candidates?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Total number of employees that were laid off were 86. Priority 1 there was 39, priority 2 - 1, priority 3 - 46. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

What is the length of time before someone receives a package, whether affirmative action or otherwise? If they take a package, what are the conditions on rehiring? Can that person be rehired the next day? What is the department's position on the rehiring of employees that received a package?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The honourable Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not know the details on that. I will have to get the information and provide it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I am informed that the question was asked under the FMB review of their budget. Total operations and maintenance. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wondered if some of the Minister's staff would have the knowledge at hand, if a person that was laid off and got a package, if they were affirmative action candidates, could they get hired the next day or is there a time line in between? I

realize he may not have the exact details, but I would like an answer to that, if the Minister can or some of his staff? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I will ask Mr. Ramsden to respond. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, the department is pursuing avenues to try and hire people back that are on a lay off list, as is every other department in the government. The fact that an employee that has received the severance package is aboriginal, would not affect any differently than a non-aboriginal person would, their ability to be recruited back into the public service, other than the normal priorities. The fact of it is, we will have to go back to the specifics. But the severance package is intended to reflect notice and history, as opposed to a forward look in terms of their ability to be recruited back into the public service. If they have taken a package, and they come back into the public service without the years of service to their credit, we will have to come back

to the Member, with the specific guidelines that we follow in each case. They are consistent across the government. Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The chair recognizes Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Minister if the regional boards housing policy would be the same as the territorial government's?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that they are. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, does that mean that the regional boards, if they do take over a nursing station in the communities, that they will not be supplying housing to these nurses?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As it stands now, they would be following current GNWT policies, where we are getting out of housing, although there is a recognition for health care for nurses that have always been accommodated with accommodation, because there is a need due to the recruitment or retention issue with nurses. That is an issue the department continues to look at. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance is \$98,587,000. Agreed. Mr. Steen.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure I got the answer. Is the Minister suggesting that nurses are treated differently than other GNWT employees?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister?

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They currently abide by all the current government staff housing policies, Mr. Chairman. They are not treated separately, unless there is a circumstance where they are living in the health centre, an attached residence, where there is a certain accommodation made because they are living right where they work, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Steen?

MR. STEEN:

Mr. Chairman, would these nurses that are living in the health centres pay rent?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, they would.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Total operations and maintenance, \$98,587,000. Agreed? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Of that 6 million dollars in salaries and wages, could we get an indication of how much that is for casual wages?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Qujannamiik. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will provide that information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I will recognize the clock and report progress to the Speaker. Thank you. I thank the Minister and the witnesses for appearing before the committee. Thank you, kindly.

MR. SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We are on Item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Ningark.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. NINGARK:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee has been considering Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1997-98, and Committee Report 6 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, we would also like to report further progress on your age... happy 49th birthday, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Arlooktoo. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, the meeting of the Western Coalition immediately after adjournment this evening. At 9:00 a.m. tomorrow of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow of the Ordinary Members' Caucus.

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 20, 1997:

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

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10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees

12. Report of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 10, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 3, 1996-1997
 - Bill 11, Loan Authorization Act, 1997-1998
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1997-98
 - Committee Report 2-13(4), Standing Committee on Government Operations - Report on the 1997/98 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 3-13(4), Standing Committee on Infrastructure Report on the 1997/98 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 4-13(4), Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development Report on the 1997/98 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 6-13(4), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the 1997/98 Main Estimates
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned to Thursday, February 20, 1997, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT