



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Barnabas, Mr. Enuaraq, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Evaloarjuk, Honourable Sam Gargan, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Miltenberger, Honourable Don Morin, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Mr. Ningark, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Picco, Mr. Rabesca, Mr. Roland, Mr. Steen, Honourable Manikot 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 the constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve. Amen.

SPEAKER (Hon. Samuel Gargan):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Good morning. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 71-13(5): Minister Absent From the House

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Goo Arlooktoo will be absent from the House today to attend a meeting with the Minister of Justice and Minister of DIAND in Ottawa. As well, the Honourable Charles Dent will be absent from the House for today, tomorrow and Wednesday to attend the Ministers of Education Meeting in Toronto and to meet with the Minister of DIAND in Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Morin.

Minister's Statement 72-13(5): Minister Absent From the House

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi will be absent from the House today and part of

tomorrow to represent the GNWT at the Memorial Service for a long-time northerner, GNWT employee and former mayor of Norman Wells, Max Melnyk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Ms. Thompson.

Minister's Statement 73-13(5): NWT Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, each year in the Northwest Territories, tragedy strikes as a direct result of fires. In many cases such fires are set by children. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the NWT Fire Service recognize the urgency of this problem and have worked cooperatively to develop a comprehensive, community-based strategy. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform Members about the NWT Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program. This program will help communities understand the problem of juvenile fire setting and provide an approach that can be used to identify, assess and educate children on fire safety.

Mr. Speaker, this program will also provide communities with a process to assess children and refer problem firesetters to the appropriate mental health professionals. It also includes followup with the children, which helps the communities and the department evaluate the effectiveness of the program and make appropriate adjustments.

The main resource used in this program is the Juvenile Firesetters Intervention Manual. The manual was first used in a pilot training project held in Yellowknife last November, co-sponsored by the office of the Fire Marshal, the NWT Fire Chiefs Association and the Yellowknife Fire Department; training was provided to community fire departments, the Yellowknife Public School Board and representatives from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Health and Social Services. Regional Assistant Fire Marshals will be implementing the program directly to community organizations in the next few months.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program compliments two other initiatives. The existing Learn Not To Burn Education Program and a new prevention program called Risk Watch. Risk Watch will provide children with a unique opportunity

to learn about injury prevention in the areas such as motor vehicles, fire and burn, poisoning, firearm injury, water safety, as well as choking and suffocation. This comprehensive program can be taught as a stand alone unit by community groups or incorporated into school programs. Risk Watch helps children acquire the skills and knowledge they need to recognize and avoid risks and develop a safety sense.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that these initiatives will provide the tools, information and a network of support to help communities address the problem of fire play and firesetting. I also believe that through these programs we will help northerners protect themselves, their families, their friends and their communities from harm. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 304-13(5): Fort Smith Highway to Southern Canada

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MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the last almost 40 years, the people of Fort Smith have been lobbying and working toward a direct road south. Last week, on Friday and Saturday, we had in Fort Smith the Honourable Andy Mitchell, Secretary of State for Parks, and Ethel Blondin-Andrew, visit the community, work and listen to what the community has to say about this road. They flew over the route and spent a good deal of time in meetings listening to the people while they were there with the band and Metis. Mr. Speaker, this latest initiative on the part of the community was given its boost last April when the Honourable Sheila Copps was in Fort Smith to announce the relocation of the parks headquarters to Fort Smith. At that time she spoke very positively about the road and building. The Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew invited Mr. Mitchell to Fort Smith, and he came as I indicated on the weekend.

Mr. Speaker, the community leadership pulled together on this particular initiative especially under the leadership of Mayor Martselos. The community

had a full day of activities that cumulated in a fine community feast. The honourable Mr. Mitchell was very positive about what we had to say and his reception did the community proud. I would like to congratulate the community leadership and all the people in Fort Smith who worked together to make this event such a positive one. Hopefully, the message we receive from the federal government in the not too distant future about the road south will be a very positive one and move this process along. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Rabesca.

Member's Statement 305-13(5): Legal Drinking Age

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a concern that affects us all. We live in a time when all our communities are suffering from high unemployment, increasing demands on our social programs, ever increasing youth crime and violence. The pressures on youth today are staggering. In most cases of crime, alcohol was involved. When asked why youth are in trouble, the answer usually is boredom. With boredom, peer pressure takes on more importance which can lead to making bad decisions, like starting to drink. In the NWT we have all of these problems in all our communities. We also have one of the highest consumption rates of alcohol on a per capita basis than most in the rest of Canada. To add to this, we also have one of the lowest ages to legally drink in Canada. Is it no wonder that we have all the problems that we now face? Mr. Speaker, we can change the legal drinking age and later today I will ask the Minister responsible for the Liquor Control Board his views on this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

Member's Statement 306-13(5): Results of The Pas, Manitoba Dog Sled Race

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give results on the 105-mile world championship race in The Pas, Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately this race was halted after two days because of bad temperatures. It was not because the temperatures were too harsh. It was because the temperatures had

warmed up and there was considerable slush on the course which froze in the evening. It was considered dangerous conditions. After two days, the race was halted. I would like to give a summary of the Northwest Territories entrants. After two days, the final results are: in second place was Frank Kelly from Yellowknife, in fourth place was Richard Beck from Yellowknife, in fifth place was Grant Beck from Yellowknife, in seventh place was Raymond Beck from Hay River; in eighth place was Arthur Beck from Hay River; in tenth place was Heather Beck from Yellowknife, in 12th place was Joe Hickers from Baker Lake, in 13th place was Danny Beck from Hay River and 15th place was Henry Landry from Kakisa. There were a few people who did not finish, Sam Perrino from Yellowknife as well as Ernie Campbell from Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, I am sure everybody in the Legislature here joins me in congratulating everyone who competed in this particular race. We wish them all the best in their southern tour. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Enuaraq.

Member's Statement 307-13(5): The Need for a Social Worker in Broughton Island

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Mr. Speaker, the mental and physical health of a community is important. Since October of 1997, the community of Broughton Island has been without the services of a social worker. Mr. Speaker, there are social workers available, but the high cost of housing in Broughton Island deters them from coming. When the rent is almost as much as your salary, there is little reason to come. Housing in smaller, remote communities need to be more affordable. They need to be more affordable to attract essential staff to our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Todd.

Member's Statement 308-13(5): Achievements of Kivalliq Partners in Development

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure, today, to take this opportunity to tell Members of this Assembly about the successes that have been achieved by the Kivalliq Partners in Development. Kivalliq Partners in Development was formed to deliver the region's economic and development programs and services in a coordinated and cooperative arrangement that draws on the strengths of these three partner organizations: one, Sakku Investments Incorporated, the business arm of the Kivalliq Inuit Association; two, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and three, Community Futures, a Government of the Northwest Territories funded organization mandated to provide small business loans to regional businesses to promote

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economic growth through the creation of employment.

The Kivalliq Partners have a vision that each Kivalliq community will develop an experienced labour force and build the business infrastructure needed to create a growing economy, one which provides communities and residents opportunities to become more self-sufficient and self-reliant. Through a teamwork approach, which reduces duplication of effort and streamlines services in a cost-effective manner, the Kivalliq Partners provide one-stop shopping for all clients of the Keewatin region who seek economic development services and programs.

Mr. Speaker, the many achievements of the Kivalliq Partners in Development are too numerous to list in detail, but I will touch on some of the highlights:

In 1996-97, the value of projects distributed throughout the seven communities in the region totalled \$5,201,567;

Local decision-making committees in the communities approved 30 percent of the total projects;

Ninety-eight percent of all approved projects were to majority-owned Inuit businesses;

The average amount of an approved application was \$16,943, with a total of 307 applications approved, reflecting the Partners' commitment to small businesses in smaller communities;

These investments in business projects resulted in the creation of 4,880 weeks of employment for Kivalliq residents, with \$1.952 million paid out in wages;

The Kivalliq Partners estimate a five percent reduction in the regional unemployment rate as a result of investments made in economic development, and

The Kivalliq Grants to Small Businesses provided assistance to over 132 residents with their projects, while the Kivalliq Training Program sponsored 370 local residents in skills' development, education, training and labour force developments.

Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Member for Keewatin Central is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Do I have any nays? Mr. Todd, you have unanimous consent.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I do not say this often. Mr. Speaker, a goal-orientated partnership which achieves such positive results can only flourish through the dedication and commitment of a team of hard working individuals. I would like to pay tribute to a few of these people whose efforts have contributed to the success of Kivalliq Partners: the board of directors, including Mr. Joe Kaludjak, president, and Mr. Yvo Airut, vice- president; Mr. Graeme Dargo, a good friend of mine, who has made a tireless contribution to economic development in the Keewatin region and who is to be congratulated on his recent promotion to the position of assistant deputy minister with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. MACA is, indeed, fortunate to be gaining such a talented and dedicated employee;

Mr. Ron Roach who replaces Mr. Dargo as superintendent of RWED in Rankin Inlet and who, I have every confidence, has the skill and abilities to carry on the good work which is now underway and last, but not least, Mr. Richard Connelly, managing director of Kivalliq Partners and for all of his talented and hard working staff.

Mr. Speaker, Kivalliq Partners in Development is an outstanding example of the growth that can be reached and the improvements that can be made to client services when government strives to work cooperatively with public agencies in the delivery of programs and services. I am extremely pleased this morning to be able to share this success story with Members of the Assembly today. Thank you.

--Applause

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 309-13(5): Nunavut Community Economic Development Conference

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the week of February 10th to 13th, an important community economic development conference was held in Iqaluit. The conference was called Parnaijiit, which roughly translates into people who prepare. The conference focused on community economic development and training for practitioners in the field. The conference was sponsored by Kakivak Association and the Baffin RWED office.

Mr. Speaker, the conference brought together over 60 delegates from across Nunavut. The delegates participated in workshops, panel discussions. We heard from guest speakers and had an opportunity to network with other professionals in the field.

The principal goal of the conference was to look at training and ongoing support for community economic development officers in Nunavut. The Standing Committee on Education for CANDO also participated. They introduced their National Certified Economic Developer Program. Attending the meeting, the CANDO participants also exchanged information and opinions with Nunavut community economic development workers and educators. James Paton of the Government of the Northwest Territories' RWED Baffin office, and a resident of Iqaluit, was selected to sit on the National CANDO Board.

Mr. Speaker, from all accounts, the conference was very successful. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers from Kakivak and RWED for facilitating a very professional and informative conference. Plans are underway to follow up with the Parnaijiit conference in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 310-13(4): Employment for Persons with Disabilities Research Project

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to talk about a new research project currently underway in Yellowknife. It is called the employment for persons with disability research project and its work began last month. Its goal is simple but its potential impact is quite huge.

Between now and the end of March, researchers will talk with as many employers around town as possible. They will be making employers aware of everything people with disabilities have to offer, as employees. Many people with disabilities are kept from working, not by their disability, but by our attitude toward them. Part of that involves the language we use to describe people. It is still commonplace to hear the terms disabled or handicapped. Workers in the field use, people with disabilities, in order to emphasize their clients are, in fact, people first.

Part of this research project's objective is to identify how we can improve our workplace environment for people who happen to have disabilities. That can involve everything from personal attitudes to improving access to buildings. We have, over the years, had people with disabilities elected to this very chamber and they have proved themselves capable indeed. While this project tries to bridge a gap that exists in parts of our community, it also affords us a chance to examine our personal attitudes toward people with disabilities and evaluate how we, one on one, can do better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Members' statements. Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement 311-13(5): The Need to Focus on Long-Term Job Strategies

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the 13th Assembly, I have seen many things change. The biggest change I have seen is us going from spending to reductions. We have also seen the continuation of control being shifted from headquarters to the regions.

We have spoken about improving the lives of all northerners and this, Mr. Speaker, is where I believe we need to focus, or should I say refocus. Past governments have tried to help northerners by providing a level of social programs comparable to our southern counterparts. Mr. Speaker, healthy communities start with healthy families. Healthy families need parents to be positive role models. Part of being a positive role model is to instill in our children good work habits. This, Mr. Speaker, cannot be done without employment.

Mr. Speaker, jobs are what the people of the Northwest Territories need. This is where we need to start focusing or refocusing. If we are to reduce the dependency on government social programs, we, as a government, need job strategies, not just year-to-year strategies, but long-term job strategies. Mr. Speaker, if we are going to set these examples, we need to start focusing long term. We need to put people into jobs that they can show their children they can be positive role models. Instead of going to the income support office, they will be going to their work office and picking up a real pay cheque. If we are going to make a difference, we need to start focusing on long-term commitments of this government.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard many a time how we can do this and I will bring it up one more time, roads, Mr. Speaker. We need to focus on roads, not just the one community or one area, but the whole of the Western Territory and the eastern if they would like to consider that. Long-term job strategies, Mr. Speaker, we need to start focusing on that. Thank you.

--Applause.

MR. SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement 312-13(5): Presentation of the Commissioner's Award for Bravery to Alayna Krutko and the Passing of Clifford Francis

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a good news, bad news, statement. First the good news, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate my niece, Alayna Krutko of Fort Providence, who received the Commissioner's Award for bravery which was presented to her on Saturday.

--Applause.

This is an award which is given to an individual who shows acts of bravery. Alayna saved another young person from drowning in the Mackenzie River.

My other statement, Mr. Speaker, is in regard to a close friend of mine, Clifford Francis, who lost his life tragically yesterday in Fort McPherson. Mr. Francis was in the prime of his life. He was trying to take steps to represent his community by serving time on the hamlet and band councils. He was a CARS operator in Fort McPherson.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to send my condolences out to the Francis family of Fort McPherson, and especially his common-law wife, Karen Collet, and his brothers and sisters. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I have allowed Mr. Krutko to go ahead with his second one due to the circumstances, but the rule is quite clear on Members' statements. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 4: RETURNS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Oral Question 343-13(5): GNWT Role Re: Telephone Rates

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Ootes, on February 17th, asked a question in regard to the Government of the Northwest Territories' role on telephone rates.

The CRTC will hold regional hearings on the High Cost Area Fund in Iqaluit on June 25, 1998. The CRTC has been asked

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to establish a video link from Yellowknife to the hearing and to have audio conference links from Cambridge Bay, Hay River, Inuvik and Rankin Inlet.

Other one-day regional hearings will be held in: Whitehorse, Yukon; Prince Rupert, British Columbia; Grand Prairie, Alberta; Timmins, Ontario; Thompson, Manitoba; Val d'Or, Quebec and Deer Lake, Newfoundland. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Returns to oral questions. Mr. Todd.

Return To Oral Question 151-13(5): Employment Generated Through Aurora Fund

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In return to an oral question asked by Mr. Picco on January 29th with respect to employment generated through the Aurora Fund.

In making lending decisions, the Aurora Fund board of directors considers applicants whose projects will, one, create and/or maintain jobs; two, provide for economic diversification and/or three, attract new capital

To date, there have been 44 full and part-time jobs created or maintained as a result of loans made by the Aurora Fund. In addition, some temporary jobs were created during the installations or construction of certain projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 401-13(5): The Need for a Social Worker in Broughton Island

MR. ENUARAQ:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As indicated in my Member's statement, Broughton Island needs a social worker. Will the Minister advise me when the community of Broughton Island will get a social worker? My question is directed to the Minister of Health and Social Services, the honourable Mr. Ng. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 401-13(5): The Need for a Social Worker in Broughton Island

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak of a date when a social worker will be placed in Broughton Island. I can say that I will check with the Iqaluit Regional Health and Social Services Board to find out what the status is of recruitment for that

position and find out what steps are being taken in the interim to provide services for the community of Broughton Island for social services. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 402-13(5): GNWT Job Evaluation System

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question will be addressed to the Premier though it relates more to a labour issue. It is in regard to the job evaluation system that the government is working toward implementing. I am concerned based on what I hear the union saying that they see this prograding job evaluation system as meaningless. How does the government anticipate or plan to bridge what appears to be a significant gap between themselves and the UNW given the tight timeframes if they want to negotiate something before April, 1998? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 402-13(5): GNWT Job Evaluation System

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance and the FMBS is involved in negotiations with the union. We hope to bridge the gap by negotiating with the union to come to a good settlement for all people of the north. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 402-13(5): GNWT Job Evaluation System

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the UNW indicates that they were not involved or consulted as this whole system was developed and that now, they are faced with responding to something after the fact, as opposed to having had a proactive role at the front end. Could the Premier indicate how this system was

developed and was there consultation along the way or is that just now taking place? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 402-13(5): GNWT Job Evaluation System

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The UNW, if I heard the Member's question correctly, is saying that they were not involved but, in fact, Mr. Speaker, the UNW was provided training on the Hay Job Evaluation System in 1997, prior to it being used to evaluate jobs. At that time, there were no objections to the Hay Job Evaluation System or the process for evaluating the jobs. The UNW appeared supportive of the initiative to develop a bias-free job evaluation system for implementation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary To Question 402-13(5): GNWT Job Evaluation System

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier confident in spite of the apparent initial negative

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response from the UNW that, in fact, over the next six weeks that an agreement will be able to be negotiated and that there will be sufficient room to give and take to reach a satisfactory negotiated settlement? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 402-13(5): GNWT Job Evaluation System

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, as a government, have put our position on the table. We have made it very public, but we feel it is fair to all northern people in these negotiations. No matter what you do from one portion of government, whether it is in our envelope of

pay and benefits, it reflects on other portions, for example, program delivery and our ability to carry those things out and do them affordably. We are hopeful. We go into it very positively that we are working with people who are very committed to the Northwest Territories and they want to see the best for the union membership they represent, as well as for northern people whom we all represent. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Roland.

Question 403-13(5): Long-Term Employment Strategies

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question at this time will be directed to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I talked about jobs and the need for long-term strategies. I would like to know if the Premier has directed any of his Ministers to look at the long term strategies or any long-term job strategy initiatives. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 403-13(5): Long-Term Employment Strategies

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been looking at that as a government for the Northwest Territories since we got here, trying to create economic activity. We have followed a very direct route. Number one, balance our budget, get our books in order so that the Northwest Territories is a good place to invest. You have a solid government which is going forward with a balance sheet that is positive and I think that is the number one step. Now we can get on with creating the jobs, and we are doing that by working with the private sector because it is the private sector that will create the jobs. We are also working with Members of this Legislative Assembly on initiatives in their regions that we would like to see moved on. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 403-13(5): Long-Term Employment Strategies

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason I bring this up is, so far as a Member of the 13th Assembly, we have spoken of job initiatives, but they have been short-term, year to year. However, I would like to know, does this government have in place or is going to put in place, a job strategy that might include the whole of the territory? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 403-13(5): Long-Term Employment Strategies

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been doing that with a certain degree of success. Through this budget, we have brought in tax relief programs, tax relief for businesses to create jobs. We have our infrastructure program that is ongoing. We have reduced interest rates for our business loans. As a government, we have made changes in regulations as well. We also have the Aurora Fund that we kicked off and started. This is all creating an atmosphere and opportunities for the private sector to create jobs in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Roland.

Supplementary To Question 403-13(5): Long-Term Employment Strategies

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have asked about long-term job strategies. Although this government is working in certain fields, I would like to know, specifically, is there a long-term strategy for highways that would see many communities among the whole west benefiting from people being employed? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 403-13(5): Long-Term Employment Strategies

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Department of Transportation is working on the transportation strategy. The only part of the transportation strategy that is really missing is the money. It is good to have a strategy, but unless we do have some money tied to that strategy, then it is not going to go very far. We have good intentions, but intentions only go as far as the dollars can make them go. So, we are working with the Minister of Transportation to ensure we identify the limited dollars we do have to put into that strategy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 403-13(5): Long-Term Employment Strategies

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We always seem to run into that problem, where do the dollars come from, but the reason I bring this up, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to start focusing on how we look at these projects. Is it a one lump sum of \$700 million, \$800 million or are we going to do this over 50 or 20 years? Are we looking at those initiatives and different

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ways of doing these big projects? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 403-13(5): Long-Term Employment Strategies

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is absolutely correct that is how we have to look at it. We could not look at, for example, the road from Wrigley to Tuktoyaktuk as a \$900 million bill. We have to look at how it affects the economy and how we can budget for that over a long period of time. We already have a proposal in from Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk people. The councils from each community got together and

developed an excellent proposal. I believe it was \$400 million for that small section of highway. The people in that area who know the country and their resources have said they can do it for approximately \$40 million. That alone justifies us to take a closer look at that. We have to work with those communities to develop that. Also, Mr. Speaker, we are working with our southern counterparts, provincial jurisdictions, to get their assistance because anything that happens in the Northwest Territories has spinoff effects, especially for Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba and other jurisdictions. They all get a certain percentage of revenues when we create economic activities in the Northwest Territories. Also, Mr. Speaker, we cannot let the federal government off the hook. The federal government developed this country. They are the ones who put in all the airports, the Trans Canada Highway, the St. Lawrence Seaway, the railroad to connect this country from sea to sea. They have a responsibility in the Northwest Territories also to help the Northwest Territories with infrastructures. We have to also work with the federal government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Rabesca.

Question 404-13(5): Legal Drinking Age

MR. RABESCA:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today during my Member's statement, I made reference to the legal drinking age, the problems the youth are facing today. It is important that the youth find a true path and stay focused. The only way to prevent or at least deter them from drinking would be to raise the legal drinking age. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Liquor Control Board, Mr. Todd, his views on this matter. What would be the procedure to get this changed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 404-13(5): Legal Drinking Age

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I have personal opinions which I do not think I would be at liberty to say because as the Finance Minister responsible for the Liquor Commission, I must take into consideration

all the northerners' opinions on alcohol. I think it is fair to say that all of us who have been in this country a long time, either through birth or desire, are concerned about what the intake of alcohol does and all the ramifications of it. I know that when I came to this country in 1965 as a 17 and half year old kid, I think at that time the age was 21 years old. Would it be appropriate to go back to that? I do not know. We would have to ask the public at large if that would be an appropriate approach to take. It certainly is not in any other jurisdiction across Canada, but I do recognize my honourable colleague's concerns. They are ones I am equally concerned with and certainly we would be prepared to have a tentative look at that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Enuaraq.

Question 405-13(5): Disposition of Surplus Funding in Municipalities

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be speaking in Inuktitut. My question is directed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Honourable Manikot Thompson. The hamlets are allocated some funding through Municipal and Community Affairs. My question is with respect to the funding that is allocated to the municipalities, what do they do with the surplus? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Ms. Thompson.

Return To Question 405-13(5): Disposition of Surplus Funding in Municipalities

HON. MANIKOT THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the surplus that is allocated to the hamlet, it is left up to the hamlet as to what to do with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Supplementary, Mr. Enuaraq.

Supplementary To Question 405-13(5): Disposition of Surplus Funding in Municipalities

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask another question with respect to the surplus in the hamlet council. Would Municipal and Community Affairs be able to allocate more funding to this surplus if the surplus is taking place before April? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 405-13(5): Disposition of Surplus Funding in Municipalities

HON. MANIKOT THOMPSON:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the surplus in the hamlet, as I understand it, I am not too sure what they do with the smaller funding and as to which community the Member is talking about. Can he explain to me which community he is referring to? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Enuaraq, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 405-13(5): Disposition of Surplus Funding in Municipalities

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MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to my question, can the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs tell me as to whether she has heard if any communities had given back some of their surplus, in particular for Baffin communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 405-13(5): Disposition of Surplus Funding in Municipalities

HON. MANIKOT THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really do not know what the Member is referring to. If he is asking are the communities in his region giving back money to the

regional offices, I do not know. Can he clarify that please? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Supplementary. Mr. Enuaraq. That would be your third.

Supplementary To Question 405-13(5): Disposition of Surplus Funding in Municipalities

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask the Minister this question now. Can she try and find out within her department if any of the surpluses that are being left in the Baffin communities, are being sent back to her department? Can she find this out for me? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (Translation ends)

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 405-13(5): Disposition of Surplus Funding in Municipalities

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not know what he is referring to. Can he clarify his question? I have not had any concerns raised from the hamlets about what he seems to be referring to; that is, if they are returning all their money back to the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 406-13(5): Surplus Funding in Broughton Island

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on my colleague's question about the returning of a hamlet's surplus. Mr. Speaker, we learned this morning that the community of Broughton Island had a surplus, and the surplus was returned to the Honourable Manikok Thompson's Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. I would like to know why this happened, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Ms. Thompson.

Return To Question 406-13(5): Surplus Funding in Broughton Island

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for giving me a clarification of the previous question. I will be talking to my department to see what has happened in terms of Broughton Island and I will get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 406-13(5): Surplus Funding in Broughton Island

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister assure this House that for other communities which have surpluses, it will not happen like the one in Broughton Island? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 406-13(5): Surplus Funding in Broughton Island

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Member asking me about the surplus for Broughton Island that is being returned to my department because I am not aware of this concern? I will get back to the Members as soon as I find out what has happened here because to date I have not been told about this concern from the community. I will get back to the Members as soon as I can on the specific issue and assure the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 407-13(5): Property Management Pilot Project Update

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week during the review of the Housing Corporation, we found that the property management of 480 staff housing units is currently under contribution to local housing associations. At the same time, there had been a pilot project done in the Keewatin region where property management services of staff housing had been done. I wonder if the Minister for the FMBS could update this House if there has been a review of the success or failure of the pilot project in the Keewatin region? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 407-13(5): Property Management Pilot Project Update

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware of whether a review is being done or not. Certainly there was an intent to have one. I will check with Mr. Voytilla and see if that review has been done or if it is underway. If it is not, I will check when it is going to be underway and advise my colleague. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

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Supplementary To Question 407-13(5): Property Management Pilot Project Update

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at some time in the past, there were questions on this area. There was some concern or thought that this type of project might be put into other regions. Would the Minister be able to confirm at this time that, indeed, no privatization of property management of staff housing in other regions would occur before this report on the Keewatin pilot project has been completed? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 407-13(5): Property Management Pilot Project Update

HON. JOHN TODD:

No, I cannot confirm that, Mr. Speaker, but certainly, whatever lessons we have learned from the Keewatin will be invaluable should we decide to do any further private sector initiatives in the property management side of things. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 407-13(5): Property Management Pilot Project Update

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was some concern in my riding that indeed, the government was looking at privatizing the property management of staff housing. One of the concerns brought forward was from the local housing association that they might have a loss of revenue because of the privatization. Has the Minister looked at that area of the privatization? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 407-13(5): Property Management Pilot Project Update

HON. JOHN TODD:

It is important to point out there are 13 communities in Baffin Island, with 13 housing associations. The privatization of property management would be a regional privatization thrust. In Iqaluit, I think my honourable colleague is saying that the local housing association does it there. I would suspect if we went to a regional privatization initiative and the local housing association was not the successful bidder, there would be a loss of revenue for them. We have not reached that stage right now and I will check with Mr. Voytilla and advise the Member, either through this House or on a personal basis, of what the status is. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 408-13(5): Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centre Accreditation

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng, regarding the accreditation of the alcohol and drug treatment centres in the territories. I would like to ask the Minister what has been done in regard to the accreditation of these programs in the north?

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 408-13(5): Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centre Accreditation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information available with me. I would be willing to have it ready as soon as possible or if our budget comes up for review, later today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 408-13(5): Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centre Accreditation

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell me who is doing the accreditation for the alcohol and drug treatment centres in the Northwest Territories?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 408-13(5): Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centre Accreditation

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, I do not have that information. I will commit to having it available as soon as our budget is up. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 409-13(5): Update on Keewatin Pilot Project

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mr. Speaker, I understand the Minister of MACA was attending the meeting about the Keewatin pilot project. Could the Minister update this House on the outcome of that meeting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Ms. Thompson.

Return To Question 409-13(5): Update on Keewatin Pilot Project

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was fortunate to have a meeting with the leadership in Keewatin for an hour before I went to Iqaluit with the Manitoba delegation on the way to Iqaluit and also coming back for the afternoon on the last day. The meetings went really well and the leadership have taken the presentation that we presented to them. They will be going to their communities and presenting the presentation to all their communities and whoever might be interested in the project. That was the next step for the communities to talk about in more detail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr.

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Barnabas.

Supplementary To Question 409-13(5): Update on Keewatin Pilot Project

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs is also planning to have another pilot project for the Baffin. Are there any concerns that were raised from

the communities of Baffin about how this Keewatin pilot project is doing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 409-13(5): Update on Keewatin Pilot Project

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is news to me. I had never said that I am doing a pilot project for the Baffin region or any other region, except for the Inuvik Beaufort Delta that have also investigated this pilot. What we have said was that if this Keewatin pilot project goes ahead or if the leadership wanted it to go that way, then the other regions might take advantage of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 409-13(5): Update on Keewatin Pilot Project

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we were discussing this Keewatin pilot project in our meetings, I understand the Minister said that there might be a pilot project similar to the one in the Keewatin. Are there any plans for the Baffin communities to go through this kind of pilot project? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Ms. Thompson.

Further Return To Question 409-13(5): Update on Keewatin Pilot Project

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last August, when I was in Rankin for the leadership meeting, we did a presentation to the Baffin leadership to tell them this is what we are doing in the Keewatin region. There are no plans to do a pilot project in the Baffin region. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 410-13(5): Diamond Valuation in Eastern Arctic

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier in reference to the diamond mining situation here and the possible spin-offs. My question to the Premier is, has there been any consideration given to looking at placing these value-added industries in the eastern Arctic, for example, in my communities, Arviat and Baker Lake, where there is 72 percent unemployment? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 410-13(5): Diamond Valuation in Eastern Arctic

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 410-13(5): Diamond Valuation in Eastern Arctic

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was a very detailed answer. I would ask the Premier why any consideration would not be given to the small communities in the eastern Arctic?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 410-13(5): Diamond Valuation in Eastern Arctic

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have always been on record, as this government has always been on record, that development in the north, whether it be diamond mining, gold mining or whatever, should be number one and benefit the communities closest to them. We do have community benefit agreements that are signed. For example, we do have a socio-economic agreement signed with this diamond mine, as well where the pickup points are, it has been fairly

clear from day one, so as a position of the government and position of the mining company, basically. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 410-13(5): Diamond Valuation in Eastern Arctic

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the clarification. Could the Premier tell this House what efforts are in play now to further encourage mining development in the eastern Arctic? Recently, we have had a number of delegations travel to Europe for the most part, trying to benefit the communities here in the western Arctic. Therefore, what efforts are being made to capitalize on any possibilities in the eastern Arctic? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 410-13(5): Diamond Valuation in Eastern Arctic

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Kivalliq Partnership which Mr. Todd talked about earlier, as the MLA from Keewatin region, is one of the things that the government is involved in. Also, we, as a government, are on record saying that we do support development in the north and we will work with northern developers, as long as it benefits northerners. We are doing that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Henry.

Question 411-13(5): Hay Job Evaluation Details

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MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd. On Friday, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister was very clear in regard to questions which were raised on the pay equity issue and the

Hay and Associates re-evaluation plan. He answered questions that my honourable colleague Mr. Miltenberger posed. This weekend, I have had more than one person contact me and in discussions with Mr. Erasmus this morning, I find that he also has had lots of people contact him regarding this issue. It is not clear to a number of the employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories what exactly happens under this evaluation process and although the Minister has made it clear what happens to the present employees, are red-circled, as he identified them as; what happens to them? I would appreciate it if the Minister would also confirm what happens to the employees who are being red-circled and what happens to those employees if they change to another job within the government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 411-13(5): Hay Job Evaluation Details

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say from the outset, what we have tried to do in this latest run of advertising questions in the House and interviews we have had is: one, provide some clarity to the issue; two, provide some facts and give some factual, chronological overview of where we are and why we are where we are at today. I hope I can reassure the employees. I understand that the union is out there suggesting our position is meaningless. I have said consistently we have to stop the rhetoric and get down to the bargaining table. We are judged based on what we do, not what we say. I am telling this House and our employees, those employees under the job evaluation system whose job may be reclassified down, will be red-circled. There will be no loss in pay. As a matter of fact, most of the female gender, pay will increase. We will put more money into the hands of our female employees, which they rightly deserve.

--Applause

If somebody who moves from a job that has been reclassified into another which has been reclassified downward, then they will get that pay level... let us say an employee is classified at pay level 25 and it gets reclassified to pay level 22, they will be red-

circled at 25, which means they will continue to get their salary at pay level 25.

However, if they move to another job which is at pay level 22, they will move to pay level 22. This is my understanding of it. As far as I am concerned, this government has dealt with pay equity in a fair and reasonable way. I want to say again for the record, I want to say this to the employees directly, nobody, absolutely nobody who is in the system right now will lose money in their current job. In fact, most of them will gain more money. We have to get beyond this kind of rhetoric that we have consistently seen and get on to a meaningful dialogue and negotiate. This side of the bargaining table has not used rhetoric. This side of the bargaining table has said we want to negotiate a reasonable settlement. This side of the bargaining table has put what we think we can afford and the reasons why the job evaluation was done. We want to get on with resolving this issue in a reasonable and fair way and get to the negotiating table and bargain to put more money into the hands of our employees, both on the retroactive side and on the ongoing side.

I sincerely hope that our UNW colleagues, who I see as our partners in this process, will agree with that and get on with negotiating. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 411-13(5): Hay Job Evaluation Details

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that and I would confirm that is the same as what he said on Friday's Hansard on page 1578 and page 1579, for those who wish to check. My question to the Minister is, do I understand it correctly that new employees coming into the Government of the Northwest Territories - and he used a position of coming into a job that was classified at pay level 25, and under the reclassification it would be 22 pay level - and coming in and becoming an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories in that position would start at pay level 22, but anyone within the system would still remain at the higher pay level? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 411-13(5): Hay Job Evaluation Details

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have the details before me. There is a greater percentage of employees who will get more money because the pay level in terms of the job evaluation has been reclassified according to Hay and Associates. Just a small group of employees, I believe, will be reclassified. For anybody new coming into a position which is being reclassified from 25 to 22, for example, it will be advertised at the 22 pay level. The current employees will be red-circled and will continue to get their pay as they currently receive it. As I have said consistently, most of them will get more money based on the pay equity resolve. I want to say clearly that the \$9 million we believe it will take to bring a level playing field in pay equity, April 1, 1998, will come into being if we seek a resolve to the pay equity issue. We simply have to find the resolve to the pay equity issue to be able to pay our employees those additional dollars they rightly deserve. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 411-13(5): Hay Job Evaluation Details

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot of references has been made to the Hay and Associates report. Would the

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Minister consider making this report available or tabling it in this House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 411-13(5): Hay Job Evaluation Details

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the UNW is basically saying that the Hay and Associates report is flawed. Our position is that it is probably the most detailed job evaluation system this government has done. In fact, I am advised that the UNW was provided with training in 1997 on the Hay Job Evaluation System. At that time, according to my records, nobody disputed the fact of what we were doing then. I will take whatever steps is necessary to provide this House with the Hay and Associates job evaluation position and the work that was done to provide a gender free workplace with respect to jobs in the government. It is important to point out that in the Hay and Associates work we dealt with every single job. We used male and female employees to determine what appropriate changes had to be made to bring a gender free, biased free job evaluation system to this government. The work which was done by that group should be applauded. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Question 412-13(5): Report on Hay Job Evaluation

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to follow up on the last question I asked for greater clarity. I did not hear the Minister say that he would, but I would ask the question again. Will the Minister make that report available to the general public by tabling it in the House? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 412-13(5): Report on Hay Job Evaluation

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am sure it is a public document and assuming it is and there are no concern with respect to individual confidentiality in jobs, I would be only too happy to table it in the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Question 413-13(5): Status of Environmental Audit

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Antoine, dealing with the status of the environmental audit which is being done by his department. Could he tell us exactly where that audit is and when will it become a public document? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 413-13(5): Status of Environmental Audit

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the environmental audit that the honourable Member is asking about can only be related to the petroleum products division. We are going to be initiating some work on tanks farms in some of the communities starting this spring. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary To Question 413-13(5): Status of Environmental Audit

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister tell me what is the scope of what is going to be done in those communities?

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Antoine.

Further Return To Question 413-13(5): Status of Environmental Audit

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the environmental conditions of these facilities are largely unknown. In 1996, the division did a visual inspection of most of the sites which did not include soil or subsurface examinations. The petroleum products division intends to go to a request for proposal to examine the environmental conditions at 42 sites. The work will look at soil and subsurface. It will document and try to quantify the levels of

contamination, if any, and identify a plan for any cleanup that may be required. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

Question 414-13(5): Human Resource Guidelines for Senior Managers

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some time ago we had the Premier table, in the House, a copy of the human resource policy. There has been some concern with senior bureaucrats and functionaries receiving contracts from this government after leaving government employment. Has the Premier reviewed this concern and would he update the human resource policy to allay some of the fears of senior people of this government receiving contracts shortly after leaving the employment of this government? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 414-13(5): Human Resource Guidelines for Senior Managers

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has gone from, I believe it was, 17 departments down to 11. We have been going through downsizing work since we were elected. There are some senior managers of this government who are out there that continue to want to live in the north. Just because a person has worked for the Government of the Northwest Territories, it does not mean he has to leave the Northwest Territories when he leaves his employment with the Government of the Northwest Territories. This person still has the right to make a living in the Northwest Territories. I reviewed and I do not see any problem with senior managers

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who are working for the Government of the Northwest Territories even after they have left their employment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 414-13(5): Human Resource Guidelines for Senior Managers

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no one is disputing the fact that people, who work for this government and who then leave, the government, should find the opportunity to get employment. Because the Premier states we have a viable economy, it means the employees do not necessarily have to go to government to get a contract or a job. In the contract policy that was tabled in this House, there is an option to opt out of the policy by an individual manager, director or former government person and to write the chairman of the FMB and ask for exclusion from that policy. Has the Premier looked at that option? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 414-13(5): Human Resource Guidelines for Senior Managers

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of that option. If any member of the public or Member of the Legislative Assembly can point out to me where past senior management would be in conflict with the policy, then he would be able to ask for an opt out but I am not aware of that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 414-13(5): Human Resource Guidelines for Senior Managers

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For clarification, is the Premier saying he is not aware of any case in the last 12 months that a senior functionary within this government, who has left the employment of this government, has applied to the chairman of the FMBS to be opted out of the policy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 414-13(5): Human Resource Guidelines for Senior Managers

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I am not aware of that and I can check into it for the Member to see, in the past twelve months, if anyone has done that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 414-13(5): Human Resource Guidelines for Senior Managers

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think in this House, on questions on the Aurora Fund, Mr. Bailey, for example, was opted out. That is public knowledge now because it was talked about in this House. I wonder when the Premier would be able to get back to me and this House on other instances, other than that one which has happened in the past twelve months, that have occurred. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 414-13(5): Human Resource Guidelines for Senior Managers

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not aware whether or not Mr. Bailey asked for an opting out on the Aurora Fund. I will look at that. I do not have those documents exactly in front of me, but my recollection is that Mr. Bailey does work for the Aurora Fund because of his expertise in the private sector prior to coming to government. He gained that expertise in the private sector, not in government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Mr. O'Brien.

Question 415-13(5): Keewatin Health Board CEO Transfer

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, the decentralized Nunavut model indicates that health and social services will be transferred to Baker Lake. My question to the Minister is, will the Minister give consideration to transferring the new CEO to Baker Lake for the Keewatin Health Board? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Return To Question 415-13(5): Keewatin Health Board CEO Transfer

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, No.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 415-13(5): Keewatin Health Board CEO Transfer

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another detailed answer. Why would the Minister not give consideration to transferring or putting this person's position in Baker Lake when it is indicated in Footprints 2 in decentralized model that is where it is to go. This, in itself, would show support from this government for the decentralized model. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 415-13(5): Keewatin Health Board CEO Transfer

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, primarily, first of all because all the senior staff of the regional health and social services board happen to be in Rankin Inlet and I cannot see a CEO operating in one community when all

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the other senior staff are in a different community. Secondly, I do not think it is for this government to

determine what the policy of the new government will be in respect to health and social services boards, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 415-13(5): Keewatin Health Board CEO Transfer

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It should be noted that the people in Baker Lake have no difficulty in accepting the rest of those positions to work with the CEO. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that this government, NTI and the federal government have agreed on the decentralized model. I do not think it is the intention that we wait until after 1999 to start putting pieces together. So my question is, will the Minister reconsider this request by the people of Baker Lake to have this position and any others that are necessary to have this operate as a fully functioning operation relocated in Baker Lake? Will you consider fast tracking this request? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 415-13(5): Keewatin Health Board CEO Transfer

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a Nunavut politician, I think we all recognize that Mr. Anawak, the Interim Commissioner, has a significant role in outlining what the implementation and establishment of a new Nunavut government are to be. Certainly the honourable Member can forward his wishes to Mr. Anawak and have him respond to it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. O'Brien.

Supplementary To Question 415-13(5): Keewatin Health Board CEO Transfer

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Ng is the Minister responsible for Health and Social

Services, I would then ask him if he would communicate in writing to Mr. Anawak to see if Mr. Anawak is willing to agree to have this issue addressed and to fast track this transfer. Thank you, Mr. Todd.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Ng.

Further Return To Question 415-13(5): Keewatin Health Board CEO Transfer

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand the Interim Commissioners' office is due to have their implementation plan to us by the end of March and at that time we can assess what is there and have their comment on proposals and responses to that plan. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 416-13(5): Privatization of Property Management

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister of the Financial Management Board. I understand that the Minister is proposing to privatize property management. In small communities, smaller businesses will not be financially up-to-date, or wealthy enough to take over these properties. How will this work in small communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Todd.

Return To Question 416-13(5): Privatization of Property Management

HON. JOHN TODD:

Well, some of us believe that certain functions of government are better performed by the private sector. Others, of course, choose not to and that is everybody's personal preference. The reality is we did a pilot project in the Keewatin under the Brookside group and as my honourable colleague, Mr. Picco,

from Iqaluit indicated in earlier questions, we are still trying to access the success or failure of that. There is no intent at this stage of the game to go any further than we have in Keewatin unless we have got a success. I am going to check with my deputy minister on what the status is of the evaluation of the Keewatin project. Some of us have got the fortitude and envision, if it is successful, to move forward and do it elsewhere. I suspect quite frankly, it will go no further given the short time we have got left and that it will be left up to the new Nunavut government as it proceeds forward on April 1, 1999.

MR. SPEAKER:

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

Supplementary To Question 416-13(5): Privatization of Property Management

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I understand through community empowerment hamlets will be taking over housing associations. There is going to be a loss, these properties that privatize. What would happen to the hamlets? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Todd.

Further Return To Question 416-13(5): Privatization of Property Management

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, I think I should point out to my honourable colleague that use of the private sector is not privatizing. We are using the private sector to deliver a service, the use of the private sector to deliver the property management services for staff housing and leased units only. It has got nothing to do with the housing association inventory. In some cases, like Iqaluit I believe, the housing association delivers that service for us. I do not see where there would be any loss in revenue at this time unless there was a specific issue in a specific community that my honourable colleague is alluding to. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Picco.

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Question 417-13(5): Review of Human Resource Guidelines

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to follow up on some of my questions earlier on the personnel policy. I did not intend to imply any type of motive in my questioning. No, I did not, Mr. Todd. My question, Mr. Speaker, is that the Premier said he reviewed the personnel policy and thought it was good. He did not see any changes needed. What type of review did the Premier do on the personnel policy and who was involved? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Return To Question 417-13(5): Review of Human Resource Guidelines

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have reviewed that with my secretary to Cabinet. We looked at it and those policies have been in place and they seem to work well for the government. So I do not see any changes to those policies in the near future. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 417-13(5): Review of Human Resource Guidelines

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Executive Office of the Premier, there was a Secretariat for Personnel. I find it hard to contemplate that a review is done with just the Premier and another person. Did not the Premier go outside of his own office and look at this policy with some experts that we have available to us, functions within the different government departments to review this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 417-13(5): Review of Human Resource Guidelines

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 417-13(5): Review of Human Resource Guidelines

MR. PICCO:

Why? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin.

Further Return To Question 417-13(5): Review of Human Resource Guidelines

HON. DON MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because we looked at the policy and we did not see any need for change, if the honourable Member would like to suggest some changes, we would be happy to hear them. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Picco.

Supplementary To Question 417-13(5): Review of Human Resource Guidelines

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to suggest that people should not be able to opt out by running to the chairman of the FMB. My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, is on the review that the Premier has done, has he found any problem on legalities of contracting former employees of this government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Mr. Picco, the question is ruled out of order. You cannot ask a Minister to give a legal opinion. Oral questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Question 418-13(5): Concerns Re: Keewatin Pilot Project

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question will be directed to the Minister of MACA. Concerning the Keewatin pilot project, has there ever been concerns raised from NTI, Interim Commissioner or the third party? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Ms. Thompson.

Return To Question 418-13(5): Concerns Re: Keewatin Pilot Project

HON. MANITOK THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did write a letter to the president of NTI in August, 1996, I believe. I may have the dates wrong but it was in 1996, for us to be invited to NTI to do a presentation on any community empowerment initiatives. I have also talked to both people, the Interim Commissioner and also the president of NTI, about the Keewatin pilot project. They have not responded yet. We have had the KIA president attending the Keewatin pilot project. Up until today, he has not raised any concerns with the Keewatin pilot project. He has been attending all the meetings. Because we have said we will implement the articles in the Nunavut final agreement, I do not know what the concerns would be. Up until today, I have not had any response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, return to written question 5-13(5), asked by Mr. Krutko to the Premier, concerning operating guidelines for senior and management personnel.

Return To Written Question 5-13(5): Operating Guidelines for Senior Management Personnel

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has Ethics Guidelines that apply to all GNWT employees. These guidelines are found in the Ethics section of the Human Resource Manual. Guidelines include directives regarding:

oaths of office and secrecy; conflict of interest with respect to political activity; conflict of interest with respect to outside employment; and code of conduct and ethics. I have provided all numbers with copies of these directives from the Human Resource Manual.

Accountability mechanisms that apply to all senior managers and employees alike include: Canadian and territorial legislations and regulations, such as section 34 of the Public Service Act which inhibits political partisanship, GNWT policies and directives including the Affirmative Action Policy, the Financial Administration Manual and the Handbook for Senior Managers, as well as the various employment contracts.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 6-13(5): Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General to the NWT Legislative Assembly for the year Ended March 31, 1996

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Government Operations has the honour of presenting its report on the review of the Report of the Auditor General to the NWT Legislative Assembly for the year ended March 31, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, this is the second year under the Standing Committee on Government Operations' mandate that it has met to consider the Auditor General's Annual Report. The 13th Assembly's committee structure allows the Government of Operations Committee to consider the Auditor General's comments in conjunction with other relevant issues, which have been considered by the committee before, rather than in isolation.

The standing committee met to review the Auditor General's report on November 19th through November 21st. The first day of meetings was devoted to briefings by the Auditor General's staff and committee staff on the nature of the public accounts, the auditing process, the review process by the Auditor General's report and the issues raised in that

report. The second day, November 20th, was a public meeting at which the committee members took the opportunity to discuss the relevant issues with the Comptroller General, Mr. Lew Voytilla and the president of the Housing Corporation, Mr. David Murray. On the third day, November 21st, the committee met with Mr. Glenn Soloy, president of the NWT Development Corporation and Mr. David Hamilton, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, to discuss the issues from the Auditor General's report relevant to their responsibilities. Committee members addressed a number of important issues arising from the report, as well as issues raised in previous committee reports.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the introductory comments on Committee Report 6-13(5) and I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Committee Report 6-13(5) be received by the Assembly and moved into committee of the whole for consideration. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, your motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motions for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Mr. Ng.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

BILL 14 An Act to Amend the Legislative Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member from Aivilik that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, has had first reading. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and

other matters, Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99; Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998; Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 1997-98; Committee Report 02-13(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations; Committee Report 03-13(5), Standing Committee on Infrastructure; Committee Report 04-13(5), Standing Committee on Resource Management and Development; Committee Report 05-13(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs, Tabled Document 15-13(5), 1998-99 Budget Address; Tabled Document 19-13(5), Guidelines for Implementing Public/Private Partnerships. With Mr. Ningark in the Chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I would like to call the committee to order. There are a number of items under consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 19-13(5), Guidelines for Implementing Public/Private Partnerships and continue with Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998; Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99; Committee Report 02-13(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations; Committee Report 03-13(5), Standing Committee on Infrastructure; Committee Report 05-13(5); Standing Committee on Social Programs and we will continue with the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Barnabas is

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recommending or suggesting that we do Tabled Document 19-13(5), Guidelines for Implementing Public/Private Partnerships; Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998; Bill 8, Appropriation Act 1998-99 and Committee Report 2-13(5); Committee Report 3-13(5); and Committee Report 5-13(5), and then we shall subsequently continue with Health and Social Services. Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I am advised that the Public/Private Partnerships document is circulated and, Mr. Todd, you indicated you wish to say something. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As my honourable colleagues know, the Public/Private Partnerships is a new initiative on behalf of this government. In any new initiative it is going to have its ups and downs and it is going to require refinement as we proceed along with it. We must remember what the overall objective of what we are trying to accomplish. Over the last two years, for a bit of a recap, we have cut significantly from the capital budget trying to meet our Deficit Elimination Strategy. It would be fair to say we knew up front that would cause us a problem with the infrastructure needs of our constituencies. It is clear to me that if we are going to be bringing the capital funding back up to its historic levels, which was somewhere in the region of \$180 to \$200 million, then we have to find the ways and means to do that. Some have suggested you could just take it from within the existing budget. I simply cannot see how that is at all possible. Most of you know and you have heard Members of this House talk about the need for more money all over the place whether it is in education, as my colleague Mr. Picco talks about; whether it is in Health, that my colleague Mr. O'Brien talks about; whether it is in roads that Mr. Steen talks about, et cetera. We have to find a creative way or a new way to bring about some of the new levels or return to the levels we have become accustomed to in infrastructure spending. We recruited Mr. Coles, who is a well-respected expert in the field, who not only knows, but has researched what is going on in the Maritime provinces, which it is in my belief somewhat similar to our constituency. Also he looked at what was going on in British Columbia, Ontario, et cetera. I am fairly confident that we have some really good expertise on this whole field.

Another concern that has been expressed by a number of my colleagues is accountability and transparency, which are the fashionable buzz words these days. Affordability and I think that, for me, is critical. All these issues, hopefully, we can address as we develop the guidelines and as we refine them as we move forward. At the end of the day, I am

hopeful that the process we are going to put in place will meet the concerns raised by a number of my colleagues, both here in the House, privately and, of course, in the numerous meetings with the constituency at large, whether it is the NWT Construction Association, Chambers of Commerce or individual groups.

This is by no means a panacea for all of our economic woes or to solve our economic infrastructure needs. This is just one new policy change that will assist us in trying to accomplish the end that we are all trying to do, and that is to put some new facilities in place with the limited dollars we have. I am open to a frank and free-wheeling debate on this issue, but I hope at the end of today, you can give me some advice and some direction as to what changes you would see if any. I am optimistic we will have support for it, and I am hoping that we can move quickly and vigilantly in ensuring that we get some of these projects moving this year so we can put some people to work, set some infrastructure moving and give some new confidence to the industry and the job market out there that this government has its interests at heart.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Mr. Ootes, particularly, for moving forward on this important discussion today. I will try to answer the questions I can. Where I am not in a position to answer them, I hope you will be tolerant enough to give me some time to bring forward any unanswered questions that I may not be able to deal with today and hopefully by the end of this week and next week we can get on with it and have a comfort level that we can move forward on putting some of the P3 into place and get some of the infrastructures in place.

Last, but not least, I would say as we speak, Mr. Coles is in town in a workshop with all of our senior managers explaining the concept of P3, how we can implement it, et cetera, and we are looking forward to some of the advice and direction that this House wants to give. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Before we get into our general comments, Mr. Minister, would you like to bring in your witnesses? Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Mr. Chairman, I do not have any witnesses today. I feel relatively comfortable in this policy that I can

handle it on my own and I am prepared to do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I have on the list a number of people wanting to speak to Tabled Document 19-13(5), Public/Private Partnerships. I have Mr. Ootes and Mr. Picco. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We appreciated getting the material from the Coles Group and the guidelines the Minister tabled in the House. We had an opportunity as Ordinary Members to review this and then spend a bit of time doing some research and to work our way through possible areas that may be of concern. We appreciate the Minister's concern that he needs a bit of time to digest what may be recommended here and then be able to report back to us. We do have a number of areas that are of concern and suggestions that perhaps could be put forward. I was able to put together some notes, Mr. Chairman, that I would like to work my way through with your and the Members' indulgence that outlines some of the areas that were discussed at the Ordinary Members' Caucus. They are my notes, rather than a collective representation. Other Members will no doubt speak along the same lines and may have other suggestions. If you can bear with me, Mr. Chairman, I will work my way through the notes.

Many Ordinary Members have supported, in general terms, the decision of the government to use the Public/Private Partnerships to develop capital infrastructures in the Northwest Territories. We all know that there is a serious need for

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infrastructure development. Capital needs' assessment identified a shortfall for capital infrastructure projects in the order of \$200 million immediately and more than \$800 million over the next 20 years. These shortfalls are dominated by needs in the areas of housing, transportation, municipal services, education, health and corrections. We also know these capital projects cannot all be funded in the current fiscal climate.

The Public/Private Partnerships initiative may be able to address some of these deficiencies and allow some of the projects to go ahead. Mr. Chairman, the

announcement of the Public/Private Partnerships initiative has focused attention on a new way of doing business with the Government of the Northwest Territories. This is not a new concept. The Minister has also stated that there are other examples for this. Partnerships have occurred before, also in the Northwest Territories, and are taking place all over the world in many forms.

While I generally support the Public/Private Partnerships concept, there are serious concerns that must be addressed before the government proceeds any further. This government can learn from the experience of other jurisdictions. The government must also be able to learn from its past mistakes and that means taking immediate and concrete steps to improve its contracting policies before these policies get muddied further in the context of a new infrastructure program.

Most important, Mr. Chairman, the government must review and revise the current request for proposal policies. Specifications and evaluation criteria must be clear and objective. All P3 bidders, but particularly, the unsuccessful firms should be debriefed on the results of each competition. This must be provided in a consistent and objective way. Bidders should be provided a report card after each competition that rates their submission and gives clear feedback on each element of their bid. Mr. Chairman, I would like to outline briefly some of the fundamental questions that this government must address in relation to the P3 initiative so the public can have confidence that P3 will be administered fairly and openly. This government well knows that transparency is the overriding concern of many Members and members of the public in relation to this issue. The government is well aware of its problems in relation to the public perception of government contracting processes. In fact if the government does not address these concerns the P3 initiative may not see the light of day because the construction industry has also said that the process must be transparent if its members are to buy in. This concern has been recognized in other jurisdictions and there is a host of measures this government can consider to ensure there is absolutely no opportunity for a perception of bias to arise. For example, many jurisdictions have established an advisory board, committee or panel that draws experience from the public and private sectors to design the scheme for the implementation of P3 initiatives. The board is generally composed of members from business, labour, government and in some cases, the academic world. These boards

provide advice to the government to monitor and assess progress in implementing P3, act as facilitators or brokers between the public and private sectors and fulfil a due diligence function by evaluating P3 decisions and processes.

Mr. Chairman, as the Standing Committee on Government Operations noted in its report on the review of the main estimates, any proposed project will have to service the basic needs of a community. Before any projects are reviewed, they must be brought to the Ordinary Members for review and consultation. There must be some structured mechanism to ensure that there is regular input by business and labour throughout the P3 initiative. This is crucial to achieving transparency. The suggestion in the government guidelines that the P3 process be run by government project teams and a senior management committee is simply not good enough. It would certainly make me wonder, and I suggest it would make members of the public, business and industry wonder, if the government objected to the direct involvement of affected groups. As well other jurisdictions have put in place mechanisms for the independent review of the contracting process where complaints arise. In Australia for example, it is usual to have an independent accounting firm conduct a provatae audit when questions arise as to the fairness of the process. In Ontario, during the selection of Highway 407 Proposal an independent process consultant was retained to confirm that the process was fair. The Metropolitan Council of Toronto has taken on this issue by adopting the principles that there be complete disclosure of all information that relates to private sector participants and their interest in the venture.

The guidelines proposed by this government state that methods will be devised to discourage the lobbying of elected officials and government staff. New Brunswick has dealt with this question quite simply. Any attempts to lobby result in disqualification. Mr. Chairman, I realize that the projects in the Northwest Territories may not be as large as some of the projects that have been undertaken in other jurisdictions. The need for clear review mechanisms is no different. We do not want to set up extra layers of bureaucracy, but we do need a simple straightforward and effective structure that ensures transparency and accountability.

Mr. Chairman, there are, of course, other concerns in relation to P3 and I would like to comment on a few of them briefly. There must be care taken in designing the scope of P3 projects as the initiative develops.

We have focused on the use of P3 for infrastructure development, but P3 is also used to deliver services traditionally provided by government. As the scope broadens it may become more difficult to include an appropriate accountability mechanism in the P3 contract. While public officials are answerable to the public, P3 private sector partners are not. We must ensure that the public sector maintains appropriate responsibility and control. Mr. Chairman, there have also been issues in other provinces and other countries about the ultimate financial risk to government in relation to P3 projects. For example, research conducted on P3 projects in Japan found that although projects were intended to be profit making enterprises, profit projections were not objective. Many projects were money losing ventures and private sector managers often expected that the government would eventually bail them out. In many cases, banks only provided financing because the government was involved and was expected to bare ultimate responsibility.

The government will be aware that the Nova Scotia government recently experienced difficulty with their P3 school constructions

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contracts. There were problems with the lease negotiations and the financing and eventually the province loaned the private partners \$7 million in interest free loans. The GNWT guidelines proposed that a cost benefit analysis and risk assessment will be conducted for each proposed initiative. Mr. Chairman, this is a crucial step in the process and careful attention must be made to the determination and allocation of risk. The methods used must be clear, open and consistently applied. Mr. Chairman, it is also imperative that we address, up front, the fact that P3 has long been

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Ootes, your time is up. If you want to continue, you are going to have to ask you colleagues. Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am just about through. If I may seek the indulgence of the Members for unanimous consent to conclude.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Proceed, Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The GNWT guidelines proposed that a cost benefit analysis and risk assessment will be conducted for each proposed initiative. This is a crucial step in the process and careful attention must be made to the determination and allocation of risk. The methods used must be clear, open and consistently applied. It is also imperative that we address, up front, the fact that P3 have long-term operating budget implications. Operating and capital budget implications must be considered over the full life of a project. The government must ensure that any economic benefits of a P3 are reflected in its value for money over the life time of the project not in the immediate impact on expenditures.

There are still some more issues that we can expect that will arise that have not yet been adequately addressed. The GNWT guidelines do not deal with the issue of environmental concerns and the need to ensure that these are not minimized by private sector partners or the issue of long-term environmental liabilities. As well the transaction cost of bidding, negotiating and contract may be high for more complex proposals and the government may need to develop a policy on reimbursement. For example the contractor selected to construct a North Cumberland Strait bridge, a very complex project, spent more than \$30 million in developing its proposal and negotiating the contract. The federal government reimbursed \$5 million. The other two finalists also each spent an estimated \$10 to \$13 million on their unsuccessful bids.

We must ensure that any P3 project results in user charges and that the charges are not excessive. The Metropolitan Council of Toronto has adopted principles relating to this issue: that the return on investment to the private sector participant is in direct relation to the degree of the participation and risk that the public sector expects the private sector to take; that the return is fair and publicly defensible and that the benefits that would accrue either directly or indirectly to the participating private sector members be evaluated on an individual and collective basis.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we know from the experience of other jurisdictions that it is crucial to the success of the P3 initiative that the government proceeds only with projects that are high quality. Projects should go to completion only if they have clear objectives carefully specified by requirements and are backed by a solid business plan. If lower quality projects, projects with vague and uncertain criteria or projects with inadequate risk analyses are pursued, the private sector will quickly lose faith in the initiative. The government will then be forced to pay a premium for any projects that do go ahead. Mr. Chairman, there are risks with the P3 initiative and the government has a lot of work yet ahead of it. I am confident though that if the initiative is implemented with careful planning and in the context of comprehensive detailed strategy, it can be very successful and bring great benefits to all people in the Northwest Territories. I look forward to meaningful discussions and resolution of these issues here, today, in committee of the whole. Thank you.

--Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ootes. The Chair recognizes your observations of the P3. Thank you. I have on the list Mr. Picco and Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the P3 initiative has generated quite a lot of interest all over the Northwest Territories, not only in the business community but also within boards and agencies of this government. The key principles, as tabled by the Finance Minister, on this initiative included exercising critical judgement in some key areas. At this time it is opportune to go through some of those, including the evaluation of each P3 opportunity on its own merits and only undertake projects that are feasible, negotiating the best deal for the tax payers of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Chairman, ultimately, the taxpayers will have to pay the cost of any P3. Ensure that the quality of services being provided to all residents of the NWT throughout the life of the P3 and also be aware that P3 require a shift in organizational thinking from directing and operating to managing. In all, my understanding of the P3 is, Mr. Chairman, for the development of building infrastructures. I am not interested in any way, shape or form in P3 that would be used to run organizations or to deliver programs or services on behalf of this government. I believe that is the point of public government. Mr. Todd talked

earlier about the transparency of the P3. There is perception out there that this government is going to have to work on to ensure that the perception is not one of slush funding or a pork barrelling exercise that, indeed, the projects that come forward for sponsorship under the P3 would be something that had been identified in the five-year capital plan or project that had been deferred because of a lack of financial resources. This cannot be overstated, Mr. Chairman.

In most jurisdictions where P3 have been used, they have been used for larger projects, for example, the bridge between PEI and New Brunswick. They have not been used for outdoor skating rinks or the purchase of a zamboni or something like that. They have been used for larger projects and that is one of the reasons why I have supported the P3 in principle because of the need for the two medical facilities that have been in the capital plan since 1988, and have not been able to

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come through because of the lack of money available. Those two specific projects are the Baffin hospital and the Inuvik hospital. I see the P3 initiative being fundamental in bringing those two forward. However, after saying that, I have not seen any type of final list of any projects or which projects that have been asked for. As politicians, each individual Member wants to see projects go forward in their riding. To me, that is not necessarily the reason for coming through with a project. I hope the Finance Minister, Cabinet and the Members themselves will exercise critical judgment based on what is actually needed and not on what is wanted. This is where the transparency of the total project would come in.

The other concerns, Mr. Chairman, are on the long-term implication cost to the government and not necessarily the government of the day but the government of other days who have to pick up the costs in the leasing. This type of program on a larger project - for example, of my riding of \$25 million for the hospital or Inuvik, which is \$18 or \$20 million - has to be transparent so that at the end of the day the taxpayer, who will ultimately be responsible for paying those bills, can see what the dollar value is.

There is also a fundamental shift required in organizational thinking from this government to the private sector in the development of these projects. What type of role, for example, does the Department of Public Works have in the formulating and

evaluating proposals that are brought forward? The Department of Public Works is our expertise in that field. What type of questions or answers will be given before, during and after the start-up of a major P3 program? Also, Mr. Chairman, because you would hope that the P3 initiative would be used for larger projects over two or three years, where is the continuity within a project for that input from the government of the day? As we know because of timelines and so on, different governments will be elected. If a program or a project goes on for three years, will that same commitment be there from that government to continue with the project? What will the legal obligations and financial responsibilities of those governments be? Those types of concerns have not really been addressed yet.

Mr. Todd talked about earlier getting confidence from the committee, from this house, to give him direction to encompass transparency, privatization. Maybe sometime today within the committee of the whole, Mr. Ootes or one of the other Members, Chairman of the OMC, maybe we should introduce a motion outlining our concerns in the committee of the whole to encompass and give direction and give that level of comfort that Mr. Todd talks about that we move forward on this initiative. Mr. Chairman, the P3 initiative is a profound way in the way this government does business. It should not be there to bring forward projects that have always been deferred because of other reasons other than the lack of monies to do it. Each project has to be looked at in the context of the community and the results that government is trying to get from putting the facilities in place. For example, again we can see the need for those hospital projects because they have been on the books for so long. I do not think anyone could debate that. They have been in the capital plan. That seems like the only way right now we can get those two facilities on stream. Other projects I am not aware of, I have not seen anything concrete telling me what other projects are going to come forward on the P3 and the type of analyses and recognition of those projects. That is what the public and the business interest would like to see.

Government, Mr. Chairman, is set up to facilitate goods and services and programs for the people. Sometimes government programs and services are not the most cost efficient, but they are in place because of the economies of scale. If private business tried to do the same types of programs, services or construction projects, business is in business to make money. We have to remember

that. I do not want to see any type of dereliction between what the government has to do and the services and programs delivered by government and see that taken away by the private sector. When I see the key principles of the P3, it says, to ensure the quality of service that is being provided to all residents of the NWT throughout the life of the P3. What does quality of service mean? Hopefully, it does not mean the delivery of programs and services. My understanding and support for the P3 are based on infrastructure development and based on limited infrastructure development which has been brought forth prioritized by project bases and not on some wish list from me or anybody else as a politician. With that, Mr. Chairman, I will end my opening comments on the P3 initiative. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco. I have on the list Mr. Miltenberger. I will recognize him after the lunch break. Thank you.

--Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

I would like to call the committee back to order. Before lunch we had Mr. Miltenberger on the list. Therefore, Mr. Miltenberger has the floor. We are dealing with the guidelines for implementing Public/Private Partnerships. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am assuming once I finish my comments by the demonstrated interest of the others here that we should be able to move on and take care of other business. Mr. Chairman, my comments are going to be somewhat different from those made by my colleagues, who I agree made some very good points. I think one situation or some variables that we have to keep in mind that make our situation unique is the very limited time constraint that we have and are facing. We have as an Assembly 13 months left in our term, and in less than a year our eastern colleagues will be out on the hustings for election. We have to respond fairly quickly, but in a careful and measured way to this particular initiative which I support and have supported, from its conception many months ago down the halls of the Assembly. The first year of this particular initiative, Mr. Chairman, to me is focused initially on two main projects and that is Inuvik and Baffin hospitals, which is an outstanding

commitment. We may want to lay the ground work for a year or two and maybe some supplementary projects in year one. Very clearly as well, in year two will be the responsibility of the two new Legislatures. It is critical that we do have appropriate checks and balances in place and we should learn from what other jurisdictions have done and gone through in order to make this a sustainable and affordable initiative. We have to keep stressing to people that this is not free money. This is not

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\$200 million that just dropped from the trees.

The critical issue to me, Mr. Chairman, and I will conclude my opening remarks, is that we are approaching division with a very limited timeframe and opportunity as an Assembly. This is our last budget together and we have to make the necessary steps to move this particular initiative along. If we delay any length of time, I do not think that we would be able to meet under the existing funding arrangements we have within the budgetary process, our commitments initially to Inuvik and Baffin. We have to try to pull together very quickly with the measured necessary checks and balances. We do not have much time. This is our last opportunity, in my opinion, to have any kind of projects or proposals of this significance that we are going to be able to act on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. We are dealing with Tabled Document 19-13(5). Are there any more general comments from the Members? Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. I support the initiative of the P3. However, there are a number of things to ensure. As we have heard earlier, the transparency of the process, where we cannot be considered by other parties that we are influencing the process by political will instead of the need established. As well, my concern will be in the area of ensuring that future governments are not put into a situation where we are paying long-term and we freeze everything after a couple years of building new infrastructure and then we are stuck back to our lower levels and having to pay long-term for existing leases. We do not want to be put back into a situation of having to make reductions to balance the books. I think that, as was referred to earlier, the process established needs to

be a clear one. There needs to be a framework put in place where one can measure the results and the way things get done, a framework that does not limit what projects go into it but a basis for where one can measure the results of the projects and the success or failure of those projects. Just to be brief, I would say I support the P3 and the sooner we get on with it the more we can get done for the residents of the territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. General comments, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to also indicate my support for P3. Mr. Ootes summarized the various briefing materials we have received and I just wanted to comment more as well to indicate that Mr. Miltenberger had indicated that this is not free money and we still have to be careful. We need appropriate checks and balances in place to ensure that we are not mortgaging the farm, the future. We have to ensure there is transparency as the Minister of Finance has indicated and all the Members are adamant about. All of the projects should have economic viability. There has to be the essence of a shared risk. The GNWT should not be the only partner that is taking a risk. The environment also has to be looked after. If there has to be assessments done, then those should be done but we have to ensure that we are protecting the environment. Another area Mr. Ootes mentioned is the cost of preparing proposals. That has to be carefully looked at. There are, of course, success factors, such as having all key stakeholders present throughout the process so everybody is informed and can contribute. The risks should be identified up front and dealt with up front as much as possible so that the risks involved later on are kept to a minimum. Obviously projects should not take place unless the expected benefits exceed the expected costs and we have to ensure there are more benefits than costs for both the public partners as well as the private partner, which is the same as the risks. Mr. Chairman, the GNWT and the public at large have to benefit more than the cost as well, not just the private partner. Mr. Chairman, as I said, I indicated my support for this and optimism, of course, with the appropriate checks and balances in place. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. General Comments dealing with Public/Private Partnerships, Tabled Document 19-13(5). Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the P3 initiative, I believe my riding has been working for a while on trying to find new ways of building infrastructure by trying to find interested groups or parties to look at the possibility of building and then leasing back to this government. That was what we looked for at the construction of the Chief Julius School. It was going to be considered after it burnt to the ground. They have looked at other areas in regard to the construction of not only office buildings, but looking at the infrastructure for schools and looking at the needs of this government which could include highway maintenance to building bridges to privatizing airports. We also have to keep in mind, at the end of the day, all these proposals are still going to be a burden on the expenditures of this government, where you are going to have to pay for leases or basically pay for services. We have to keep in mind those long-term obligations we find ourselves in, which we are financially sound, and we are able to pay for those new initiatives but also to continue to run the government with delivery of programs and services.

The reason I say that is we find ourselves a lot of times in this House where we are making statements to the government and the government comes back to us, telling us, you tell me where to get the funding. If we end up putting another level of bureaucracy in place, it is going to be that much harder for us to try to find new funding for social programs such as health and education. We are going to try to find a way that we can continue to look at new initiatives, but also to keep in mind we have to have a healthy, educated workforce to carry out these activities in the north.

In regard to the whole idea of Private/Public Partnerships there has to be clearer ways of monitoring and evaluating to ensure people with deep pockets, who have a lot of funds, especially in southern financial institutions, do not find a way of monopolizing what we are doing here in the north. It has to be developed in the north and produced in the north by northerners. So that we find a way to help those communities and the business people in those communities and regions to ensure we are not only looking at a long-term infrastructure for this government but also as economic jobs and opportunities that come along with these ventures,

when they come to be, especially in regard to constructing large facilities such as schools, hospitals and highway construction. There has to be a guarantee that there is going to be those spin-offs left in the

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communities in regard to janitorial services or employment for people in the communities.

The other thing I would like to state is, this has to be good for everybody, not just the larger centres where we are talking about major hospitals being built or major office buildings being constructed or whatever. This has to be designed in a way that it can be used in the smaller communities so they too can have an opportunity to have these things they may have wanted in regard to redesigning their schools, expanding their school facilities or to look at ways to improve their airports. Those small communities have to have the same opportunities as the larger ones. This has to be spelt out. When this is distributed, I want to know is it going to be distributed by each community in the ridings or is it going to be one community designated for the whole region? In the case of Inuvik, there are calls for a hospital, but what about other communities within the Inuvik region? What do they get? Is this just a one-shot in the arm where, basically, funds are there for the hospitals in Inuvik and Iqaluit? If there is nothing there for the other communities, I will not support this initiative. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. General comments. Any further general comments from the Members? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

That may have been the general comments. I do not know if you wish to have questions, Mr. Chairman, but perhaps, if the Minister wanted to comment, we could consider where we go from here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I will now allow Minister Todd to endeavour to answer the questions. He may have been keeping notes or just reply in general. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I am prepared generally, and as quickly as I can, so we can get on to other business of the House, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to applaud all Members for their comments. In particular, I want to applaud Mr. Ootes for a well-laid out presentation. He has obviously done a considerable amount of work and he deserves a lot of credit.

Perhaps when we brought forward these P3 there was a great deal of excitement about it because people are looking for new opportunities and new job creation and private sector, et cetera. I would hope what I can do in my brief comments I am going to make today, is kind of reducing peoples' expectation. There is a limit to what we can do with these P3. With all due respect, when you refer to projects of a billion dollars, et cetera, that is what we are talking about here. We are talking about very, very small numbers. It is very important we say today the expectation, I have anyway, is not anywhere near any of these kinds of numbers.

Mr. Picco had indicated he was concerned we would be going beyond the capital. I want to make it clear today, the P3 as I see it, is for capital only. I think that answers some of the concerns he had. It is important projects are analyzed. Once the projects are defined, they are to be analyzed on an individual basis. We have to determine what the appropriate savings are and what the net benefit is to the government. We are prepared to do that. I am as equally concerned as everybody else in this House about the long-term costs. In fact, new governments will have to pay this. Therefore, it is critical we do have an arrangement with the Interim Commissioner in the east and an acceptance in the west of the fiscal obligations in any of these projects. I am fairly confident we can get that.

Some of the key areas of concern expressed in Mr. Ootes' presentation were the contracting policies with respect to RFPs. As I have said to him on numerous occasions in this House and I do not think I have to say it again, we are working with the NWT Construction Association. My staff spoke to Mr. Aho this morning with respect to contracting policies, in particular RFPs. We can answer the concerns about transparency with industry and the public at large.

I have had four meetings with the Construction Association. We are continuing to do that. The discussion about maybe some kind of panel or advisory board, I am not discounting that, but I have not made a decision on whether we should do that or not. If we do it, I would see it as an external board

made up of possibly private sector and labour, et cetera. It is certainly under consideration. When you look at that, one of the other comments that was introduced was the need for an independent review of the process when the problems arise. We certainly have with the hiring of Mr. Coles been able to draw upon the problems associated within other constituencies. There is a great deal of learning to be gained there, which is probably another important recommendation being made. I am certainly prepared to take a hard look at that. In fact, Mr. Coles is currently reviewing some of the problems that took place, for example, in New Brunswick for the schools, et cetera.

Mr. Picco had made some reference to the public sector. I am fundamentally of the belief that the private sector on a number of occasions, not in all instances, but on a number of occasions, can do it more cost effectively than government. In fact, it can access tax concessions. It can write off its interest payments where governments cannot. You have to believe when you move on the P3 that the premise of the private sector can do it on a more cost effective basis is one of the reasons, not the only reason, for moving in that direction. At the end of the day, the overall cost to government will be less. However, I think it is important, again, as several Members said, projects have to be analyzed on an individual basis.

I do not think there will be any clear way. This is one way to do it versus another way to do it. It requires some flexibility. I hope we can do that. I do not want to go on and on, but for me, three or four key issues are: long-term fiscal obligations and affordability. We have got to, if I may, deal with each individual project as it comes forward and determine what the cost benefit is. This has to be done and has to be transparent. There is a need for transparency, so that people see the projects that have been approved. I have already said, in this House, to previous questions, that we will advertise the projects and we will discuss with industry and others what the projects are.

The need for checks and balances, as I have said earlier, I am prepared to look at and I will not commit today, but I am prepared to look at some kind of panel, some advisory board that can provide external advice or overseeing of the policy. I think that is a valid suggestion and, certainly, we are looking at

the need for clear contracting policies. As I have said, we have been working on that for months. We are certainly working very diligently on the RFPs because that is one area that consistently comes up here. I do not see any other way of doing the P3 but through an RFP. If the Members have some other suggestions, I would be prepared to listen, but I do not see how you can do it any other way. What are you looking for? You are looking for private sector initiative. You are looking for private sector ideas. You are looking for private sector funding. You are looking for private sector creativity, et cetera. It is going to have to be done through some RFP and, clearly, there is going to be a need to be much more transparent than we have in the past. I am politically committing to that today.

The last issue or the main issue, for me, is the affordability issue and the fact we will be committing future governments to long-term fiscal obligations. Let us say, clearly, in this House, we are ready to do that. We do that through our lease arrangements. We do that through our capital expenditures, et cetera. It is incumbent upon us to make sure the parties who are going to be involved in the division of the territories, Interim Commissioner and the new western government, are intimately involved in the fact there will be new long-term fiscal obligations. Whether it is in the construction of the Nunavut hospital in Iqaluit or, for example, the one in Inuvik, these are the obvious ones.

In closing I would say we are still learning about the P3. It is expected by the constituency out there that they want us to move in a fairly expeditious way, so we can get some things on the ground, put people to work and get the infrastructure that is needed in the communities. I am fairly confident we can do that. I am going to commit today, after discussions with my cabinet colleagues that, obviously, the House has to be involved through the committees. We would share that all with everybody and seek their direction and advice on the projects. I want to say again. This is not a panacea for everybody's favourite project. This is not a panacea for multimillion dollars' worth of expenditures. This is just another way of adding to and enhancing our current spending in capital infrastructures. I hope in my brief response I have been able to answer some of the problems or some of the issues raised. They are valid. I have Mr. Ootes' well laid-out presentation today, and I think it is probably reflective of how we all feel, including myself. The only note of caution I would say is we have some obligation and responsibility to move

relatively quickly. I may differ there, in that, we want to get some things moving in 1998-1999.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I do appreciate the comments made by the Members. We will take them into full consideration. All Members will be involved. Let me repeat. All Members will be involved in the final outcome of the projects. They will be done based on the criteria set on merit and no political interference. There is certainly going to be political direction. This is why we are here. I see these projects coming forward based on need, et cetera, based on the criteria we set.

I think Mr. Picco said, which I think is an appropriate one, he probably plagiarized it from the report, but he did say, if my memory serves me correctly, that the P3 would require a shift in organizational thinking. I think that was it. I think this was from page one of the report. I am not sure. I agree with him. Clearly, there is a need for a new way of corporate thinking. The reason I bring that up is because I want to remind everybody that today, Mr. Coles is in town dealing with our senior managers, explaining what P3 are about, getting them committed to the projects, getting them to understand it means a shift in thinking, et cetera, so we are, in fact, trying to do that at the senior management level. In conclusion, gentleman, I hope I have been able to answer some of the questions and if there are any others, I would only be too happy to do it today or we can deal with it later next week. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. About ten minutes ago, I asked the Members if there were any more general comments. I called out two or three times. There were none. Perhaps, now you want to get into question and answer period or shall we conclude? Mr. Picco, you are on the list.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to get into some specific questions on the P3. This is a good opportunity because in reality we have not had an opportunity to debate the P3 at all. Just simple questions in question period. I would like to have this opportunity to ask some specific questions to the Minister. The Minister talked about ground rules, guidelines and some of the areas that we have had presented to us. I do not know and I cannot remember if they have been tabled in this House so that the public at large could see them. That would

be one of my concerns. If it has been tabled, that is fine, but I do have some specific questions and I will begin right now, Mr. Chairman. My first question would concern the projects themselves. When will they actually be identified and when will those projects then be made known to the House and to the public at large? Would these projects be taken out of the capital plan? For example, if an arena is to be built in hard luck bay, would that project then come out of the capital plan and the monies allocated for it, so that it could go under the Public/Private Partnerships? Is that the plan Mr. Todd has been looking at? That is the question and how the projects will be identified. I will let Mr. Todd answer those two questions and I have a couple more. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Hard luck bay meaning Pelly Bay. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I thought it was Iqaluit. First of all, Mr. Chairman, we did table the guidelines for implementing Public/Private Partnerships on January 26th, sometime two or three weeks ago. Right now the deputy ministers are reviewing the existing capital plan and Mr. Picco is correct in taking a look at the potential projects that, while approved, may be able to be transferred to P3. When these projects will be identified and brought forward to FMB and then forwarded to the Standing Committee on Government Operations or all Members, I am optimistic that we can have that done later this week, meaning at the end of this week or the early part of next week, with the Standing Committee on Government Operations, in which we would invite all Members of the House. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if the

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projects are approved within the capital plan, I will use the hard luck bay example. If the arena in hard luck bay is approved in the five-year capital plan - or in the budget of this government - for example, a line item under MACA is the arena for hard luck bay which has

been approved for \$2.1 million - would the Minister then take that program out of the budget or out of the approval process that has already been in place because MACA has been finished and that arena has been approved for hard luck bay. Would that project then move forward under Public/Private Partnerships? If it does, then that means, of course, that the Government of the Northwest Territories does not put the \$2.5 million up front. What happens to that \$2.5 million, does that go back into the budget then and is that money used for another project? What would happen? That is the concern I have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I think that is a legitimate concern and certainly, as I said, we are reviewing right now the existing capital budgets to see if there is a potential for P3 that could free up some money to do the other initiatives that we were going to do, for example, in the housing or perhaps some other issues out there that become priority in this government. I want to assure Members that once the projects come forward, that there will be full disclosure and full involvement and, hopefully, we will be able to address all the issues that Mr. Picco and others have raised. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister has agreed and confirmed that, indeed, the projects identified would be specific projects and if they have been approved in this budget as a \$2 million line item for an arena in hard luck bay, as an example, that money then would go back into the budget to be rebased for education or any other priority that this government would identify for those capital monies. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, that is correct, Mr. Chairman. That is how we would have to look at it. We certainly need to find the

money. I would like to avoid borrowing as little money as we can and we have to find the money; for example, for the housing project which is roughly \$20 to \$40 million. There may be a way and means to reevaluate some of the existing capital projects. All committees, all Members would be intimately involved in a final decision being made through, as it normally is, discussions with the committees.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Following along the same line on the projects themselves, should the projects be limited per riding or constituency? For example, maybe the need in hard luck bay is great and there needs to be identified three, four, five or seven P3 projects in that constituency of hard luck bay. Would the Minister, or the government itself, be limiting P3 per riding? For example, would some ridings have four or five going on, some might not have any. There are 24 constituencies in the Northwest Territories and not all of them need a P3 project. Would it be fair to say then, that in some ridings or some constituencies, depending on need and the transparent process that the Minister talks about, that indeed, there could be more than one, two, three or four projects in a constituency like hard luck bay? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I want to say in all seriousness that anybody who thinks this is a constituency by constituency issue is dead wrong. This has got nothing to do with constituencies, per say. It has got everything to do with trying to bring about the purchasing power for the infrastructure needs of the communities, based on certain priorities. This is not a political issue. It is a policy one, a change in the way in which we build our infrastructure. The P3 projects would be done on its individual merits and the project has to be feasible. They have to bring some return at some point to the government, this one and the future one. There may well be where one constituency may get, I do not know, one or two projects and some do not. I do not think it is a question of saying the politically correct thing is to do one in each riding. That is not the way

you run government. It may well be, Mr. Chairman, that there could be one or two projects in a riding versus none in the other. However, we are not at that stage right now and we will be in the next two or three days. I think it will become clear to everybody when we present it to the committees exactly what I am saying. It is nothing I am trying to avoid discussing, but I think it is a little premature because it is still being worked out at the bureaucratic level. The projects have to bring some return to the government, both short and long term. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Term to remember is transparency. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That, indeed, is correct, Mr. Chairman, that transparency is the question. Although it is a policy one, it becomes political. Mr. Todd talked about that it is a policy of government, not a political policy, but it does become political when you look at infrastructure requirements and as politicians, of course, we are there to make sure that the constituency at large, receives projects and those types of projects create jobs and everything so that is my concern. That is going back to the ground rules and guidelines that we talked about earlier. The Minister, Mr. Todd, talks about bringing them to the committees and that also is a little bit of a concern I have because next week, on Friday, this week, Friday or Monday, if the House is finished, I do not see on any of my planning calendars where there would be any committee meetings until April. We have to come back some time in April to review projects. By that time, because of the time lines with sealift and so on, some projects might have to go ahead. That is a question that has been raised by the public. I wonder if the Minister could maybe explain the mechanism that he is looking at to make sure, indeed, that all projects are screened and the committees have input in those decisions that are brought forward by departments, again, I could use the hard luck bay initiative for the arena. If a committee has a problem with that, is there a veto mechanism that you are looking at, Mr. Todd, or something like that so that transparency, as the Chairman just mentioned, and that hammer, I guess that as elected officials

you would want to have. Maybe Mr. Todd could elaborate a little bit on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was originally my intent to try to go to FMB tomorrow and go to the standing committee and invite all Members on Thursday, on the assumption that we would finish on Friday. My understanding in talking to the Chairman of OMC, Mr. Ootes, is that there is some discussion about the possibility of moving and finishing on Tuesday or Wednesday of next week. However, I agree with my humble colleague who says we need to move on this because we will never make the sealift. It is certainly not my intention to delay the ability of the Ordinary Members to have total access and involvement and direction on this policy. We will just have to have some flexibility, but it certainly was my intention to meet with you on Thursday and maybe it is Friday or maybe it is the weekend and Monday. Certainly, it will occur and your involvement will be intimate and we will look forward to the recommendations and support that we are going to receive on the projects that come forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I have on the list here, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we can all identify some of the benefits from this P3 initiative and I would like to start off by saying that I do not think that this P3 initiative is something that is brand new. I think the government has an obligation to ensure that the people that we are responsible for understanding completely what the initiative is about and remove any fears or concerns that they have by explaining as much as possible about it. This government leases space. It leases vehicles I think this whole question is about who provides the capital. I think if it can be reduced to that question whether the government does a project or whether private enterprise does a project, the main thing is who owns it and who is producing the capital for it. I think this is one avenue where the government can put some of that responsibility out to the private sector to produce capital for these projects. The government is still

going to need these facilities, so whether they borrow the money for it themselves or whether private enterprise borrows the money and builds the structure, it is not the crux of the matter from my perspective. I think there are many examples being talked about P3 initiatives. We seem to, all the time, go away outside of the Northwest Territories to look at projects that have been handled on P3 initiatives, such as the bridge across the Northumberland Strait to Prince Edward Island.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Minister, if you want to respond, that is your prerogative. Mr. Minister.

HON. JOHN TODD:

My honourable colleague is saying, do the developers have to put in equity and take some risk attached to a project, as the government will, in its lease arrangement or whatever P3 arrangements, the answer is yes. I suspect there will be a ten percent or 15 percent equity. Hypothetically, you have a million-dollar project, a company bids on it, and they have got to show where they are putting their money at risk, otherwise there is just no point in this. I think we have said clearly in any presentations we have made that the risk side of this thing has to be shared both by the private sector, whether it is on the development corporation or individual or a group of individuals, along with the government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that, but for greater clarity, I would like some assurances from the Minister that a private component will not be able to get to the table without having some of their own resources committed, that they can go to three or four other government agencies and use that as their equity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I think I have indicated that we see the need for there to be a sharing of the risk and the risk means, in my eyes anyway, a former entrepreneur or groups of

entrepreneurs or the development corporations have to take some risk by putting their own cash equity into the projects. I hope that is clear. If they see fit to go and seek long-term debt from either government-sponsored funds like the Aurora Fund, the BCC or the bank that is their business. Certainly we see

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the element of risk critical to the success of this project. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I have on the list Mr. Henry and Mr. Krutko. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we are getting to where I was hoping we could get to. Maybe I am not making myself clear enough. The Minister has talked about long-term debt, and I agree yes, I think that is a commitment. I am talking about the equity they put in, that it does not come from other government agencies. I think that is what I am trying to get at to alleviate the concerns from some of the constituents who have doubts about this to ensure that the equity, the seed money that makes it works. The long-term debt, I agree, can come from anywhere. I am talking about the equity they put in has to come from outside of the government. It has to come from the proponents. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

I hope that is what I was saying. I think that where people get their long term debt from is their business. They have to put equity in, and my experience has been when you put equity in, you write a cheque or you find the cash. I hope I am trying to answer the question properly. I am not trying to avoid it. Let me try a question on Mr. Henry. Is he saying he is concerned that government may put the equity in for a proponent? If that is the case, I do not see that at all. I think the equity has to be a risk equity because it has to be collective risk. Therefore, the equity has to be from the individual group or individual persons. That is the way I see it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry, are you okay on that?

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I appreciate that the Minister did get the point of the question I was trying to make, and he did answer it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For now I will give way to other people who may wish to question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Any time a Member yields to another Member, it is always appreciated. Thank you. I have Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not know whether other Members have any questions or not. I would just like to make a comment. I found, when I went through the report and through the guidelines, that not a lot of the concerns we have expressed today have been answered in the guidelines nor in the report prepared by the Coles Group. What I would like to do, Mr. Chairman, if the Members are through with questions, is to move on and defer this item until a later date, that Mr. Todd can digest the suggestions being made and then try and wrap this up before the Sessions ends, if that is agreeable with the Members.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Ootes is suggesting we defer this item and move on to another item on the table. Do we agree that this item is not concluded but deferred?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Thank you very much. I thank the Minister. The next one on the schedule, as it was agreed by all Members, is Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a very small amendment. This amendment makes a small change to the Income Tax Act to allow the Government of the NWT to delegate to Revenue Canada the authority to remit personal income taxes, in some situations, where the federal taxes are also remitted. This will

reduce the administrative cost of making remission orders for this government in a small number of cases when they are issued. Only three income tax remission orders totalling \$4,600 have been issued in the past six years. Remission orders are usually used to assist taxpayers when a very strict interpretation of the Income Tax Act would result in an unfair tax burden. That is it, Mr. Chairman. It is a very minor change which we discussed in the committee. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. I believe the Member of the Infrastructure Committee is Mr. Henry, who will make the opening remarks. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Infrastructure reviewed Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act on February 4, 1998. The committee would like to thank the Minister of Finance and his officials for presenting the bill. The bill would amend the Income Tax Act to provide that when the Minister of National Revenue remits tax, interest and penalties to an individual taxpayer, he or she may also remit the Northwest Territories portion of the tax, interest and penalties. The committee noted that a mission might be granted for relief of extreme hardship and in cases where the individual received incorrect advice from the Department of National Revenue. Committee Members questioned the Minister about the amount of remission given each year. Members were advised that the remissions for the two previous years amounted to less than \$5 thousand for both years. The committee noted that the corporations and groups of taxpayers such as northern residents applying for northern residents deduction, would still have to obtain the agreement of the GNWT for remission orders. As the Minister of Finance explained, the remissions for corporations and groups of taxpayers are more complex than for individuals and occur more rarely.

Mr. Chairman, following the committee's review, a motion was carried to report Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act to the Assembly as ready for the committee of the whole. Additional comments or questions of Members may be posed as we review the bill here in the committee of the whole. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Before I can entertain general comments, I would like to ask the Minister if he wishes to bring in a witness or witnesses. Mr. Todd.

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HON. JOHN TODD:

Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER:

Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Proceed, Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms. Thank you. For the record, Mr. Minister, would you please introduce the witnesses?

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my immediate right, of course, is Margaret Melhorn, deputy minister of Finance. On my immediate left is Denise Gagnon, who is the legislative drafter for the Department of Justice in the legislative division of the Department of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Welcome to the committee. The floor is open for general comments. Do you want to go clause by clause? It is in your green binder, Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act. Clause 1, Income Tax Act is amended by this act. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 2. Agreed? Mr. Ootes.

MR. OOTES:

Mr. Chairman, I am wondering if we need a quorum, because we do not have one.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Are you requesting a quorum here, Mr. Ootes?

MR. OOTES:

I wondered if we need one.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 2 of Bill 6. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 3 of Bill 6. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Does the committee agree that Bill 6 is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Bill 6 is now ready for third reading. I thank the witnesses and Mr. Minister. Thank you. Another on the table that was agreed to earlier by this committee is Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998. On behalf of this bill, Mr. Todd.

HON. JOHN TODD:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. I will deal with this Bill today. Mr. Arlooktoo, as you know, is in Ottawa. The purpose of Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998 is to amend various statutes of the Northwest Territories that contain errors, inconsistencies or anomalies that have been identified in the ongoing statute review project or that have been brought to the attention of the Department of Justice by Members of

the public or by the staff adjusters and other departments. The department's responsible for the administration of various statutes being amended by the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998, have each reviewed and approved the changes to the statutes under their authority. Most changes proposed in the bill are minor in nature and many consist of grammatical or spelling corrections to either the English or French version of the statute. Other changes have the effect of repealing certain provisions of the statutes that have expired, lapsed or otherwise ceased to have effect. The bill also provides for the repeal of Expo '92 Revolving Fund Act which is spent in its entirety. The amendments are of such a nature that the preparation and legislative consideration of individual bills to correct each statute would be time consuming for the government and the Legislative Assembly, particularly at this juncture when we must be frugal with both time and resources. In order for an amendment to be included in the bill, it had to meet the following criteria: It must not be controversial. That would be nice. It must not involve the spending of public funds. It must not prejudicially affect the rights of persons, and it must not create a new offence or subject a new class of persons to an existing offence. In our view, the amendments proposed in Bill 10, met these criteria. During its initial review of Bill 10, the Standing Committee on Government Operations expressed concerns with provisions amending the Condominium Act and the Legal Service Act. Minister Arlooktoo concurred with the Standing Committee and agreed that a motion should be brought forward before this committee to address these concerns. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Todd. Your answer for Mr. Arlooktoo is noted for the time being. I have Mr. Henry on behalf of the Standing Committee on Government Operations. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Government Operations reviewed Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amending Act, 1998 at its meeting on February 19, 1998. The committee would like to thank the Minister of Justice and his officials for presenting the bill. The bill corrects errors and inconsistencies that have been identified in various NWT statutes. The amendments made are intended to be noncontroversial and uncomplicated. In general, the standing committee agreed that the

amendments fulfil the intent of the bill and is noncontroversial. However, committee Members had questions and concerns about some aspects of the bill and had reached agreement with the Minister that motions would be made to amend two clauses of this bill in committee of the whole.

Some committee Members expressed concern about the proposed amendments to the Condominium Act, dealing with condominium plans. The amendments would allow engineers to certify that the buildings in question have been constructed and that the diagrams of the units are accurate in relation to the buildings. Currently only architects are able to provide similar certificates. Some Members were of the opinion that, as the

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term engineer covers a broad field, it would be appropriate to clarify that such certificates could only be given by engineers qualified in the relevant area.

The Minister provided an undertaking to the standing committee that a motion would be moved in committee of the whole to address this concern. This motion would amend clause 8 of the bill.

Committee Members also questioned the Minister about the rationale for the proposed amendments to the Legal Services Act. The amendments would change the composition of the Legal Services Board, which is responsible for administering legal aid. As the bill currently stands, three members of the board would be removed. The lay member, who is a person and is not a member of a law society or the public service, would be appointed on the nomination of the Attorney General of Canada and the executive director of the board. The Minister explained these changes were proposed by the Legal Services Board. The standing committee had no difficulty with two of the proposed changes. The federal government had notified the board that it no longer wished to nominate a representative. As well, the board proposed the removal of the executive director because that person is a staff member and takes direction from the Board. The Committee understands the executive director will continue to attend all board meetings. However, in some committee Members had concerns with the proposed removal of the lay person from the board. The Minister advised that in the opinion of the board, there will continue to be a balance of legal and lay membership because each of the regional committees nominates a board member. However, in

the standing committee's view, it is important to ensure there is a category of membership that specifies that a person is not a member of the law society or of the public service. The Minister again provided an undertaking to the standing committee that a motion would be moved, in committee of the whole to address this concern. The motion would amend clause 19 of the Miscellaneous Statutes Amending Act, 1998.

Mr. Chairman, committee Members may have additional comments or questions on this bill during review in committee of the whole. This concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amending Act, 1998. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. We are dealing with Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998. Before we get into the general comments, I would like to ask the honourable Minister if he wished to bring in witnesses? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Proceed, Sergeant-at-Arms. Escort the witnesses, please. For the record, Mr. Todd, would you introduce the witnesses, please?

HON. JOHN TODD:

On my immediate right is Mark Aiken, the legislative counsel. On my immediate left is Mr. Gary MacDougall who is the director of legal registries.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Welcome to the committee. Dealing with Bill 10. General comments from the floor? No? Clause-by-clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

For the record, I would like to indicate to you we are dealing with Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes

Amendment Act, 1998. Page one, Bill 10, clause 1. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Clause 2. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 3. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 4. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 5, agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 6 of Bill 10. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could you just note the page numbers as you are going along and the act if you would, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Bill 10, clause 5, the Judicial Change of Names Act. Clause 5. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Okay. Charter Communities Act, clause 6. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Cities, Towns and Villages Act, clause 7. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Condominium Act, clause 8. Mr. Todd, clause 8.

Committee Motion 19-13(5): To Amend Subclause 8(5) of Bill 10 Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998

HON. JOHN TODD:

I would like to make a motion, as I

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understand the committee has concurred, with respect to subclause 8(5) Bill 10 be amended by deleting proposed paragraph 6(2)(e) and by substituting the following:

(e) a certificate of an architect or of an engineer qualified to do so, certifying that the buildings have been constructed and the diagrams of the unit shown on the plan are accurate in relation to the buildings; and that is all, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Clause 8, Bill 10, as amended. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 9, Bill 10. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 10 on page 7. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Dental Auxiliaries Act, clause 11.
Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Deceased Registries Act, clause 12.
Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 13, Bill 10. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 14, Explosives Use Act. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 15. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 16. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 17, Bill 10. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Land Titles Act, clause 18. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Mr. Todd. Land Titles Act, clause 18. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Legal Service Act, Clause 19. Mr. Todd.

Committee Motion 20-13(5): To Amend Clause 19 of
Bill 10: Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act,
1998

HON. JOHN TODD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is we
have a motion here that has the agreement of the
committee, under the Miscellaneous Statutes
Amendment Act, 1998, clause 19 of Bill 10 be
amended by deleting paragraph (2)(b) and by
substituting the following:

(b) repealing paragraph (d).

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.
Question has been called. All those in favour? I have
been advised that in order to have a quorum, Mr.

Todd, you must be sitting in your chair and vote. Otherwise, we do not have a quorum. Thank you. Now we can vote. The motion is in order. To the motion. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Thank you. Clause 19, as amended. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Clause 20, Bill 10. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 21. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 22. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Mental Health Act, clause 23. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Page 12, Northwest Territories Teachers Association Act, clause 24. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 25. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Clause 26. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Page 13, Public Health Act, clause 27. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Public Printing Act, clause 28. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 29, Bill 10. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 30. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Settlements Act, clause 31. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Clause 32. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Page 16, Bill 20, Wildlife Act, clause 30(33).

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Can we agree that Bill 10 is ready for third reading as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Bill 10 is now ready for third reading as amended. I thank the honourable Minister and the witnesses for appearing before the committee.

Thank you. As we agreed at the starting of this committee, we will proceed with Bill 8, Health and Social Services budget, 1998-99 main estimates. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Is the honourable Minister now ready to make an opening remark on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Services, Mr. Ng?

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to have the opportunity to present the 1998-99 budget of the Department of Health and Social Services. This budget contains major reforms that began in 1996-97 to achieve an integrated system of care that is financially sustainable. This work involves the cooperation and contribution of boards, professional associations and other stakeholders. Approximately two-thirds of the 1998-99 combined...

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Ng, I know that time is of the essence but we have a translation here. Would you please slow down a bit. Thank you.

--Laughter.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Approximately two-thirds of the 1998-99 combined budget of \$261 million will be in the hands of health and social services boards. In the coming year, the department will work closely with the boards and its other partners as new roles and responsibilities evolve. The completion of a comprehensive, strategic plan for the department will continue to be a priority. The strategic plan will provide a vision for health and social services for the decades to come. Significant progress has already been made toward this goal. I expect the strategic plan to be concluded in May, 1998. Public consultation on the draft strategic plan was completed in December. Consultations with communities were lead by health and social services boards with support from the department. In addition, the department hosted a series of meetings to consult with territorial associations and front-line workers. Summary reports of these meetings are being prepared for distribution to participants and boards. In conjunction with the ongoing strategic process, the 1998-99 budget includes the introduction of the \$4 million Strategic Initiatives Fund. This fund will help boards to make fundamental changes necessary to develop a system that is sustainable over the long term.

The accounting structure in the main estimates that we are reviewing today represents the change in organizational structure. It also answers a need we heard last year for greater and more meaningful disclosure to this committee and to the public. The document we are presenting today allows for a better understanding of how health and social services funding will be spent.

In 1997-98, the amalgamation of health and social services at the regional level was completed, as well as a decentralization of the Mackenzie Regional Health Services. In conjunction with the amalgamation and decentralization, boards are becoming more responsible and accountable for their expenditures. In 1998-99, approximately \$172 million will be in the hands of the boards. The boards are accountable for the delivery of

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programs and services based on territorial legislation and policy. The details of the roles and relationships between the boards and department are included in a series of partnership agreements currently being

finalized. The boards are responsible for achieving specific broad outcomes in terms of the health and social well-being of residents. They have the flexibility to make decisions about program delivery to achieve outcomes. They are also responsible for the deficits or surpluses that result from their actions. The department provides support and monitoring to ensure that the outcomes are being met.

The department will be working with the boards to develop comprehensive business plans. These plans will be consistent with the strategic directions of the overall health and social services system. The Department of Health and Social Services, along with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, has actively supported and initiated the development of a digital communications network in the Northwest Territories. The network promises to provide health and social services staff with high quality and high speed data connections that are more reliable than the phone lines currently being used. They will allow the telehealth service to expand and operate more effectively. While the department and boards are working to provide more support to people in their home communities, it is recognized that appropriate and adequate infrastructures are required to provide essential services to residents.

Planning for the replacement of the hospitals in Inuvik and Iqaluit will continue in 1998-99, with design and construction to begin in the 1999-2000 fiscal year. Regional planning will be conducted in the Keewatin and Kitikmeot to determine the facilities required there. Design and construction of a new health centre in Arviat, which was delayed due to funding shortfalls, will begin in 1998-99. Changes have been made to the capital plan to reflect the reprofiling of the hospital and long-term care facility in Fort Simpson. Renovation of the Fort Simpson Hospital in 1998-99 marks the completion of an extensive review and integration of health and social services for the residents of the Deh Cho. Although it can sometimes take years to see the full effect of a change in this type of policy, the department has some early indications that its reforms have shown and will continue to show results. However, we realize that there will continue to be pressures on the health and social services system as costs and the population increases. The department and boards will continue to work closely together to develop a sustainable health and social services system.

Mr. Chairman, I believe the actions the department has taken in the 1998-99 budget will build on the progress we have made in recent years by working

together and by taking responsibility 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. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your understanding again. You slowed down a bit. That helps. Appreciated. Thank you.

On behalf of the social program committee, I believe Mr. Miltenberger has an opening remark.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee was generally satisfied with the presentation of the main estimates by the department. The figures corresponded to those contained in the business plan and the capital plan as previously reviewed by the committee. The committee also noted that so far, the 1997-98 revised main estimates match the original estimates and hopes that this will continue to year end. The committee recognizes that the main estimates are a fluid document and those changes in the information contained within them will occur over the course of the year due to division related activities. In conducting its review of the 1998-99 main estimates of the Department of Health and Social Services, the committee made note of the following issues.

Hospitals and health care centres, the construction of the Inuvik and Iqaluit hospitals should remain a priority for the department. The committee is pleased that a funding agreement for the two hospitals is anticipated to be concluded with the federal government in the near future and that planning continues for replacement of these facilities. The committee wishes to be provided with the terms of the funding agreements for the two hospitals as negotiated by the department and the federal government and to be kept apprised of any developments regarding the construction of the hospitals. The committee also understands that the Arviat Health Centre was a victim of restraint in previous years and had to be rescheduled in the five-year capital plan. However, the need has become critical and the committee encourages the department to ensure that this project remains on track. The committee recommends that the department ensure that these projects proceed as scheduled and review all hospitals and health care centres as possible

candidates for Private/Public Partnerships funding in the upcoming years, should that initiative receive approval from this Assembly.

Strategic Initiatives Fund, the committee was concerned that there was no real methodology as yet, by the department for accessing the funds available under this initiative. The committee agrees in principle with the department's position that \$2 million of the \$4 million fund to be allocated to address funding deficiencies for the Dogrib community services board, the Baffin regional board and the Keewatin board. However, there is a concern that by focusing initially on these three boards, they may have an advantage in accessing the other \$2 million not specifically targeted at them. The committee is very anxious to review the department's plan for the access of funding available under the Strategic Initiatives Fund. The committee wishes to review the guidelines as soon as possible to verify that all boards have equitable access to this program.

National health care standards, the committee is concerned that under current fiscal restraint measures, the NWT may not be meeting the minimum national health care standards. With \$4 million available in the Strategic Initiatives Fund, it is important that reference be made to the basic recommended standards when considering the funding allocation.

The use of remote technology in health care, the committee generally supports the department's efforts in this area. When

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properly set up and administered, these technological advancements can benefit the residents of the Northwest Territories. The majority of the Members of the standing committee were concerned, however, that this technology should not be used by the boards or the department as a method to reduce current levels of qualified medical personnel. Members are aware that this technology allows real time contact between the health practitioners but emphasizes that it should not be viewed as an acceptable step toward replacing a doctor with a nurse or a nurse with a nurse's aid. The committee looks forward to being supplied with more information on the successes and application of this technology in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, I will ask my colleague from the social program's committee, Mr. Fred Roland, to continue and complete the report.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for Inuvik, Mr. Roland. Carry on please.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Program evaluation and monitoring board standards. The committee was pleased that the department is fulfilling its responsibility to ensure adequate access to health care and will be providing the boards with a measure of assistance. The committee was very concerned that all residents of the Northwest Territories receive equal access to all programs funded by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Members understand that the present funding arrangements allow the boards flexibility to deal with the concerns in their own jurisdictions. However, it must be made clear to the boards that they are responsible for the delivery of all programs funded by the government and cannot select programs to deliver. Over the course of the last year, it has become apparent that the devolution of responsibilities to the boards may have occurred at a rate faster than the board's ability to absorb the changes. Members feel that a uniform set of guidelines on the standards to which boards are expected to adhere would assist the boards to take on new programs and services. The committee looks forward to receiving some terms of reference for the program evaluation and monitoring division and would like to review copies of the guidelines and standards developed for the boards at the earliest opportunity.

Administration costs, in discussion with the Minister, the committee learned that administration costs averaged between 8 percent and 12 percent at the board of management level. It is hoped that this percentage can be reduced and that any savings realized can be used to deliver client-driven programs. The committee is optimistic that the program evaluation and monitoring unit of the department will be able to identify cost savings for the boards of management. While maintaining the independence of the present boards, the committee looks forward to being advised of progress on the reduction of administration costs.

Physician recruiting, the committee was pleased to hear that the department was working with the NWT Medical Association to develop a plan and report on

physician recruiting for the NWT by the end of 1997. The committee looks forward to reviewing the report and discussing the recommendations made. There was a concern that competition among the boards for physicians may be contributing to the shortage of physicians. The committee encourages the department to work with the NWT Medical Association and the health boards to develop innovative solutions to address the doctor's shortage in the NWT and requests a brief overview on the current level of this shortage.

Health care dollars spent outside the NWT, as the Minister stated, \$22 million is spent on health care for residents receiving treatment outside the territories. While the committee recognizes that it is not realistic to provide all services to the residents of the Northwest Territories at a local and regional level and that there will probably always be a need for outside services, Members feel that the government can improve on this figure. With the great strides made by the colleges in providing nursing programs over the past couple of years, there is an opportunity to repatriate more people to their home communities from southern institutions. The department must take a lead role in identifying those patients who can be repatriated and provide the local boards with the necessary level of support to reintegrate the patient back into their home community. The committee looks forward to progress on this issue as a reduction in the money spent on health care in the south and would appreciate receiving a breakdown of the \$22 million spent on health care outside the Northwest Territories.

In regard to travel, this is an important issue to many residents of the NWT, particularly, in the east where travel costs are prohibitive. The committee understands the previous Travel Program was lax and that there were significant abuses. This being said, Members feel the government needs to refine its definition of compassionate travel and communicate this definition to the boards. The committee recommends that, as part of the department's development of the minimum standards and guidelines for hospitals and health boards, the issue of compassionate travel be addressed to ensure that criteria and guidelines provide for fair and equitable access. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you very much, Mr. Roland. Before we get into general comments, I would like to determine if Minister Ng wishes to bring in witnesses? Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Do we agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Proceed. For the record, Mr. Minister, would you please introduce the witnesses?

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right, David Ramsden, deputy minister. To my left, Warren St. Germaine, director of Financial Management Services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. Welcome to the committee. The floor is now open to general comments. Mr. Enuaraq.

MR. ENUARAQ:

(Translation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will

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be speaking Inuktitut. First of all, I should express my appreciation to the Minister and his witnesses of Health and Social Services. I would also like to thank my committee Members on the Social Programs, including Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Roland and Mr. Ningark. You were able to participate when we discussed the issue of the budget of the Department of Health and Social Services. Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that, while we are on the topic of health and services, there used to be some monies available for compassionate travel. At this time, in communities in the east that have people who are close to death and who have to travel to Montreal or Ottawa for medical care, it is difficult for people to go on compassionate travel. There used to be a policy where compassionate travel was allowed. I would like to see this reintroduced in this budget to review further Mr. Roland's statement as a Member on our committee. It is important we consider reintroducing compassionate travel especially for relatives who may be losing their family. Hopefully, you can understand

the translation. Thank you for the opportunity for general comments. (Translation ends)

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Enuaraq. I am not reminding Mr. Enuaraq, but I will remind the speakers who are speaking to general comments to try and refrain from getting into detail which will come out in following pages. I have Mr. Miltenberger on the list. General comments, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to briefly highlight some of the areas that I want to have further discussion on, when we hit the appropriate activity. I want to ask the Minister and his staff for updates on some of these long awaited reforms. We have been told this would be our third budget. We understand the broader strategic one has been ongoing for years and could carry us to division and beyond. I would like, as well, to find out what is happening with the Care Facilities Reform which we have been talking about and waiting for. I am also interested in information about the alcohol and drug reforms, changes that were made and how those are working. Have they met the goals that were anticipated when the changes were made? Mr. Chairman, I stay in fairly close contact with the board chair and the CEO in Fort Smith, and I am also very concerned about and interested in getting any further information on the kind of board support that is being provided or not being provided. There are apparent mixed messages in some areas in regard to what kind of reprofiling should or should not take place. I am very concerned about the department's latest messages that apparently it is not up to the department to decide what kind of service should be provided, but is up to the boards to, I suppose, guess as best they can as to what kind of services they might want to consider in terms of reprofiling. I am very concerned about the partnership arrangement that should exist, in my opinion, between boards and the department. There is clearly a coordinating function that has to be played by headquarters. I would like some information. I asked you earlier about the relationship between ORMED, FIS, and Star Master and the confusion that may or may not still be there. I should point out, Mr. Chairman, before I go on to some other questions I will be asking, there is a sense of apprehension in the community I represent in some cases, there may be another agenda that the Department of Health and Social Services has not put on the table in terms of

the reprofiling exercise. I would, of course, like some information on that.

There are some child welfare issues that I think we have to address. Once again, the feedback I am getting from the South Slave and specifically the community I represent is that headquarters is not in a position to provide clear direction in terms of child welfare, the new changes that have been made and the function of the superintendent of child welfare itself. I was given an example that a social worker called on a serious child welfare incident; for example, and was told they should not be bothering the superintendent of child welfare because that is a very busy position and that basically the staff should figure it out themselves. I want to make sure that, in our amalgamation and the move toward bringing the departments together, we do not forget this very, very critical issue. It is such a critical one, in fact, that we made extensive changes to the Child Welfare Act to try to reflect the concern and the need to update. The concern has been passed on to me that we may be seeing, in fact, the disintegration of the role of social workers as we know it and that nurses are being trained to do apprehensions, but at the same time, you do not see that kind of plan being envisioned for social workers. Their role seems to be downgraded when, in fact, this is probably one of the greatest areas of concern in the Department of Health and Social Services.

I will have questions in regard to board development and what this means and the need for the department to in fact play a very clear leadership role. We cannot rely on Mr. Chang, who may be doing a very good job and happens to be teaching a curriculum that the department may agree with, to set the standard and make sure there is a coordinated and integrated approach to board development which I think we all recognize is critical if we are going to, in fact, have boards that are functional.

I would also like further information about the support services the department is setting up to provide board support. I am interested as well about this think tank the Department of Health and Social Services is involved in. We have folks, and I met one of them in the Northwester Building, sitting on one of the higher floors in the Northwester Building doing good things, apparently. What those are, I would be interested in knowing, and what kinds of plans and directions are they geared toward?

I would also like, Mr. Chairman, some feedback on the Healthy Children's Initiative, and I see we are still

pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into wellness. The concern has always been that we are pouring money into these areas, but we have no criteria for evaluation. Are we getting value for money or is this just free money for the communities to basically do what they will? This was the concern before, and I do not know if that has been addressed to alleviate that concern.

The final couple of issues, Mr. Chairman, that I would like to question further, when it is the appropriate time, are the vacancy rates by region for social workers and nurses. I understand there are some significant percentages of vacancy rates that cause me great concern. While they may not be evident in the riding that I am from specifically, if it is a problem across the north, then we should know about it, and we should take the steps to address that.

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Finally, at the appropriate time, Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister to indicate when he anticipates the Adoption Act being brought before this House so that we can conclude that final chapter of the Family Law Review and all the other good work that has been done.

As you can see, Mr. Chairman, I have a number of issues I would like to discuss. There is one I forgot. Of course, it is Trail Cross. I have very strong concerns about that as well, not just the actual physical structure but the program itself. I am hoping everybody is planning to be here at least for today to address some of the concerns I have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. There is a fair amount of observations and concerns. However, Mr. Minister, you will be given the privilege of responding after every Member has spoken. The Member also indicated he will be asking, at the appropriate time, a number of concerns he has. It is not necessary to endeavour to answer every question the Member has. General comments? Mr. Roland and Mr. Krutko.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Briefly, in the Minister's opening remarks he talked about the strategic plan that will provide vision for Health and Social Services for the decade to come, and he expects it to be, hopefully, completed in May, 1998. It would be nice

to see before we actually get into division what we are heading into besides knowing that a plan is being worked on. This has been one of the concerns I have had as well, especially since the department will be working with the boards to develop a comprehensive business plan based on the strategic directions of the overall Health and Social Services system. There are a number of items there. My concern would be, as brought up earlier, last week, with the Inuvik Regional Health Board and my specific questions which I will bring up later on in the appropriate section which has to do with funding levels and Cabinet decisions as to how they impact those funding levels. It has been just over a year since the closure of Delta House. Although the Minister at the time in an Inuvik meeting made a commitment to support, as they now call it, a turning point helping them work on other initiatives. I am disappointed as are members within the community that the help that was offered did not seem to follow through down to the community when the crunch came. It was like pulling teeth in some instances. So I would have questions in that area. Although, they have moved to another area, they are trying to provide some services within the community when it relates to drug and alcohol, which has been severely reduced but they are still trying to provide some service to the individual. I will be asking questions in the appropriate section when it comes to the amount of funding we are spending in sending out patients. I am speaking of medical and travel dollars as well as costs for the individuals to be in another facility.

Hopefully, this framework we are talking about will establish a solid criteria where all health boards will know, and it will be clearly labelled and spelled out, that the process which is to be followed when it comes to health care for individuals in the Northwest Territories. Although there should be some flexibility, all people across the Northwest Territories should be eligible and able to receive medical health for items that are open and offered to all residents of Canada. Of course, I am interested in the process of the Inuvik Hospital and its financing, when it comes to the federal government. Hopefully, the Minister can update us as to what is happening in that area. I think that we have come a long way and the last two budgets we have gone through without a lot of discussion. We are moving in the right direction of giving communities control of developing systems, but once again, I must say there needs to be a framework in place where all health boards are expected to operate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask 1,000 questions on this department and especially in regard to health and social services, the Tl'oondih Healing Camp and child advocacy. Those questions have not changed my mind that something has to be done to the system to improve it versus making the notion that when we establish regional health boards now our problems are solved. All we have done is moved the control from one sector of the government to a newly formed sector. Yet the people in the communities still do not see changes they were hoping to see from anything they want in the way of developing drug and alcohol programs to how their medical service is going to be improved or the whole question about vacancies within the health system. In regard to my riding, the last time I checked there were three vacancies in Aklavik and two in McPherson. McPherson serves the Arctic Bay riding. At any one time there is only one nurse on call and she has to serve two communities. This has to be seriously looked at in regard to the quality of health care that we are presently delivering to the people in the communities.

There is the whole notion of devolving powers to the regional health boards that they were going to be closer to the communities. I will use an example, the Tl'oondih Healing Society, who has put forth four proposals to the Inuvik Regional Health Board looking for different funding to deliver alcohol and drug programs in the community of Fort McPherson. It has received only one reply to the latest proposal they put in just last week. I wonder if that is the case because they have a surplus in the regional health board's budget. A motion was passed in this House in which I received support from my colleagues and committee of the whole to recognize the Tl'oondih Healing Program and to direct the Minister to work to find sources of funding so the program could follow through. Very little has happened in that way to ensure that there are funds to carry on such a program.

The other area that I basically have concerns about is the whole area of community wellness and ensuring healthy communities. Because of the funding is presently being distributed to run alcohol and drug programs in the communities, the mental health

workers to whom those funds have been distributed are so limited in carrying out that job in the communities that it is hard to even attract people to work within those different sectors because of the limited resources they have and the demands on them.

The other area I mentioned was Child Advocacy in regard to the children in our society, especially the ones who are under the care of this government, either being incarcerated in youth facilities or being put into group homes or what not. There has

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to be some system in place to ensure that children have an avenue to raise their grievances. I attended a conference in Winnipeg last year in which there were child advocacy groups right across the country. They have done a lot of good things. We hear the Liberal government stating that their main platform is children and youth. When it comes to this government, when you talk about child advocacy groups or things that could improve the system, working with other organizations across Canada who have developed the programs where they have legislation in the different provinces and who are able to have some clout and teeth in regard to making decisions in the way children are being treated when they are in custody of the government, when they are being transferred between correction facilities and young offender facilities or even in regard to the care they have been put in through foster care or whatever; there has to be an avenue there that they do have a group or agency where they can raise these grievances, so they are heard. We cannot continue to institutionalize our children to basically become another statistic on the wall of how many children we have in facilities or how many children have been taken away or how many are becoming street children. We see that in Yellowknife and other areas where you see a lot of runaways.

We have to look at what we have done over the last three years and see exactly if it is really working meeting the expectations that we all had when we put this new way of delivering health care to the people in the communities in the region. Is it working? Just like anything else, it is a process of learning and we have to continue to improve things to make them better. In the case of health care, what we have heard from the medical association from different doctors that there is a real crisis with regard to the health system in the north. There are vacancies in different areas of the infrastructure and in the whole area of health care

delivery in general. We have basically taken the system which used to be one organization, split it up into four or five different categories and expected the same thing. We have to look at the whole area of community wellness and community health care in light of statistics in regard to events we have heard from the RCMP saying that they realize the cost to this government not only in the health costs but in the social costs in regard to justice is skyrocketing because of there are no programs for rehabilitation not only for the inmate himself but also to the people affected in the communities.

There has to be a mechanism that we can deal with these problems at home, in the communities and not to allow these problems to be resolved by just putting people in institutions. We have to find a way to find more funds and resources to be able to improve program delivery and services in the smaller communities. We say we are empowering communities by allowing them to deliver Community Wellness Programs and other programs but with the amount of resources they have and the limited human resources which they need to adequately do their job, it is not there. We have to seriously look at what has been done and exactly where we are trying to go. We have to take note that there are other factors we have to consider, such as the increase in birth rates, high employment rates we have in our smaller communities and the cultural differences people have from different cultural ethnic groups which are in the Northwest Territories.

The question I have asked the Minister over the last couple of years I ask sincerely because something has to be done to improve the communities I represent. Regarding a lot of these questions that I ask, no effort whatsoever was taken by your department to even try and consider some of these ideas. I will continue to ask questions, raise concerns, pass motions and nay this and nay that, but that is what I will have to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. No, I did not touch the timer. Shall we take a break now? I need direction. I will recognize Mr. O'Brien and after the break Mr. Ootes will speak. Mr. O'Brien, general questions.

MR. O'BRIEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be brief. Mr. Chairman, I was pleased to hear the Minister

indicating in his opening remarks that the design and construction of the much needed health centre in Arviat are being looked at and will possibly be under construction in 1998-99. The Minister is aware this is a much needed facility and there has been plenty of discussion over the last few years regarding it. Having said that, I am pleased the Minister is trying to address it and is acknowledging the extreme need for this facility.

The other comment I would like to make briefly is on compassionate travel. This is a critical issue for all northerners and their families. I will speak to it as it relates to residents of Nunavut. As most are aware, there is no road system in the eastern Arctic and all families who are residents have to fly south. On many occasions they fly without an escort simply because guidelines are not as clear as they should be and sometimes decisions are made further away from the actual situation at a regional office as opposed to the local centre. This is a welcome addition to look at this and try to tighten things up. Recently, I was at Baker Lake and there was an elder I was visiting. She indicated that she was quite concerned that she was travelling to Winnipeg for some back surgery. As I said, she was an elder and she was not sure her daughter would be able to go with her or not. This would be serious surgery and a case where she would require and would only want one of her family members with her, but she was not sure if that would be the case. Another issue which arose when I was in Arviat last week was a lady that had serious vision problems, near blind, and she was having difficulties in trying to get someone to agree to allow her one of her family members to escort her while she travels to various tests and analysis that she goes through on a very regular basis. There is a need for this to be looked at and tightened up and to me it is a welcome addition and long overdue. That is all I have to say Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. With that we will take a break.

--Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you. I would like to call the committee back to order. On the list I have Mr. Ootes. Mr. Ootes, general comments.

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make some comments that we received from the Northwest

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Territories Medical Association. Some weeks back they appeared before Members of the Legislative Assembly with concerns with regard to the provision of health services. I would like to just review some of those concerns they had.

The Medical Association, first of all, had some comments with regard to the Med-Emerg Report, following that with regard to the strategic plan and in general the state of health services in the Northwest Territories.

Perhaps I can just review some of those comments, then refer to a document by the NWT Nurses Association as well. The doctors appeared with us and they met with us for about two and a half hours to discuss their particular concerns. Most of their concerns were with regard to regionalization.

They pointed out that while there is no doubt some advantages to regionalization, there are also tremendous disadvantages. Their concern was mostly in the area of fragmentation of fiscal and human resources and discrepancies in the access to health care.

They are concerned about the changes being made in the delivery of health care by the regional boards and the potential for destabilizing the system. What they point out is that the people who are working within the system are the most important resource. The health care workers have kept the system going but the health care workers feel they are not being adequately supported in many cases by the regional boards. Doctor David Butcher, who is the president of the association, feels very strongly that economics is driving this system because the department has established a method of funding that we traditionally refer to as formula funding. He is of the opinion, along with his association, that funding should be done for programs, not just strictly by formula funding. That, because of this, the department's effort and approach is to strictly save money. The concern has to be with the quality of service being provided, not just with respect to the money. He stressed that. He stressed that the most important point to be made is the quality of health care and that any reforms or devolution of responsibility should focus on maintaining and improving the quality of health care.

He felt that models should be designed and if they are successful, fine, proceed with the next stage. If they are not successful, you have an ability to go back. Go back and regroup and redo it in a different way. He felt that there must be territory-wide standards and a need for leadership by the department in this whole area. Otherwise, each particular board can go in its own direction. One example that he made, and he stressed it very much, because he also has spoken on this area and I know everyone here is likely tired of hearing me speak on it; he made reference to it continually and that was in the area of breast cancer.

Now each board sets its standards and chooses what services to deliver, how to delivery it and each particular region can make that decision. He feels we need to ensure a plan is in place for appropriate training of staff for hospitals and clinics that there are adequate numbers of staff in place and that all institutions are credentialed institutions. Apparently, outside of one or two of the hospitals, none of the nursing stations or clinics are credentialed in the Northwest Territories whereas everywhere else in the country, they have to be.

Dr. Butcher was very concerned that we are placing a great deal of expectations on the boards, but they do not have the governance process in place. They also lack many, of what we would call, well-trained people to run the boards and to run the organizations. One of the examples used was the Keewatin. His term was, around the Christmas, January period, we had to send in a swat team because critical levels of staff started to fall off.

They made some very dramatic statements, Mr. Chairman. One of the doctors in our meetings stated that the system as a whole is in a critical state and needs a lot of attention.

Another point they made was there is a potential for professional liability to the boards. The boards are mandated to provide the health care, but we understand they are not adequately and in some cases, have no appropriate liable insurance.

The regionalization process has created a fear of loss of quality health care. That needs to be addressed and it has to be addressed on an ongoing basis. Now turning to the nurses' recruitment retention survey, a survey was done in 1997. It does not provide a lot of glowing reports. It is not a glowing report. It certainly is not a very complimentary report when it comes to the department and addressing their concerns and how the staff themselves feels about where they are

at. Here, I have highlighted a few of their remarks, poor staffing leading to burnout, stress, heavy workloads, demanding jobs emotionally, long hours, high cost of living, lack of continuing education or in-service orientation, no education leave, no in-service on equipment and continuing education. That is just flipping through two pages. It carries on in that fashion, Mr. Chairman.

In here also is a report on nurse requirement and retention survey response done on the Keewatin in January, 1998. There is a table here that indicates that the most serious shortage of nurses is in the larger communities in the region is in Rankin Inlet, Arviat and Baker Lake. It is evident from this chart they have provided. There is no question in my mind that the department needs to pay attention to what the medical practitioners are saying. It is okay to have some rhetoric on it. I think when the medical association asks for meetings with the MLAs, and the nursing association presents reports like this, then there has to be an awareness that there are some serious concerns out there.

Finally, I would like to take a moment, the Yellowknife Stanton Regional Hospital is on a fund-raising drive right now to raise some \$2 million plus and I commend the people who are doing that, but I have some concerns in that I hope this is not the trend of the department's attitude toward funding of medical needs in the Northwest Territories. While it can be done here, perhaps with Stanton, I am not sure that any fund-raising drive in one of the regions would be that successful. I do not think you can ask the Inuvik region, which is already suffering tremendously from a loss of people as Mr. Roland continually and very eloquently points out and very passionately that there

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are problems there. Now Iqaluit is going into a bit of a boom time. But again, the business community might not be there to support any fund driving system. So I guess my concern is that this does not be looked at as a precedent but from now on, okay, if we need anything we have to go into a fund-raising drive. That is not the way our health care should work. These items they are raising money for are very essential. There is a CAT Scan Program. The government in turn, if we get this CAT Scan here, the government itself will save many hundreds of thousands of dollars per year because of it because there is no travel anymore.

So those are my remarks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. On the list, I have Mr. Barnabas and Mr. Steen. Mr. Barnabas.

MR. BARNABAS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to stress more on compassionate travel. In the small communities where there is no hospital, most of the patients, especially the elders and the handicapped are travelling alone. Last year, we found out when, I was travelling with Mr. Enuaraq to Montreal to go see the Baffin House, there was a shortage of interpreters there. Most of the elders we visited, we had to interpret for them, for simple things sometimes. The most important thing we found out was when we were dealing with medical areas with that person, there are no interpreters for them. Doctors are trying to deal with these people. So for that reason, I really urge that compassionate travel should be back. The funds should be taken back. Even if the family could pay half for the travel, if the government could probably pay half that person's travel, that would even be a good thing to do.

The other reason why I wanted to talk was about the doctors' visits to the communities. I have noticed that with doctors' visits to smaller communities, sometimes they only take a short period of time. They do not have time to see all the patients they need to see because of the travel arrangements and the duties they have to do in the hospitals. I think there should be more doctors visiting the communities. Sometimes when I find out there is a person with cancer in the community, they never knew about that person until they send the person down to the hospital which could have been prevented if the doctors visited regularly to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. General comments. Mr. Steen on the west.

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my general comments will be centred around what I feel is better monitoring now that we put in place cuts to the regions. Most of these cuts are through the boards. I feel this department should now be monitoring to see where it may be necessary to increase funds again in order to supply good quality health service to the

communities. One of the obvious weak points is sufficient funds for the boards to recruit qualified nursing staff for the communities. I think it may even be necessary to ensure the boards have sufficient staff so they can rotate staff due to the remoteness of the communities and insufficient recreational activities and things like that for the nursing staff in the communities. Great consideration should be taken for the amount of work the nurses are required to do especially if there is only one in the community, if they are rotating, somewhere on holiday or other types of leave. It puts a big strain on the staff who is left. They do not really have all that much private time to themselves. They end up with burnout whereby eventually the nurses feel overstressed. In particular in small communities, there are a lot of night activities which, in the end, some of it require hospitalization or treatment by the public. Of course, the nurses are the ones that all this falls on. I think it has to be taken into consideration that these nurses should be allowed to have breaks, even twice a year. If they are satisfied with twice a year breaks, then perhaps we should be looking toward that, allowing the health boards to have sufficient funds to allow for this. It may not be necessary to give them breaks all the way to Edmonton. Even to a larger centre is maybe all that is needed. This could be tied in possibly with training and other functions that would have been funded anyway. I see this as one of the major shortfalls at this present time to ensure there are sufficient funds to the boards for full-fledged nursing staff.

The other thing I would like to see coming out from the boards, and I notice that Stanton Regional Hospital does this, is a newsletter to the public whereby the public has some idea of what is being done in the boards, what services are available, just a general newsletter. I noticed Stanton Regional Hospital was very informative on those particular points, and it was quite well received by the public. I notice that in the opening statement by the Minister, he refers to consultations on the strategic plan and that summary reports of these meetings are being prepared for distribution for participants and boards. I think these reports should be very informative to the MLAs as well. We know what concerns are being expressed by the communities even though we are not present at the particular meetings. I personally would like to see that happening.

The only other point that I can make, Mr. Chairman, is as I stated in questions to the Minister, early in January, I would have like to have seen in place, and the department is working that way now, some form of

management group that would do a quarterly or semi-annual review of the boards and how they are progressing and whether or not there are any problems starting to surface. So that there is an early indication and the department has a chance to help out with the communities or with the boards to be able to respond to any concerns that are being expressed in the regions if those concerns are board related and assure that the boards are, in fact, taking into consideration concerns expressed by the communities. I think this would benefit both the boards, the public and the department in general. With that, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to go through the department's budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Steen. Mr. Steen indicated he was prepared to go through the department's budget. In the meantime, are there any more general comments? If not, then I will allow the Minister to reply. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and my honourable colleagues, for their comments. I will speak on a couple of the broader ones that have been touched on by a lot of Members. There has been a lot of discussion on board empowerment, accountability and responsibility and of whether or not they are able to handle some of the functions and the

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duties we have asked them to carry out in delivering health care programs and services. I think that is a legitimate concern. I think it is recognized, in our experience, certainly with the Keewatin situation, about some of the potential problems that can develop if a board is not cognizant, I think, of the public opinion and the public pulse, I guess, of concerns in respect to some of their delivery of programs and possible changes to those programs. As I have said in this House, the department, recognizing that, has set up a monitoring and evaluation unit specifically to strengthen that function in the department as a result of some of those concerns. We want to eliminate the possibility of those types of situations happening again or minimize the chance. We have various amounts of capability in the department in the areas of program delivery, finance and administration, board operations and human resources. I understand we have about 27 people who are in that area, but what we have done is

not just drawing upon them, we have a couple of individuals who we task now to coordinate regular operational reviews of board operations. They will draw upon the resources we have in the department from those 27 individuals to put together an operational review team who can do the evaluations and provide ongoing support as required to boards that have deficiencies or that ask for assistance in certain areas.

I think there have been a lot of discussions on boards, establishing of boards and the powers we are giving to boards. We have to remember that this is nothing new. This is not a new concept. With the health transfer from the federal government to the territorial government in 1988, there was the establishment of boards throughout the Northwest Territories. Recently, of course, there has been a few more as a result of our dissolution of the Mackenzie Regional Health Services that caused us to set up some public administrators and some other boards to divide up the services that used to be held centrally at the Mackenzie unit. It is not something new in that respect. I know Mr. Ootes brought up some concerns that the medical association had raised about regionalization. Something I think we have to remember as northerners is that we have had these regional structures in place. The concern on regionalization in the southern jurisdictions is actually the opposite of ours in that they have had a lot of community-level services, hospitals in every community in the southern jurisdictions. They found that was uneconomical to continue to run a hospital in every community, so they forced or certainly strongly encouraged the development of regional boards to try to consolidate some of those services and try to eliminate some of the duplication and become more efficient in those jurisdictions. Whereas our situation is a bit of the opposite in that our facilities and our services have been in a developmental state ever since even before we took over as a government from the federal government. When the federal government had it as well, they were continuing to try to increase the level of services.

There has been some discussion as well, Mr. Chairman, about compassionate travel or escort travel. It depends, a lot of people lump the two together. Compassionate travel was a program that was administered under Income Support, and it primarily was dealing with individuals who expected some close family member to pass on. So it had provisions to allow immediate family members to go see their loved one before he or she passed on. Our

programs we fund to the boards are primarily for escort travel, but, of course, a certain part of that escort travel can be deemed to be compassionate in respect to if you have, in some circumstances, a senior or an elder who is unilingual and not comfortable in travel or maybe with some of the treatment that he or she may be receiving or some of the diagnosis they have to understand or comprehend what is happening to them in order for them to make an informed decision. Boards do have some limited discretion to provide escort travel in those types of situations, albeit it is not ideal. I have said before, it was not one of the programs we chose to eliminate as a high priority. It is just faced with having to deal with meeting some of our fiscal targets. We had to make decisions on what programs could be offered and what programs could not be offered. I have said, ever since this issue has come up, a regular issue at public meetings, a regular issue that my honourable colleagues bring up to me, if there was a way to reinstate the program, I would. If any Members have suggestions on how to do that, of course, I would be more than willing and receptive to taking a look at that. We have to recognize though, if that program is reinstated, that some other program of the department or of this government will suffer as a result because we do not have new dollars. The finances have to come from somewhere.

On the issue of the strategic planning exercise that continues to be ongoing, Mr. Steen pointed out an interest in seeing what public consultations took place and some of the concerns and issues that came up from that. As you know, we worked with our partners, the boards, in carrying out the consultation for the draft strategic plan. I will have to ask. Each individual board did it in their own way. I am not sure how the Inuvik Health and Social Services Board undertook their consultations, but if there are transcripts or concerns that have been put together from his constituency from the Inuvik region, I will certainly provide that to the Member, to all Members for that matter.

The health professionals recruitment and retention have been an issue that has been highlighted and recently in the forefront of discussions in this House and in the public. I missed the timetable, unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, of having it tabled last week. I am expecting to have it tabled tomorrow. We do recognize in there that providing some support for our health care practitioners is critical to retaining them and minimizing the chances of burnout as a result of over work. I think somewhere Mr. Ootes

pointed out, I believe it was, that the medical association had indicated health care workers were not supported enough by regional boards. I do not know if that is the case or not, Mr. Chairman, I think there may be a lot of issues that are ongoing at the board level. Everybody recognizes the importance of our health care professionals. I know in recent years, even at the community level, more and more so, since there have been a lot of programs passed on and more directed linkages between community councils and their trustees in the boards and the importance have been recognized of these health care professionals. I know in one of my communities they had a Health Care Professional Community Wellness Workers Day to recognize the significance of these individuals and just to show some of the appreciation that sometimes a lot of us take for granted, unfortunately, Mr. Chairman. Without getting into too many more details, I look forward to getting into more of those discussions as we go into detail of the budget, Mr. Chairman.

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I will leave it at that for now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Honourable Members, are you ready to go into detail? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to indicate that I have been a Member of the Standing Committee of Social Programs and obviously, I support the report we have here. In addition to that, I want to make a few comments and start out with the hospitals and health care centres. I feel this is an area where the P3 initiatives might be undertaken and that the Inuvik and Iqaluit hospitals should continue along the path that has been chosen without any delays. At the same time, Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate that the centre of excellence as it has been called by some people that has been established in Yellowknife, the specialists, should not be diminished in any way by adding these capacities in these other centres. We have to be careful that we do not lose specialists through whatever we do.

Mr. Chairman, the Strategic Initiative Fund is a good initiative that will assist the boards to evaluate the current systems and to make changes that they may determine are necessary to ensure that they implement the programs and services that are

supposed to be implemented within their specific regions. We have already seen where some things may be entered into perhaps prematurely so that there are problems encountered. This initiative will help so that those types of incidents do not occur or at least they will be diminished.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of what I had to say in the Health and Social Services area has already been indicated in Members' statements, particularly under national standards. I believe that standards have to be maintained and that there are certain programs that have to be territorial wide, perhaps with the input of the regional boards, but there have to be standards and territorial programs. Obviously, we do not want to diminish the independence of the boards. The GNWT still has to maintain the ultimate responsibility for our residents and this is one way of ensuring that. The use of remote technology in health care is another good initiative. However, we have to be careful that we do not place too much reliance on technology. We still have to have good qualified personnel who are confident and reliable in the communities to ensure the medical programs are delivered properly. I just wanted to make one more comment which was in the area of recruitment and retention of medical personnel. The social services personnel plan that was undertaken in conjunction with the medical association, the health boards and the department, I am looking forward to seeing it. I know we have heard parts of it, but it would be nice to actually see it and review it. It is also very comforting to know that all these various groups and agencies have come together and worked on the recruitment and retention plan.

One area that does concern me is the housing that had been available for nurses and medical government staff. It seems as though this housing may not be guaranteed anymore. This could pose a problem for the GNWT, not only in the health and social services area, but in other areas as well. Mr. Chairman, we have heard of complaints from various communities and we are in the process of trying to get this information compiled so that we can have a look at the overall situation. At this time, I wanted to make my concern known that, if we cannot ensure there is adequate housing for our nursing personnel in the communities, then we are going to have a problem retaining our personnel. The key to a good health and social service program is to ensure that we can retain our personnel within the communities. Those are the comments I wanted to make at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Are there any further general comments from the Members? Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As was stated by Mr. Erasmus earlier, I also have mentioned and spoken many times in the House and in committee of the whole regarding health issues. I will not take the committees time up right now by going into those, but there is one area that I believe they are stressing. It is the whole area of being able to attract qualified, medical personnel to the Northwest Territories. Over the last few months we have heard many concerns raised in this House by MLAs in their community about what they feel and what their community feels is a shortage of qualified personnel. Mr. Chairman, in my own community of Yellowknife, that also is a concern. It is difficult here to attract and keep qualified medical staff so I can certainly understand where it would be difficult in some of the communities. On the question of construction, again I have stated in the House that we should not be building edifices or medical centres until we have resolved the major concern of staffing and ensuring that there is qualified medical personnel to operate these facilities. That would be something which will be occupying a fair amount of my time over the discussion of health and social services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ningark):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. For the record, we have in this jurisdiction many good qualified personnel in the medical profession. I think that should be recognized. Are there any further general comments? If not, I will ask the Minister to respond to Mr. Erasmus and Mr. Henry, as I have allowed the Minister to respond to other Members of this committee. Then we will get into detail. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would concur with Mr. Erasmus as saying we are not trying to diminish the level of services which are available in respect to the specialists. In fact, we are trying to, hopefully, provide some supports to try to enhance that pool to make them more accessible, if at all possible, to all residents of the Northwest Territories. The intent would not be to diminish any of those services but certainly to make them as accessible as possible. I had forgotten to mention it earlier in

looking over my notes while I had a chance to listen to Mr. Erasmus and Mr. Henry. Mr. Ootes brought up the issue about the medical association bringing up concerns about formula funding and inequities. There is no formula funding in place right now with the way that we finance our partners, the boards. As you know, that was an issue in looking at formula funding that brought a lot of concern because of what the impact of trying to equalize some of our funding would do to our partners, the boards. As a result of that, we were fortunate that the Financial Management Board rebased us the \$4 million that we are using toward the Strategic Initiative Fund. Firstly, we will try to in a small part compensate for some of the deficiencies and some of those boards that

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were not funded at the same level. Secondly, we try to target some of our dollars specifically toward preventive types of programs.

The other issue is on national standards, territorial standards. Certainly, our understanding is we do have those. There are core services we require to provide to our residents. I use the issue of breast cancer screening as one, because as you know, that is another issue which has been discussed over the past couple of years in this House. When we say it is a core service, we are saying the boards have to provide that. It is a matter of discretion for them as to how they provide that, whether they send people out or make sure individuals follow the guidelines that are set, Mr. Chairman.

In respect to Mr. Henry's comments on facilities, it is important to recognize you need to have some form of regional facilities where you can bring together some resources, in order to try to provide some basic services which could ultimately save the system dollars in the long run, particularly in the area of having to minimize or eliminate some of the medical travel which is a big part of our costs, Mr. Chairman. I speak of things like having the capabilities of having observation beds for individuals that may or may not need to be medevaced. If there were not these types of facilities and these types of supports were not readily available at a central location, things like birthing centres that we know as a result of the Rankin Inlet pilot project worked, some of the minor surgery capabilities, some of the x-ray lab type of services and ultrasound services; just as importantly, Mr. Chairman, you have to have facilities that are available and are able to support the specialists if they do not happen to be from the region, if they

happen to be travelling in. Again, in centralizing some of the travel, we are trying to reduce overall costs. I think that it is important for me to put on the record, Mr. Chairman. With that, I hope this is the end of the general comments. We have done it twice now. I see another Member came in late as usual, Mr. Chairman, and I am hoping we can move on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Some Members have called to go into detail twice, but at this point in time, I have Mr. Picco who wanted to speak to the general comment. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon. As some of the Members of this House, including some of my Minister friends, have always said, better late than never. When you are leading this type of constituency life, you have to return calls and so on. I will have fun now. I am getting to my general comments, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, this is general comments on the Department of Health and Social Services. It would be an understatement to say that, indeed, this department is probably the largest and probably the best example of a political hot potato, ball to bounce as it were, of any department in this government. The Minister has come in for much criticism and the department staff in general, over the past sixteen to eighteen months. It is not for me to say if that criticism has been fair or whatever, history will write that story. I would like to say that the department itself seems to have lost its direction or vision somewhere along the way and I think that was indicative of the fiscal cuts that have to be made. When you make change, change at any time is hard to do, difficult change is even harder to do. There have been some difficult changes within the funding and the allowances paid out. Some of the Members have talked earlier about compassionate travel as an example. It has caused some problems. The situation regarding staffing, retention of nurses and the NWT Medical Association are some of the things that have gone on. I would like to reflect now, on some of the programs and services and studies that have been issued.

First and foremost, was the \$750,000 for the Med-Emerg to study the health care needs of the Northwest Territories. The report, as many Members have brought up before, has basically been criticized

very heavily by medical professionals in the Northwest Territories and seems to be sitting on a shelf and probably that is where it should remain.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. Point of order. To the point of order, Mr. Ng.

Point of Order

HON. KELVIN NG:

Mr. Chairman, the honourable Member alludes that the report is sitting on a shelf. If he was here during the committee of the whole opening comments, he would know exactly what is taking place with the report, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you. To Mr. Picco and Mr. Ng, to all Members, I want to pause and remind each and every one of you to try and endeavour to be in the forum when certain items are being discussed. I cannot find any rule in the rule book where Mr. Ng has a point of order, although he made a good point. At the same time, try to be here when we are discussing certain items so that we know what is going on. I am advised by the Clerk that there is actually, at this time, no point of order. I believe Mr. Picco has the floor. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not think you have to be here to be able to read the opening comments. The only opening comment I can say about the opening remarks is about the comprehensive strategic plan for the department. If the Minister is saying that study was a strategic plan, then that would be open to debate between myself and the Minister. All I am saying is what is factual and that is the report was heavily criticized by different organizations who are professionals in the field and I am not. I would take that for face value of what it is. I would like to continue my opening comments, Mr. Chairman, and my opening comments included earlier talk and discussions surrounding the area of retention of our medical professionals. It would seem, at times, this was one of the concerns that was raised, not just in my region, but other regions of the NWT.

The area surrounding family planning, the Member had talked about making a statement on family planning and, hopefully, today, we might be able to

hear a little bit from the department on that issue. The birthing centre he talked about earlier in Rankin Inlet was a success, but now is closed. That is a concern. It would be interesting to see what happened there. On boards and agencies under the Department of Health and Social Services, the people we talk about all the time, the front-

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line staff, have not had any wage increases since 1992. Mr. Chairman, that is six years. I would have liked to see some more money, hopefully put in, reprofiled, into the health and social services board budget for those types of boards and agencies of government. That is a concern.

One of the goals of the department is outlined in the program overview in the main estimates. It says that the NWT residents will achieve enhanced health and well-being and have equitable accesses to quality health and social services based on their needs. Those two points have been carried out by the department and I am pleased to see that. On the other hand, the sustainable health and social services system seems to have been having some problems and I would agree with other Members here today that when you try to raise some areas of concerns and criticisms, it seems you get retorts and replies in a negative manner when you are trying to provide constructive criticism. That is not the point. The point of being a Member of this Assembly, asking questions and everything has been well demonstrated in the past. If you checked the attendance record, I think I have been here for every sitting of questions and so on. Just because I was upstairs on a conference call, for Mr. Ng to make a little cheap point, we both can do that and I will have an opportunity to do it later.

Following up on my opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, is the concern surrounding the construction of the facility in Inuvik and the Baffin region. I understand some Members felt those projects should be put off for another year. They have been on the books now for ten years and they are a priority. To update certain Members of this House that indeed, the Baffin Regional Hospital has not had any type of major renovation since 1962, the population in that region has increased by more than 60 percent in that period of time and we are still using the same stand-alone facility. Last year, federal public works was in and found the facility to be redundant, Mr. Chairman, so that project should be moving ahead. I do have a concern with the federal dollars that have been committed in the renovation and replacement of the

facility. Later today, Mr. Chairman, I will be asking some specific questions on the monies that should be forthcoming from the federal government on that agreement. With those monies that have been paid out and allocated already, I think there is about \$6 million transferred for the Baffin facility and \$3 or \$4 million for the Inuvik facility.

One of the major concerns we had two years ago was that day we found the money that had been transferred by the federal government to the territorial government went to the consolidated revenue fund and had been expended, as per usual of this government. We do have to come up with those monies that have already been transferred and the negotiations to date have centred around whether it is a renovation or replacement of the facility in the Baffin. It is also contingent on the percentage of aboriginal population. In our case, 85 percent of the population is aboriginal and if it is a renovation or a replacement, 85 percent of that cost would be covered. I do understand that the Minister and his staff have been in negotiations and each time a question comes up, we still have no concrete portion of monies. I do not know if maybe the negotiations are delicate, or what have you, but it has been a ten-year period. The negotiations have been ongoing for quite a period of time. My level of comfort in the federal contribution is this, Mr. Chairman that, indeed, whatever money the federal government gives us, it means we do not have to leverage loans to the P3 to finance that hospital and which means it will be less exposure to the taxpayer over that 20-year period that the P3 facility for my region would have to be paid for. The more federal government money we have, the less debt we have to incur from the lenders of choice. This is my reason for continuing to ask questions on the formula that will be allocated to both of those facilities. Later today, I will have an opportunity to ask that question to the Minister and thank him for his time and ask him to try to keep his well known discretionary powers and his good sense of humour on keel, so that we could ask some serious questions without him getting angry or flicking pieces of gum wrappers at me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Was that general comments, Mr. Picco?

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I could go on for some more time, but noticing the clock, maybe some other

Members would like to speak and I do have some questions when we get to the budget review itself. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Are there any further general comments? I will ask the Minister to respond then. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

I thank Mr. Picco for his comments. I look forward to specific questions from him. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. If there are no further general comments, we are prepared to go to detail of the estimates. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Agreed. Thank you. On page 66, activity summary, administration, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$29.538 million. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have just a few more questions I would like to ask, starting with the issue of board support. I heard some of the seemingly confusing messages that apparently the board is getting from headquarters. To be specific, in Fort Smith, Mr. Chairman, the health centre in Fort Smith has been undertaking a reprofiling exercise over these many past months. Initially, up to last month, they were told to focus on cognitively impaired. Apparently last month they were told the cognitively impaired are now off and it is up to the health board to decide on what else they may want to do. I have a concern about the message that is being sent. It is tied into an earlier comment I made with general comments, where apparently the message from the department is, it is not up to the department to provide direction or make decisions, but it is up to the boards to decide what services the Northwest Territories may need and up to the boards to somehow coordinate and best allocate where these services should be delivered. I wonder if the Minister could speak to that particular issue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ng.

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HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Ramsden, who is more familiar with that specific aspect, to speak on this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I could speak to whether or not there is some confusion coming out of the department and obviously we regret that if it has been caused. I think, however I need to draw a difference between the work that we have been doing in partnership with the board around services for the cognitively impaired, as it relates to a service that the Fort Smith board could provide to more than the residents of their catchment area or their community.

What we have found though in the process of a series of discussions with the board is that there had not yet been adequate work done between that board and the community it served around the very basic or primary or the basket of services that need to be provided for that community.

What we have simply said to the board is forget about designing services for people beyond your board until you get the work done in terms of meeting the needs of the residents that you serve most directly. Once that is done, there is still opportunity to look to services beyond their boundaries, but we thought it imperative that they first deal with their own community and designing services to meet the needs of those people first. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two topics related to this particular one. Prior to Christmas, there was a community meeting held once again in Fort Smith with a member of your staff, the director of policy came down. We talked about reprofiling and the need

to move this process along. Following that, after having discussions with the mayor, I approached the department for information on some of the various options that would be and could be open to the health board so they did not waste time trying to reinvent the wheel because headquarters has a better overview of what is needed in the territory. I have made a number of attempts to get that information delivered. To date, it has yet to be delivered. Promises were made that I was going to get it then weeks and weeks ago, but I have yet to see one word on paper on that particular issue.

On a broader note, if you can answer both of these at once, I am concerned about the broader message of the department that it is not the department's position or place to give direction to health boards in terms of services that may or may not be needed across the Northwest Territories. Apparently that message was delivered late last week. It causes me some concern, tied into the options paper because I cannot see anybody else who can be in a better position to be able to speak to the whole territory than the department. To provide direction, some advice and suggestions to boards wherever they may be about services that may or may not be of benefit to the territories, so there is a coordination, no duplication or redundancy. That we are not reinventing the wheel or groping in the dark when Yellowknife is sitting with the information. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can deal with the second issue first. At the risk of perhaps contradicting my staff, I will deal with that later. Let me be quite clear that the department has an obligation to make recommendations to the Minister on design of services and the delivery system for the entire territories. We will continue to do that. As the Member indicates, we are best placed and are burdened with the responsibility to make recommendations on the territorial delivery system.

What we have said to the Fort Smith board is that they have a particular issue as it relates to the service to residents beyond what will become the Western Territory. They have a significant number of residents from Nunavut that they serve today, in their facility. We have suggested that it is difficult today to make a long-term commitment in terms of the source of funds

and services for Nunavut residents. We will and must make recommendations and the Minister enforce final decisions, ultimately on design of the territorial system.

Perhaps I can suggest that the Member and I can meet later to get a clear view of the information that he is expecting. As I see it today, the level of concern that we have has risen as it relates to the Fort Smith board. While we initially embarked upon a fairly long-range strategic planning exercise with that board, it became apparent that they needed some much more direct support in areas of payroll, financial systems, basic administrative systems and staffing. We have suggested to them that we will first provide some supports in those areas simply to get their day-to-day operations to a point where the board itself has confidence. We have suggested to the board that I will participate directly in the recruitment of the CEO competition that is currently open. Once we have achieved that level of day-to-day stability, then we look forward to getting on with the longer range planning process with them. I will undertake to pursue directly a statement of the needs and fulfil that commitment to the Member in the next day. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to just broaden out the discussion and I thank the deputy minister for his commitment which I would be happy to take him up on some bright and early morning. I just want to broaden out this discussion in terms of partnerships. We spend a lot of time talking about the problems boards are having and that they may have bitten off more than they can chew and that they may be not quite ready to do a lot of the things that have been expected of them. I think that is probably a fair comment. However, my concern when we look at the department, is the department ready and have they been ready to provide the monitoring and support functions, evaluation and feedback that are necessary to get the boards up and running? I had made a Member's statement to this effect that the boards have a

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responsibility and accountability but the department has one as well. I am not convinced at this point that

we have all the pieces in place and all the mechanisms in place to provide the appropriate level of service, support and monitoring evaluation that the department should be obligated, as a key equal partner in this whole process, of giving community empowerment to the boards and to the regions. I was wondering if the Minister could speak to that? I know efforts have been made, but I think the problems we saw in Keewatin, the ones that the deputy just referred to are there in Fort Smith. If you looked in Baffin, if you looked in wherever, are those other problems of a similar nature? Are we taking the right steps and the necessary steps to make sure this department is capable and has the labour force that is qualified and capable to provide that support? At some point we can get away from crisis intervention and response and into some sort of ongoing stability and a cooperative relationship. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as I indicated in response to the concerns brought forward during the general comments, it is an area in which we are actively established now. It is an ongoing issue with us in continuing to enhance that group for the monitoring, evaluation and review. We recognize it is going to be key to the success of our boards as well as ourselves in being able to deliver effective health and social services programs to our residents throughout the Northwest Territories. I would like to say right now that I am sure we will be capable of meeting that need. We are hoping to have learned from the experiences where we may have fallen short over the past year and are actively and aggressively addressing that issue. I think it is there now and it is just a matter of us being vigilant and continuing to monitor. I guess one important aspect of this, Mr. Chairman, is boards, as well, have a responsibility to recognize some of their deficiencies and recognize when they need assistance and not be afraid to ask. It has always been a fine line when we seem to be stepping on their toes or invading their territories.

In the past, there has been an outcry for empowerment and stay out of our business, know how to do things best in our regions and our communities. It is a fine line but I think a lot of that, Mr. Chairman, can be resolved through our partnership agreements that we are in the process of

finalizing with our boards. I think it is safe to say they recognize, as a result of some of the problems that have developed with other boards, that it could happen to them. They certainly have been in situations, I think, where they have required assistance and may be even hesitant to ask. Maybe we have been hesitant to intervene as aggressively as we should but certainly that will not be the case in the future, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I am on operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$29.538 million. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman in the area of boards and the role the department plays when setting up criteria, I would just like to know from the Minister, what are the primary roles of the department when it comes to the boards?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, primarily in providing support, as I indicated, and monitoring and evaluation of their operations; doing some of the broader policy and planning for the legislative requirements that are necessary and some of the broader human resources like the recruitment and retention work that we are doing in partnership with the professional organizations and the boards right now; developing the standards and programs we expect them to carry out as they deliver programs; providing, I think, some of the population health; the intelligence monitoring, protection of public health issues across the territories, the environmental health; doing some of the capital planning requirements I think to assist the boards, some of the financial management; quite frankly not only being the funders but analyzing if we are getting effective programs as a result of the funding we provide and just generally some of the broader support mechanisms. Another one that comes to mind is the telemedicine in assisting them to develop that system that can benefit all the boards, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Further to what the Minister has replied, is that some of the standards set up or established by the department? What does the department feel are the standards in some of the critical areas that have to be addressed? I know we have heard a number of times now, and to a large degree many of us agree with the idea that boards need to be able to make up their own minds, but as I have stated earlier in my general comments, there needs to be guidelines or a framework. I am interested in hearing what the department lists as critical areas or areas where they see the boards must function under and carry through with programming. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask Mr. Ramsden to reply to this one. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Deputy minister, Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, the department has been working in a fairly focused way for the past six to nine months on a document that we refer to as a statement of core services. We have had a series of discussions with the boards around that area and we are within weeks of actually putting the document to bed, so to speak. What it speaks to are the range of services that we believe must be offered to residents whenever there is a need identified in the region. It starts in broad areas of screening and searching for disease or ailment. It talks to areas of developmental screening so that you can look to identify the needs of your young population and plan programming around that. It looks to identifying needs appeals that either are developmentally delayed or suffering from communicable or non-communicable disease. It speaks to areas of intervention or treatment in each broad age range from

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preconception through infants, children, youth, young adults and seniors. It speaks to the broad range of social service programming in terms of counselling

and family support and fostering. It speaks to obligations around provision of medically necessary support from either community health nurses or physicians. It covers the broad range of health and social service needs of the population. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand what Mr. Ramsden is saying is that there shall be a document soon. Will either the Social Programs Committee or the Members of the Legislative Assembly be able to view this document and have input as to what they see coming out?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Certainly, Mr. Chairman, if the Member wants it, we can provide a copy to all Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In light of the ongoing work that has been going on in strategic planning, it would be nice to see a final product or something of that nature. As mentioned earlier, there are a number of us on the Social Programs Committee who have been part of this ever changing and growing planning and hoping for an outcome. Hopefully, that will be the document we can view. One of the concerns I understand you are working on something, but right now, is there a set of core services that each board has to meet a set of standards on?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, what the department is doing now, perhaps how I would describe it is a broader and more current version of what we inherited at the time of transfer and had been updated in some respects. The medical services branch, passed on to the

department at the time that we took over responsibility for the delivery system, had a far reaching set of program and clinical standards in place. We support board activities in those areas. There is and has always been some concern around certain areas, the appropriateness of those standards. There has always been debate around the ability to deliver against those standards. Clearly, there is structure in the system today that we use and, obviously, it needs updating. This is what we have been working toward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of board and board training, we heard earlier comments from Mr. Miltenberger on the area of training staff and trying to equip them with the ability to deal with a lot of the issues. Is there more in that area? Does the department do more work with the boards than just training for a couple of weeks, or however the program schedule is run, preparing boards for the work that lies before them? I also refer to the area that it is now called health and social services. I do not see that as one department assuming the role of another. For example, we heard Mr. Miltenberger say earlier where he heard comments that nurses are expected to learn some of the child care things. I do not know where that is coming from, but I would have concern if that is the case because as I have said in other departments, we are handing a lot of work down to individuals who just become over loaded in what they are looking at. Does this board training involve any of the changing roles of boards and, for example, the amalgamation that has happened? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Deputy minister, Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, there is a broad range of activity. I suppose firstly, to clarify my comments, we talk about board training. I will speak to the staff of the boards as opposed to trustee development or trustee training. If I look, for instance, to the issue around nurses in terms of awareness or developed appreciation on child welfare matters, what we are trying to do is ensure there is a team in every community and they

understand how it works together and how it can improve the way it works. There needs to be a sharing of the issues that each particular profession works with so that we know how the various professions can work together. I can assure Members that we are not trying to make social workers out of nurses and nurses out of social workers, there is a tremendous amount of professional training for each, but there is also a lot of work we can do to get a better appreciation between. If I use the example of the new family law legislation in place, there is almost a year's worth of training needed before we believe the various care givers and committee members will understand fully how they can contribute to supporting children and families. There is a significant effort there. We spend significant resources in areas of the ANSIP programming, nurse mentorship, supporting the nursing program, all trying to invest in having staff feel more comfortable and contribute more to the people they serve. It is an area of extensive activity that we both see a need for more in and that we have always been actively engaged in. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. I have Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A short question on the department's policy as far as bill payments. Could the Minister advise us under administration how this is handled within the department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, as I understand the Member's question, we have a means of making commitments, receiving invoices and paying on those invoices in a way that is consistent with the Financial Administration Act and the

financial administration manual. Typically, those commitments come in the form of either purchase orders, contracts, local purchase authorities or local contract authorities. Again, I limit my comments typically to matters of expenditures that we incur directly. We do not pay bills for boards. We do pay bills for the service fee for physicians and we pay bills for out of territories hospital expenditures as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Ramsden for that. On the question of paying fee for service for physicians, reimbursing physicians, has there been any delays experienced in those reimbursements for fees and if so, what is the department doing about it?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairmen, from time to time, there are delays. This government made a decision to shut down a significant amount of its service through a five-day period over Christmas and, of course, that always, when we send most of the people home for five days, affects some of what we can do. The other thing I am struggling to understand is why we take these private clinics, essentially businesses, and some time ago we agreed to payroll their invoices differently than any other business in the Northwest Territories. While it is a contractual obligation, sometimes I question the approach we took there and it caused over a period of a Christmas break to have this system performed differently than it does for any other business in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Than you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly appreciate the comment that systems which are in place should be evaluated, but I think it is important that the people who are affected also participate in this evaluation. I

heard Mr. Ramsden say that any delays were probably over the Christmas holidays, if that is the case then I suspect things should be back to normal by now and any of those concerns would be cleared up. I was wondering if Mr. Ramsden could assure me that those things are cleared up and any changes to the system that is in place right now, any re-evaluation Mr. Ramsden talked about, would include the people who are affected. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We work very closely with the clinics and my sense is that we most often bend over backwards to try to keep ourselves in sync with these clinics. The only issue outstanding between our department and a few of the Yellowknife-based clinics right now is that they want to know why sometimes the cheque arrives on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. We have conveyed to them very seriously that we cannot control the postal system, but short of that we are doing almost everything humanly possible to make our relationship quite smooth with these private business people. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can appreciate Mr. Ramsden's, or the department's inability to certainly control the post office. Something they may wish to consider is to make the option available for clinics to have access to picking up these cheques in the event that you cannot, rightfully so, control the post office. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned before, no other business in the Northwest Territories is able on a routine basis to pick its cheques up and so we are caught in terms of the expectations of some of these private businesses run by doctors and every other

business in the Northwest Territories. I do not think we have the latitude to arrange any further degree of special pay provision than they have succeeded in negotiating with the department so far. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Page 6-6, activity summary administration, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$29.538 million. I have on my list, Mr. Erasmus, Mr. Picco and Mr. Krutko. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the whole area of program evaluation and monitoring of what is happening within the government with the changes that are taking place. One area I would like to know from the department about is in regard to the alcohol and drug programming where there was a cancellation of Delta House, the Tl'oondih Healing Program in my riding. I would like to know, from the government, exactly the number of funds that were spent in the past in the Inuvik region which I believe is a lot less versus what is presently being spent, they have opened southern facilities in Hay River and Yellowknife. I would like to know from the department have they evaluated the program to see if it has been more accessible to the residents of the Mackenzie Delta Inuvik region versus what it was in the past because of the closing of Delta House and the Tl'oondih Healing Society?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman the alcohol and addictions funding is under Community Health Programs on page 10. If we want to skip to there it is certainly at your discretion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I believe the Minister is right. Mr. Krutko, you want to hold your questions until we reach 6-10 in regard to the community health program. Of course, we could address any other questions under administration if you want if they are not specific to an activity.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, how this government evaluates its expenditures and how it operates, I would like to be assured that it is evaluating and monitoring the programs that it does pay for, regardless whether it is being paid through a regional health board or through a contribution agreement. It is an administration matter, unless the Minister is trying to avoid answering the question so be it I will ask him every opportunity I have. I think my question was valid. It is an

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administration matter where the question about evaluation and monitoring of expenditures of this government has to be monitored in some way. You know basically what you had before, basically what we have today. Has there been evaluation of exactly the changeover from the previous programs in regard to Delta House and the alcohol programs and Tl'oondih Society in the Inuvik region with these closures? We are funding programs in Hay River and Yellowknife which I believe is probably more costly than it was previously.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Minister I believe it was a valid question under administration.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we do evaluations of the programs on an ongoing basis and it is my understanding that individuals still have access to alcohol and drug treatment programs as they require. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell us if there was a cost savings to the government because they are not spending as much money now or is it a cost savings to the client who is basically getting better service than he was before?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman I believe when we first put out the alcohol and drug reforms, there was some anticipated savings as a result of having to regretfully close down Delta House. It is my understanding that we have attained a savings from that but by the same token, no individual has been denied access to the alcohol and drug programs as we have indicated. Individuals still have access to residential alcohol and drug programs, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Operations and Maintenance, total operations and maintenance. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell me exactly how many clients we had in the previous years versus what we have today in regard to the actual client ratio of who is accessing the programs now versus before this change was made? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Krutko I will allow the question but you are getting close to community health programs. I presume the question will not be asked again. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have that level of detail with me but I can certainly provide it to the Member possibly tomorrow.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has the department done an appraisal from the different boards that are presently delivering these programs in regard to see exactly if those program dollars are being spent in a particular region versus being spent in a centre like in Yellowknife? How much of that money is really being spent in the different regions where these boards are?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it is an ongoing issue in that it is still the current fiscal year and we still do monitor, but quite frankly it is up to the board to determine where to send their constituents for receiving what they deem to be the adequate service. It is not necessarily within their region if they do not have that service available there. The board's responsibility to us again is to make sure that there is access in the case of what the honourable Member is referring to in the alcohol and drug programs, if the individual requires that residential treatment that they have a program available. We have not heard any concerns or complaints from individuals to us saying that they are not being provided the service through the boards. It is my understanding that service is being provided. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Minister Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to communities having accessibility to funds and resources within the boards when a community puts forth proposals and the board ignores them and say we are the board and we can do as we please because we are the people that make the ultimate decision; what role does the community play in regard to these boards and who takes priority over what? Is it the board who makes the ultimate decision? What role do the communities play to ensure that the delivery of health and social services program deliveries in their communities are basically inherent to the board making the ultimate decision? Is there a system in place where communities can complain? Whom do you complain to, the Minister? You cannot complain to the board because they are the ones with the ultimate authority. So is there anything in place, some mechanism to allow for complaints to be filed against the board or basically the conduct of the board when it comes to community development programs such as alcohol and drug programs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I will allow the Minister to respond and then we will take a five-minute break. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this goes right back to the essence of the initial opening comments and my response to board accountability and responsibility to the people they serve. As we know the Inuvik situation is a bit different than other boards as they had a board representative of every single community. When I first took over responsibility for Health and Social Services back in the fall of 1995, they found that the Board was not effective, it was too large and not conducive to being productive on numerous occasions when I met face to face with them or through correspondence or speaking to their MLAs. They chose to downsize that board dramatically, as the Members know, to have a representative from the Sahtu, from the Gwich'in, from the Inuvialuit, from the town of Inuvik, from the town of Norman Wells and the chairperson. I would say that depending on the circumstances, those representatives of those groups in the

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communities that they represent are the avenues to appeal or lodge complaints if community members or community leaders feel that their interests are not being looked after and their issues are not being resolved, as a first avenue. If their representation on that board is not deemed to be adequate or deemed not to be representative, I guess I would leave it to the people that they represent to make that individual accountable. Failing that, of course, there is always the avenue of coming to myself as the Minister of the department as ultimately being responsible for bringing forth the issue. If it is a legitimate issue that our standards are not being met, our expectations, then we would intervene. Otherwise, if it is logistically a board decision, then we would stand by it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I will have Mr. Erasmus and Mr. Picco in that order after we take a five-minute break.

--Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

I would like to call the committee back to order. For the record, we are on Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99. Health and Social Services, activity summary administration, operations and maintenance, total operations and maintenance, \$29.538 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in the area of health and disease surveillance, could the Minister indicate what the situation is with regard to tuberculosis? Whether the incidences of this particular disease are remaining at a constant level, if they are decreasing or increasing? I understand that throughout the world it seems to be increasing in various locations. I was wondering what the situation is in the NWT?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe there have been some outbreaks in the Northwest Territories in the past. It seems to have resurfaced again. Recently, there has been an outbreak in Cape Dorset. I will ask Mr. Ramsden to speak more specifically on that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, we did not come here today with specific ratios or percentages in terms of incidents of tuberculosis, but certainly, the rate at which it appears in our population is high. There are troubling issues around tuberculosis. One of the areas that we are putting particular effort into is the follow up with people who have tested positive. We have seen in recent months outbreaks of tuberculosis amongst people that had previously been treated and either were not followed up with properly or did not complete the course of their treatment. It is high and we think there is additional vigilance or effort needed to adequately support and treat people that do show positive signs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there a danger associated with people not completing their medical treatment, who are not taking all the medicine they are supposed to? The response indicated they are not taking all the medicine at the proper time and through proper timeframes. Is there a danger associated with that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, to provide more than a fairly basic answer, I would want to call upon some of our medical staff to advise the Member. Clearly, it is a risk whenever there are a pharmaceutical prescribed and where the course of treatment are not pursued. You run the risk of developing drug-resistant strains of the disease. In the area tuberculosis this is a very specific concern and one that clearly has drawn our attention and raise the pressure we put on boards to ensure that it does not remain an issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have our medical personnel found there are some drug-resistant strains in the Northwest Territories that are perhaps not responding to the typical medicine we utilize?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, I would have to seek the resources of our department to be able to respond properly to that. I am not able to respond to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How soon would we be able to get a response in this area?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, depending on when I am able to consult with our chief medical health officer. I expect it is a matter of information he probably has in his hands. Perhaps, tomorrow is possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the earlier responses indicated that there are certain situations we have in the north which makes the communications of tuberculosis from one person to another happen a lot easier. Could we get an indication of what these factors are?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

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HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we are getting into an area which requires some medical advice for us through the chief medical health officer. We will try to provide that information at the same time to the honourable Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not sure if this is the proper area, but there have been indications of core programs in some of the Minister's previous statements and responses to questions in the House. I would like to know if a core program is health and disease surveillance?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, in the core services document, it is quite clear that boards must provide education, screening and treatment for communicable diseases. Tuberculosis is a disease which falls squarely into the communicable diseases area. It is very much a core service. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These core services, are they prioritized by the board or do our departmental staff actually determine what the priority is on these core services and how to deal with them?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe in a previous answer that Mr. Ramsden stated, there is a statement of core services being developed now. It is near its final stage. We have carried on in determining some of the basic services. The boards operated from programs that the medical services branch of Health and Welfare Canada passed on to us when we assumed responsibility for health in 1988. We had committed to providing that information to the Members previously and will continue to do so. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are there territorial-wide programs, perhaps outside of these core services, that the department is responsible for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, there is a wide range of programs that we are both supporting and seeking to improve upon that need to be consistently offered across the territory. There is not a broad range of territorial programs, in fact, the delivery responsibility for programs rests with the boards. What our role is, is to ensure that each board can deliver those programs and that there is a territorial consistency in terms of the delivery. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. I have on my list Mr. Picco and Mr. Morin in that order. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under the authority of the Minister, the directorate provides leadership and direction to the department and monitors health and social services program delivery to the public, including health and disease surveillance. Under disease surveillance and environmental concerns, would I be safe to assume that the environmental health officers would be under that area? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, and also the chief medical officer, of course.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under disease surveillance, there has been for some time now concern in Yellowknife regarding the arsenic problem at Giant Mine. I am wondering if the department has been following up on this on a regular basis? Do they have any idea how much is there? What is the department's response on the arsenic problem here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, our medical health officer, our staff that work in the environmental health area, the medical association and the Yellowknife health and social services organization jointly and recently made a submission to the water board dealing with the water licence for Giant Mine where they shared with the board their concerns from an environmental health perspective and their advice in terms of monitoring the future and potential prospects of environmental contamination. They are very much engaged in that very current issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, following up on our disease surveillance, there has been over the past several months and now in the last few weeks, concerns raised with different types of influenzas. One, for example, would be Sydney Type A, which is in Toronto and has been identified in Ottawa. In the east, because of our transportation links, there is a concern that indeed that strain, which seems to be a virulent strain, may already be in place. Does the department have any plan in place to inoculate people for Sydney Type A? Are they following on this serious health issue? Will they be trying to help elders and people who are susceptible to those types of pneumonias and flues? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, the medical health officer and

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the chief medical health officer are constantly in contact with both their colleagues across the provinces and with Health Canada. Health Canada has the initial response in terms of pandemic, a disease that threatens broad ranges of the country. Most recently it was in action during the concerns around the so-called Bird Flu out of Hong Kong. These recent concerns are very much under their

scrutiny right now. In the meantime, it has always been a role for the medical health officer to offer advice and direction to the public health staff, including community health nurses around the role of influenza immunization flu shots. They put particular effort on offering that kind of immunization to people that are most at risk, typically elders. I cannot speak to their most recent recommendations in terms of the availability of flu shots for this most recent strain, but while we can confirm that later I am quite confident that they are in very close contact with Health Canada and with their Ontario colleagues at this point. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Moving on under administration, population health provides the lead in developing core services, program standards, monitoring outcomes in health status and providing an evaluation framework as the department moves toward a ministry function. What does that mean, Mr. Chairman, toward a Ministry function in that area? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, I think the way in which we try to make it clear, both within the department and to boards, is that we see our job, our responsibility, being in areas other than the direct delivery of service. We do not see ourselves, typically, having a direct client, patient or resident relationship. We see our job falling into the areas of defining what is acceptable, offering the support and ensuring that the services that are offered are appropriate; more important, particularly in the population health area, making sure that the services that are provided actually make a difference to the health and wellness of people and ensuring that both the department and boards report back to residents on the health status and the actual efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, following along under administration, the reform transition board supports, in the following areas, we talk about children and family services and mental health. My question here is on mental health. In the east, as an example, we have no psychiatric unit. We have no mental health facilities. Earlier this week we talked about injustice, where people with mental illness seem to be incarcerated and not been properly cared for. I wonder what type of strategic plan, under reform transition, is the department actually doing to help with this problem of mental health? In other jurisdictions a lot of these people would be in psychiatric counselling or in other facilities. We do not have that access here in the territories, other than the psychiatric ward at the Stanton. I would like to have some followup on that from the staff.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Mr. Ramsden.

MR. RAMSDEN:

Mr. Chairman, it is certainly the view of the department that mental health needs of the residents of the Northwest Territories have taken a back seat to the physical needs of people as the system evolved and as pressures developed in the system. It is clearly an area where we think we can make a significant difference in terms of the supports for residents. It is clearly the area where early intervention makes a genuine difference. The care reform initiative for the department has very much begun to deal in that area and more specifically is dealing in the area of children services in that regard. There is a significant amount of work going on right now to assess the needs and the services and, obviously, then to test for gaps in the system. The department is supporting, in one particular area in Yellowknife, a pilot project that is looking at taking a more aggressive case management approach to people that actually come to Yellowknife from various regions of the territories drawing on the existing service system. There are still significant inconsistencies in terms of the range of services that are provided today in the mental health area across the territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Picco.

MR. PICCO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I agree with the deputy minister. Indeed, mental health areas have really been put to the back burner as it were. Under the community wellness initiatives we have looked at areas to talk about suicide prevention and so on. It always seems to be that when traumatic events occur there is very little counselling available. I know in the regions you might have a visiting clinical psychologist or psychiatrist, and that is two different disciplines under medical health, Mr. Chairman. They are not the same. When we do have that expertise available, we usually find that one visit for three or four days and then someone goes and does not come back for another month. We need that ability in the regions so that you have someone available who can fly into communities to help during the traumatic incidents, like suicides, like accidents or rapes. All kinds of different areas. In any other jurisdiction we would have people on the ground for that. Sometimes the counselling services that are available, because of the language problems, do not translate very well when you are speaking with a person who does not understand English very well or maybe not at all, and then try to ask them what their problems are through an interpreter. It is a very serious area and I would ask that the Minister and his staff review this area to see what type of support we can give to the regions. Like the deputy minister said, maybe the focus has not been as much on mental health as it has on other things under our community wellness strategies. I would like some type of commitment today, from the department, to at least look at it. I know money is tight but it has come forward many times before. I know in my region especially. I brought this up about the counselling services that are available. My wife, who works in a facility that tries to provide counselling, is now getting more professional development, but they are not professionals. I think it is an area of concern. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Picco. Just to remind the Members that particular discussion would have been more

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proper under community health programs, but I presume we are talking more on monitoring here so I will allow the question. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would not argue with the honourable Member. He makes some good points there. I think what we have tried to do in that strategic investment initiatives fund is allow mental health initiatives to be one of the key criteria for boards to invest in through their own means or through some of the funds that are available in these initiatives fund. We are hoping, certainly, that some portion of the take up will be toward mental health initiatives as it is an ongoing problem that needs to be addressed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I have Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of medical travel that is one area that has been growing and under administration you say that financial management services provided include the monitoring of medical travel. This has been an area that has been growing. Can the Minister or someone in the department inform us as to whether there have been further increases in the area of medical travel?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Roland, would your question fit under the next activity, which is health insurance program. I note it specifically refers to medical travel. Would you like to put your question at that time?

MR. ROLAND:

I could do that, yes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Do you have further questions, Mr. Roland?

MR. ROLAND:

No, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Krutko, you had your hand up.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is regarding the whole area of monitoring and board development.

I am looking at the evaluation and the setting of certain standards so that everybody in the territories gets the same treatment no matter where you live. You know that you will be able to see different specialists at any one time of the year. You will have the opportunity to have consistent services, especially where you have the smaller isolated communities, especially when you have doctors in regard to ensuring that there always will be doctors made available to the communities on a constant basis and especially with the concerns from the medical association concerning attracting good doctors to the north and keeping them in the north. I would like to ask the Minister, what has been done to establish the whole area of general guidelines or standards developed across the board so that everybody knows no matter which region or community you live in that you are going to get the same type of health care regardless of who your board is or where the board is located.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, Mr. Chairman, it has been indicated on a couple of occasions now. The finalization of the statement of core services will do that, in that there will be a broad understanding of what is expected. All boards will be able to provide for services and it will be our job to monitor the boards and evaluate the boards to make sure those services are being provided on a consistent bases. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to standards, there are also national standards that have to be followed regarding the Department of Health on the federal government side. What is being done to ensure that those standards are also adhered to by the boards that everyone knows they are receiving the same sort of health service based on the national health care standards that are in place and that everyone knows that the flow from Ottawa to Yellowknife to the communities is consistent regarding the type of health care you get in the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, generally we would take the national standards into consideration when developing territorial standards that we would use for a statement of core services and I use for example, there have been some recent announcements about national standards for breast cancer screening. Those standards have been worked on over the course of the past few months and our staff is fully aware of that as we develop the NWT standards that I will be dealing with working with our boards as they undertake some of their work in developing how they are going to deliver the programs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding the area of delivering programs and implementing them in all the regions and regarding the demands on the different health boards, what is being done to ensure that the health boards are adequately trained or aware of the whole medical community and how the standards are implemented so that they are aware that these standards exist. Are there workshops or some sort of a mechanism that there are people brought in from the headquarters office out of Yellowknife or from the medical association to inform the health boards that these changes are coming. You mentioned the whole area about cancer screening which is a national program presently being announced, that there are different changes regarding the way the programs are being delivered. What type of an arrangement is done to prepare the boards with these changes that are presently taking place?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I use the example of the breast cancer screening guidelines because it has been an issue in the forefront in the past session. The department and the breast cancer screening

working group are coming together with the boards, I believe the date is March

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13th, the middle of March, to work on those guidelines and develop the work plan on how they are going to deliver the services for their constituents, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The concern I have is that the Minister says that these boards are appointed to represent the regions and the different communities within the regions by the makeup of the board. What happens in the case of the makeup of the boards where you have, for instance, in my riding, Aklavik, McPherson and Tsiigehtchic where you have three different groups, the Inuvialuit, the Gwich'in. Who takes care of the interest of the non-aboriginal people in those ridings if that is the makeup of the board?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Ng.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The board has a responsibility for health and social services programs for all individuals within their service area. It is not specific to one aboriginal group versus another because of their representation. It is our responsibility to monitor to make sure that is taking place and if there are suggestions that are not happening, then, of course, it will be our responsibility to step in to intervene and to make sure that issue is addressed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe the Minister could elaborate a little more on exactly how he intends to monitor or step into such an event. Are there guidelines in place to consider that or does he have some sort of a formal complaint process that is going to be established or is there already one in place?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. I will allow the Minister to answer and then I have to recognize the clock.

HON. KELVIN NG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be through the board monitoring and evaluation unit we have on an ongoing basis as one major part of it to making sure the services are being provided and failing that, of course, individuals do have recourse to complain directly to myself, through their board trustees or through MLAs or whatever mechanism they have available to them that if they feel they are not being treated in a fair manner. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Steen):

Thank you, Mr. Ng. I would like to thank the witnesses and the Minister. I will rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER:

Good evening. The House will come back to order. We are on item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 19-13(5); Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99; Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998 and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act is ready for third reading and Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 1998 is ready for third reading as amended. Mr. Speaker, I move that report of committee of the whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Barnabas. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Speaker, there is a meeting of the Ordinary Members' Caucus at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 24, 1998:

1. Prayer
 2. Ministers' Statements
 3. Members' Statements
 4. Returns to Oral Questions
 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
 6. Oral Questions
 7. Written Questions
 8. Returns to Written Questions
 9. Replies to Opening Address
 10. Petitions
 11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 13. Tabling of Documents
 14. Notices of Motion
 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
 16. Motions
 17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Financial Administration Act, No. 2
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Territorial Court Act
 18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly
- Page 1040
- Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 8, Appropriation Act, 1998-99

- Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act,
No. 3, 1997-98

- Committee Report 02-13(5), Standing
Committee on Government Operations, Report on the
1998- 99 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 03-13(5), Standing
Committee on Infrastructure, Report on the 1998-99
Main Estimates

- Committee Report 04-13(5), Standing
Committee on Resource Management and
Development, Report on the 1998-99 Main Estimates

- Committee Report 05-13(5), Standing
Committee on Social Programs, Report on the 1998-
99 Main Estimates

- Tabled Document 15-13(5), 1998-99
Budget Address

- Tabled Document 19-13(5), Guidelines for
Implementing Public/Private Partnerships

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act

- Bill 10, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment
Act, 1998

22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER:

Thank you. By the authority given the Speaker by
Motion 3-13(5), I order that this House stands
adjourned to Tuesday, February 24, 1998 at 10:00
a.m.

--ADJOURNMENT