



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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The Honourable **Samuel Gargan**, Speaker

MEMBERS PRESENT

Honourable Jim Antoine, Honourable Charles Dent, Mr. Erasmus, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Henry, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Krutko, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Morin, Mr. Ootes, Mr. Rabesca, Honourable Floyd Roland, Honourable Vince Steen.

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.

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Krutko):

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

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 48-13(7): National Day of Mourning

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today the flags in front of the Assembly are at half-mast in recognition of the National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured on the job. Despite ongoing efforts by employers and employees to ensure safe workplaces, there are hundreds of people injured at work every year. In many years, we also lose territorial residents to workplace accidents. At noon today, the Northern Territories Federation of Labour held their annual ceremony to recognize those Northwest Territories workers who have died or been injured or disabled on the job. The ceremony was held at the Miners' Monument and was well attended.

Mr. Speaker, this day reminds us of the need to continue our efforts in the area of occupational health and safety and the important work that we are doing in prevention, with employers, employees and youth. I would ask each Member to take a moment to remember the employees who have been the victims of workplace accidents and disease and to remember the families who must also live with the result of these accidents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Ministers' statements. Mr. Roland

Minister's Statement 49-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the establishment of a Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services. There has always been a high degree of public interest in health and social services issues in the Northwest Territories. This is understandable. All of us come into contact with the health and social services system at some point in our lives. The quality of health care and support services, especially at the community level, has a significant impact on individuals, families and communities.

There have been several reviews and studies of health and social services issues over the past several years. In 1992, the Legislative Assembly initiated the Special Committee on Health and Social Services. One of the primary recommendations from the special committee was for the GNWT to consolidate the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services. The main purpose of the consolidation was to improve services to clients by eliminating overlap and duplication, and by integrating program and service delivery. In June, 1994, the Departments of Social Services and Health were amalgamated. Over the next two years, regional health boards added social services functions to their mandates.

In 1995, the department undertook a comprehensive review of its programs and services with the Community Wellness Initiative. This initiative involved aboriginal organizations and over 50 non-governmental organizations and women's groups. The directions outlined in the Community Wellness Directions document provided a foundation for the integration of health and social services at the community and regional levels.

In 1996 and 1997, in response to continuing challenges within the system, the department consulted again with the public, boards, professional groups and non-governmental organizations. Health and social services boards also undertook extensive consultations in their respective communities. The department also commissioned the Med-Emerg Group to conduct a comprehensive review of the health and social services system. As a result of

these consultations and the information gathered from the Med-Emerg report, the Department of Health and Social Services released "Shaping Our Future: A Strategic Plan for Health and Wellness" in June, 1998.

Mr. Speaker, as I have just outlined, the department has been under almost continuous review since its establishment in 1994. One might question why another review is needed at this time. I believe a Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services is needed, for a number of reasons. First and foremost, I want to make sure that our health and social service system continues to offer high-quality services to people in all of our communities, not only today, but also in the future.

I am concerned about sustainability. Since assuming this portfolio, I have been briefed by my department on a number of key cost-drivers, which are escalating the costs of the system at an alarming rate. These cost-drivers threaten the future sustainability of our system, and we must address them. Some of these cost-drivers include:

- a severe shortage of nurses and social workers - particularly at the community level;
- increased national and international competition for physicians and nurses;

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- increased costs of operating the system;
- increased incidence of preventable illnesses and conditions; and
- growing public expectations for more services, better services, faster access and more choices.

I want to emphasize that this Minister's forum is not a fishing expedition to generate a wish list of new programs and services. In light of the government's fiscal situation, we cannot expect major increases in funding for health and social services in next year's budget. We all need to understand this at the outset. What we can do is share information with the public about the current state of our system, and discuss how we can sustain and improve the system in the future.

I will ask the Minister's forum to focus on the directions in the strategic plan related to sustaining and improving the system. These are: governance,

human resources, financial sustainability and program and service delivery.

Mr. Speaker, health and social services are expensive, especially in the north and they cost more each year. We need a system we can continue to afford; one which makes use of our relatively small economies of scale. We need to maximize service levels and eliminate unnecessary administration and overhead. We also have to review program and service delivery. Many health and social problems, and costly demands on the system, could be avoided or greatly reduced. Mr. Speaker, it is often said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The forum will provide information to the public on current health trends in the Northwest Territories, and, I hope, generate discussion on more effective ways to support healthy lifestyles, prevention and health promotion.

The Minister's forum will consult with the general public, boards, professional associations and non-governmental organizations. I will be calling for nominations of individuals with past experience in the health and social services system, either as a frontline worker, in a governance role, or as an advocate. The Minister's forum will represent a broad cross-section of the NWT population: north to south, east to west. Ideally, I would like to see a balance of both professionals and lay people on the forum.

I hope to appoint forum members within the next three weeks. Community consultations will be held as soon as possible. At least one community meeting will be held in every constituency across the Northwest Territories.

A Health and Social Services Conference will be held in the fall. Delegates from across the NWT will be invited to meet with forum members, representatives of the professional organizations and the boards, to hear the results of the community meetings and discuss the findings. Following the fall meeting, the forum will finalize its recommendations. Mr. Speaker, depending on the date of the next election, the results of the Minister's forum will either be tabled in this House or provided to the next Legislative Assembly. I hope that MLAs will be able to attend the meetings in their constituency and I look for their support in promoting the work of the forum. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you. Ministers' statements. Mr. Steen.

Minister's Statement 50-13(7): Joint NWTAM/MACA
Municipal Finance Review

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide an update on the Municipal Finance Review. Members will recall that the discussion paper developed for this review were tabled in this Assembly last month. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is committed to continuing this review in partnership with the NWT Association of Municipalities. The annual general meeting of the NWT Association of Municipalities was held in Cambridge Bay last March. Delegates there supported continued efforts on this review. There has been much hard work put into this review over the past two years and everyone who has participated is to be commended on their efforts. This partnership has worked well to date and we plan to continue to work together through consultations on the proposals.

This government is committed to building stronger communities. One of the essentials for building stronger communities is that financial resources be made available to community governments. Communities have concerns about the fairness of our department's current funding. They want greater flexibility in how funds can be used as well as new financial arrangements with fewer controls. The proposals in the Municipal Finance Review discussion papers give us an opportunity to redesign the financial structure between the communities and MACA so that community governments can achieve greater authority, flexibility and accountability.

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The same discussion papers tabled with the Assembly have now been distributed to community governments, aboriginal organizations, and other interested groups. Over the next four months the department, with the NWT Association of Municipalities, will consult these groups to seek their input on the proposals and to hear their comments. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to carry on the work of my predecessor in this important area and will seriously consider recommendations of the Municipal Finance Review Steering Committee, based on community consultations held this spring and summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Ministers' statements. Mr. Steen.

Minister's Statement 51-13(7): Annual Fire Loss
Report - 1998

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to discuss the Annual Fire Loss Report for the Northwest Territories for 1998. The north continues to experience significant losses as a result of fire. Tragically, in 1998, a five-year-old boy died in a fire. Last year, fire losses in the NWT were worth \$14.5 million dollars. This was largely due to the loss of the Kilinik High School in Cambridge Bay. The fire losses in the Northwest Territories for 1998 are still high in comparison with the Canadian average.

Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Fire Marshal has been working with stakeholders to improve fire prevention and firefighting. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has developed a fire protection strategy that will give direction to the future of fire protection in the territories. The commitment of local communities to support the initiatives of the Fire Marshal is critical to the success of the strategy. Through this support, we will be able to limit the damage caused by fire or prevent fires from occurring. Mr. Speaker, I am confident that with the support of my colleagues and local governments, we will see fire protection in the Northwest Territories improve and reduce our losses due to fire. Mr. Speaker, later today at the appropriate time, I will table the Office of the Fire Marshal 1998 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 137-13(7): Bellanca
Development's Initiative to Provide Exercise
Equipment

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about a new initiative in Yellowknife. I believe it is important to recognize businesses that contribute to better health in our community and last session I had

indicated that Sutherland's drugstore had quit selling tobacco in their drugstore.

Today I wish to speak about Bellanca Developments, who have provided exercise equipment downstairs in the Scotia Centre to the tenants of their four buildings, namely the Precambrian Building, Scotia Centre, Bellanca Building and the Northwestel Building. Mr. Speaker, this area where the exercise equipment is, is where the YWCA was formerly housed and it moved last year. Obviously the tenants are sad to see the YWCA go, but Bellanca Developments conducted a survey to see if the tenants would use this available space if exercise equipment was provided. The reply was yes, so there has been equipment put into this area, namely three new treadmills as well as four bicycles. The intention, of course, is not to compete with local fitness facilities, but to provide a service to their tenants. The tenants can access this area from 7:30 in the morning to 9:00 pm and tenants provide a \$25 deposit for an access card fee which is refundable when the tenant turns in their card. This has been in use since March 15th and already well over 100 people have signed up.

Mr. Speaker, studies in the south indicate that a lot of businesses do this now and it allows workers to relieve stress, so it turns out healthier workers and, in fact, better productivity to those businesses. The businesses and agencies in those four buildings, I would think would like to heartily thank Bellanca Developments and I am sure the Members here join me in applauding them in this new venture. Thank you.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

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

Member's Statement 138-13(7): Youth Employer Award Presented to Javaroma

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Small and medium-sized businesses are one of the fastest-growing sectors in our economy. They bring investment and employment into our communities. Many small businesses also provide our youth with part-time employment and valuable job experience. The National Conference Board of Canada has recently chosen Javaroma, a coffee and snack-bar service,

with the honour of being the NWT's top employer of youth. The awards are sponsored by the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Forum of Labour Market Ministers. This is a significant achievement for Brendan and Adrian Bell, owners of Javaroma in Yellowknife. They are in Toronto this week to accept their award and to share some of the knowledge and experience they have acquired in their youth hiring program. Along with other winners they will also be taking part in a Winner's Circle forum, a panel discussion at the 10th annual Reaching for Success Conference. Their award also gives significant recognition to our youth.

Clearly our young people are interested, capable and committed to building their job skills when given the opportunity. Javaroma has provided such opportunity. They in turn are grateful for the support provided by the GNWT/ECE Working Together program; an initiative aimed at providing job opportunities for students and youth. We need more of these sorts of initiatives that encourage government and business to work together for the benefit of our young people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--Applause

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mrs. Groenewegen.

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ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Ms. Pat Thomas returning to the House today. Mr. Miltenberger can rest assured it means nothing to the questions that will be coming from this side of the House. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Welcome to the Assembly. Item 6, oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 141-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was interested in the Minister's announcement today on the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services so I have several questions for the Minister in this regard. I wonder if the Minister could tell us, in light of the Minister's Forum on Education Report where there were difficulties now encountered to implement a number of the crucial recommendations, if the Minister could tell us is he restricting the forum, the panel that he will appoint, to making recommendations in the area that do not involve money expenditures? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 141-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The forum that I spoke about earlier in my statement is going to go out and look at the existing services and how we provide them. In the terms of reference that I will table later on there is no mention of how it is restricted, but it will be focused in how it goes about its work. I will be meeting with forum members that are selected before they go out on their community consultations. As I stated earlier to a number of questions in this House, this forum is going to be focused on how we can improve our system and looking at the existing sustainability concerns that I also raised. We need to make sure we can provide for services in the Northwest Territories that are sustainable. The message they will have with them when they go out to the communities and do their workshops will be focused as to what we can do within the existing confines we find ourselves in now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 141-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does that mean that the board will also look at the possibility of eliminating some programs if they are unaffordable for this government?

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 141-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the forum members go out through the territories and hear the concern that there needs to be reprofiling of dollars in different program areas, that is something we will look at to see, if it means a reduction in service to what degree, that will all be looked at by the forum as they make their final report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 141-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Minister's statement he stated that currently there are nine health and social services boards in the NWT. In light of the recent announcement of Nunavut that they are looking at the elimination of health and social services boards, obviously for financial reasons, perhaps there are more reasons, but could the Minister tell us here in the territories will that also be under consideration, the possibility of the elimination of health boards?

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 141-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would not want, before the forum even gets started, to establish that it would go out and start looking at reduction of services. Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut government has announced indeed that they are looking at consolidating their

health boards, but as I stated in an interview with CBC, their situation is quite different from our situation. One of the things, as I stated in my statement, we will be looking at our governance structures and again, looking at affordability and sustainability of the systems we carry on with today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 141-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am somewhat concerned about the cost factor that this may take. We have done the Med-Emerg Report to the tune of \$750,000 and jokingly referred to as a doorstep and several other reports that need to be, of course, taken into consideration. Could the Minister tell us if he has a budget allocation for the Minister's forum?

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Ootes. Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 141-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has not been a budget laid out, so to speak, but we definitely will come under the Med-Emerge Report that was done and I would like to notify the Member that, in fact, the Med-Emerge Report

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was used in the strategic plan that was developed and put forward by the department, not as a doorstep. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Morin.

Question 142-13(7): Value-Added Resource Sector

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. The cornerstone of this

government's political agenda is to get the most out of the resources that we harvest in the Northwest Territories and have value-added products produced from those resources that we harvest in the Northwest Territories, for example, diamonds, the value-added was the polishing and cutting. This government pushed very hard for that, Mr. Speaker. Is this still the cornerstone of this government's political agenda, resources harvested in the Northwest Territories that we get value-added product from? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Morin. Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 142-13(7): Value-Added Resource Sector

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is our intention wherever there is resource development to maximize the economic returns and benefits to our communities and our businesses. Where there are potential value-added activities, yes, as a government we try to maximize the realization of those. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 142-13(7): Value-Added Resource Sector

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently, it is my understanding, there is a review being done of Great Slave Lake Forest Products which the Minister is responsible for. It is now late April, the first of May comes along fairly quickly and the normal season of logging and sawing, the slaver of a sawmill will be firing up in very early May to start sawing the logs that are in the yard, the resource that was harvested, to maximize the benefits from that resource. At present they do have a plan that was put forward to the Development Corporation and, in order for any part of that plan to be in place, they would have to start actioning it soon. So my question to the Minister is, how soon will they start actioning the plan and sawing the logs in Fort Resolution? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you Mr. Morin. Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 142-13(7): Value-Added Resource Sector

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the department, and also through the Development Corporation, we had initiated discussions with Chief Don Balsillie in March to address the situation with the sawmill in Fort Resolution, Great Slave Forest Products, to see if there was some way in which we could work together to ensure the operation becomes increasingly efficient and viable under the present circumstances. One of the difficulties we are having is making sure the financial information we have is accurate and, once that is done, the Development Corporation president will work with Great Slave Lake Forest Products and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and the community of Fort Resolution to take some action to ensure the operation in Fort Resolution can continue in some form or other that is acceptable to the Development Corporation and to the community as well. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 142-13(7): Value-Added Resource Sector

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good that Great Slave Lake Forest Products as well as the NWT Development Corporation are working on a plan with the community. That is good news, but the problem that we have is in the milling operation, and the logging operation and producing lumber in the Northwest Territories is something similar to building a house, Mr. Speaker. We have so many days of warm weather in the Northwest Territories, south of the lake, and we have so many days of warm sun in order to air-dry that lumber. It takes time to do that, so it is not as simple as sawing it and selling it. You have to air-dry it before you plane it. All of that stuff takes time, and the days that you lose at the beginning of your sawing season, you never gain them back at the end, because then it is fall and it rains constantly. So how long is this review going to take to get finalized if the numbers are correct, and when will we have the get-together in Fort Resolution

to address this issue? There is a time restraint here, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Morin. I heard two questions, you used up your supplementary. Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 142-13(7): Value-Added Resource Sector

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had a meeting this morning, myself, the Deputy Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, the new president of the NWT Development Corporation. We know there is urgency to come up with a business plan for the NWT Development Corporation as well as a need to respond quickly to the business plan that was tabled by Mr. Morin the other day. I have asked them to work quickly to address that and come up with some plan with the community that would ensure the ongoing viability of the sawmill and to look at different options on how that could be done. It is clear to all of us that the level of funding that was available in previous years is simply no longer there. There is a real need on our part to make sure all subsidiaries are treated the same way, and given the same level of support. We will work to achieve that. There are concerns with the auditor general that need to be addressed. We will be looking at ways in which we can make sure the operation of the Development Corporation is done in a way that assures the public, this government and the communities that we are doing everything we can to operate in line with legislation, in line with

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acceptable accounting practices and with sound business practices and policies in place.

An operational audit, as I said, was requested by the Financial Management Board in February and we are now looking at doing a full comprehensive audit, and are requesting that to be done on the NWT Development Corporation and each subsidiary, looking at the value-for-dollar component of it by asking the Auditor General of Canada to do a comprehensive audit of the Development Corporation. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 143-13(7): Support Provided to Down Payment Assistance Plan Applicants

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, under the Expanded Down Payment Assistance Program, the Housing Corporation can end up with considerable equity in a home. I believe that could be as high as 70 percent of the cost of the home. My question is what measures are taken when assisting a potential home owner in ensuring they are investing in a sound structure that will meet the client's needs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 143-13(7): Support Provided to Down Payment Assistance Plan Applicants

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the area of the Expanded Down Payment Assistance Plan, the Member is correct, it can range from as low as 5 percent to as high as 70 percent, but I believe it is a cap at 70 percent. I would have to get that information. As to the process, there is a lengthy process involved with the clients that would come forward in filling out their applications and understanding the process. We do give the Down Payment assistance to those that qualify and come through with an actual purchase, but the mortgage that is held, is held by the bank, so, under most approvals, the banks would have the first right for things that would happen if anything were to go wrong in the application for those that had received assistance. The Housing Corporation has, through the EDAP, found itself that this process has been quite successful and we have not had to deal with many individuals when it comes to their mortgages failing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 143-13(7): Support Provided to Down Payment Assistance Plan Applicants

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was specifically looking for what kind of assistance the Corporation would provide to, for example, in the case of a first-time home buyer, where I am referring specifically to issues of structural integrity, those types of issues that the average person might not be aware of. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Minister responsible, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 143-13(7): Support Provided to Down Payment Assistance Plan Applicants

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Housing Corporation will assist the individual who would come forward in going over the application, in reviewing the finances and collecting that information. The department itself, I am not aware that the department or the Corporation staff go out and actually inspect the buildings to be purchased. That is considered to be a process that the buyer should be going through, to be looking at the structural integrity of the building being purchased. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 143-13(7): Support Provided to Down Payment Assistance Plan Applicants

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister saying that even giving the potential investment in equity which the Housing Corporation would hold in this property, by way of assistance, they would not have their staff inspect homes that they were approving for purchase? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 143-13(7): Support Provided to Down Payment Assistance Plan Applicants

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to get more accurate information, I would not want to mislead the Member in giving her an inaccurate answer. I am aware that the staff of the Corporation would become involved, for example, if someone was putting in for a home improvement program, something of that nature where they would go in to look and assess what would need to be done to repair the house. As for purchasing a home, the first-time home owner, due diligence as it is called, the majority of that would be left up to the potential home owner or the buyer, but I will endeavour to get back to the Member to make sure I have not forgotten anything or to what degree the staff would become involved, besides looking at the financial areas. One of the concerns would be if, in fact, someone was purchasing a house that was very old and quite expensive, those things might trigger another process taking place, but for your average sale of a home, I am not too sure as to how deeply the staff would get involved. I will get that information and get back to the Member. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 143-13(7): Support Provided to Down Payment Assistance Plan Applicants

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the unfortunate event that a client does purchase a home and that deficiencies are overlooked by either an appraiser or by CMHC or by the failure of any staff from the Corporation to look at the house, if that were to be the case, is

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there any further support that housing could then provide to that client if it becomes evident that there are serious structural deficiencies in a home that they have purchased and it, in fact, will not be meeting their needs and could put them under tremendous financial stress? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 143-13(7): Support Provided to Down Payment Assistance Plan Applicants

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member brought up an important area as well when individuals would go through the Corporation and go to the banks for the other portion of their financing, CMHC would be involved, and they do also have a process of looking at the a type of building that a potential purchaser is looking at. I am aware that there are other programs that home owners can access through the Housing Corporation for looking at repairing of facilities. As I said earlier, one of the things I will do as well as adding to the information I have already committed to getting for the Member, is to see if, in fact, when a home owner has accessed the Housing Corporation programs, what degree of access can they get on other programs. I will look into that as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr Henry.

Question 144-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland. I would like to follow up on some questions that were asked by my honourable colleague, Mr. Ootes, this morning. When questioned about the cost of the forum that the Minister is proposing, there are a couple of other costs that I would like to get identified if I can, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minster have the costs that this government incurs in having health boards in place across the territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 144-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The majority of funding through the department is contributions to the health boards throughout the territory. If we are fortunate enough, we will be going through the budget this afternoon, and I would be able to provide that specific information to the Member at that time. Right now I

cannot give the Member a specific amount unless I do a little bit of research here. But I know that a majority of our funding provided through appropriation of this in this House is contributions to the health boards throughout the territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Henry.

Supplementary To Question 144-13(7): Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe this is your first day in the chair, and I would like to congratulate you in being elected to that. You will be missed down here. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Honourable Member, Mr. Roland, is, and I would like to congratulate the Minister at certainly listening well to what Members of this House have been saying for quite a few months and what the public of the Northwest Territories have been saying in regard to health in their communities and indeed, as I said, the Minister has identified those things within his statement today. He was talking about some of the cost-drivers, and the first one, which I believe everyone agrees, is there is a shortage of nurses. I am wondering, we do not have the budget figure that the Minister is proposing on the forum. But was there any consideration given to using funds that will be spent on the Minister's forum to alleviating the problems that are already identified in most communities in the Northwest Territories, a shortage of medical staff? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Sorry, Mr. Henry. That is a new question. You were asking a question about the cost of health boards, now this is a new question altogether. Will you rephrase your question?

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I was trying to get at was monies that are being spent on this forum, has the Minister given any consideration to using the funds that will be spent on this forum to provide nurses in communities or medical staff in communities?

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Again, Mr. Henry, I will rule that question out of order. Your original question was based on what is the cost of running health boards. This is a whole new area that you are venturing into so the question is out of order. Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 145-13(7): Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. My questions today are in relation to the Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan. Mr. Speaker, I have been contacted by a constituent who is quite concerned by the proposed plan. This person runs a non-consumptive tourism business in that he provides services to tourists who wish to photograph wildlife and the environment, that type of thing, in a pristine situation such as the sanctuary. The cause for concern is that apparently there will be hunting allowed in the sanctuary as well as some of the travel restrictions that are going to be put into place. Could the Minister indicate what type of hunting will be allowed in the game sanctuary if this game sanctuary management plan is put into place according to the way it is currently spelled out? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 145-13(7): Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan

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HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are concerns by people about this proposed management plan. Some of it is around the issue of traditionally there has been absolutely no hunting or harvesting of wildlife allowed in the Thelon Game Sanctuary. Recently, I believe, the Wildlife Management Board for Nunavut has proposed a new management plan which would allow for aboriginal people to hunt for subsistence hunting in that area and that is contrary to what some people, business people and others, feel is acceptable for the area. This has led to the concerns being expressed. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 145-13(7): Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Speaker, I am assuming that the Minister or the management plan, in allowing this type of hunting, is responding to treaty and aboriginal rights to hunt and that this is the reason this is going to be allowed. Could the Minister indicate if this is the case? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 145-13(7): Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Member is correct in the assumption he is making that it is difficult to suggest that aboriginal people who have lived here for thousands of years should have their most basic rights, that is the right to harvest the wildlife over their traditional lands, curtailed unilaterally by any government. I believe that is what happened in the case of the Thelon Game Sanctuary and now that the Nunavut Wildlife Board jurisdiction is in place, they have moved, in their view, to reconcile that. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 145-13(7): Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I had indicated, the inquiries that were made of me were from a tourist operation who deals with tourists that wish to photograph wildlife. Obviously, there is concern that the wildlife would become skittish if there is too much hunting. Could the Minister indicate if there would be totally unrestricted hunting by the aboriginal hunters? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 145-13(7): Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not certain I can confirm that, but I do know that in the case of the Inuit as well as the Dene, they have hunted and harvested wildlife here for thousands of years and have done so in a way that respected the wildlife, and there was some management regime in place to ensure that the wildlife was never over-harvested. I believe that the Nunavut Wildlife Board is moving to ensure that they manage with the harvesters, with public interest groups, and the private sector to manage that particular area in the interest of everyone. I believe that they put their management plan forward believing that is what they have done in the best way possible. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 145-13(7): Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that information. Finally, the outfitter in question is also concerned that there seem to be some very limiting restrictions on the amount of flights that can go into the sanctuary. It seems as though you can only fly in, drop somebody off, and come back and pick them up a couple of weeks later, quite some time later. Could the Minister indicate whether this is actually true, or would a person be able to fly in and fly out the same day with his...wait around, fly in, drop off his guest, come back later, and pick them up, that sort of thing? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 145-13(7): Thelon Game Sanctuary Management Plan

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would take that question as notice I am no longer able to provide any more details to the Member on this plan. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you Mr. Minister. Oral questions. Mr. Morin.

Question 146-13(7): Meeting With Great Slave Lake Forest Products

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. As everyone knows, this House is set to adjourn on Friday. I know that the Premier has a very busy schedule. I know also that he has things set up for the beginning of next week, but if the Premier has any days available at all next week, I have a letter from the Great Slave Lake Forest Products, the advisory committee in Fort Resolution that is comprised of the First Nations, the Metis Council, the Deninoo Community Council. Two people from each of these community governments sit on an advisory committee on the Great Slave Lake Forest Products as well as two workers from the mill sit on this committee and advise Great Slave Lake Forest Products how to run the sawmill. They would like a meeting with the Premier, as well as the Deputy Minister, Joe Handley, and possibly the president of the NWT Development Corporation. You can even bring my good friend, Mr. Steve Kakfwi, with you, if you do not mind. If you can come down to Fort Resolution and meet with the people of Fort Resolution no later than the end of the next week, it is very important that we have a meeting so that we can start working together to solve the problems of Great Slave Lake Forest Products and hopefully Fort Resolution can go to work in the sawmill soon. Thank you.

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DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Premier. Mr. Antoine.

Return To Question 146-13(7): Meeting With Great Slave Lake Forest Products

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for the NWT Development Corporation and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development is working very hard with his staff in trying to get a handle on the situation in Fort Resolution and the Great Slave Lake Forestry. I welcome the invitation to go there. As you know next week, there is a three day chiefs meeting, Tuesday,

Wednesday and Thursday. Perhaps if we get the information together, the last day of next week there might be an opportunity to go there for the day. We will see how things evolve here in the next few days in the work that the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi is doing and once we get the information we will be able to go there and meet with the people. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 146-13(7): Meeting With Great Slave Lake Forest Products

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the request that was put in to the Premier. He should have received it today, it will be in your reading books, from the Great Slave Lake Advisory Committee. Also, if the Premier could let me know by the end of the week because it is very important when we have such honoured guests in our community, like yourself and the Minister, that we prepare properly ahead of time. A lot of people are out on the land at this time of the year and we would like them to have the opportunity to attend those meetings as well. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Premier.

Further Return To Question 146-13(7): Meeting With Great Slave Lake Forest Products

HON. JIM ANTOINE:

I will notify the honourable Member by the end of the week. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Ootes.

Question 147-13(7): Material for Consideration by Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some further questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services, regarding his statement today on the creation of the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services. In the report the Minister states some reasons for establishing a Minister's forum and one of

which is the concern of sustainability. He outlines some of the cost-drivers that lead to the sustainability problem. He refers to a severe shortage of nurses and social workers, increased competition for physicians and nurses and increased costs of operating the system. Additionally he speaks about, that the forum will focus on directions of the strategic plan, such as governance, human resources, financial sustainability and program and service delivery. My question for the Minister is, has the Minister had his department prepare reports in each of these areas that I just referred to, such as, the cost-drivers and in the area of the focus, such as governance, human resources, financial sustainability and program and service delivery. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 147-13(7): Material for Consideration by Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in preparation for the Minister's forum, the department has on an ongoing basis, monitored the concerns that I raised in the cost-drivers area, as well as a number of other areas. Part of the process, when the forum members go into the communities, there will be one member of the staff that will go to provide information on the ongoing statistics as they are today in those areas of cost-drivers. There will be information provided and the department on an ongoing basis monitors the cost of delivery and services. The drivers that increase the burden on our budget for delivery of service. Information is available and will be used when the forum members go out to the communities. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 147-13(7): Material for Consideration by Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that information, but that was not the area that I was concerned with. I am more concerned with, has the

Minister had his department prepare briefing papers in each of those areas so that the Minister is fully aware of the concerns that are there. In other words, is the Minister satisfied that his officials have done adequate work and prepared enough reports to identify the problems facing the department?

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 147-13(7): Material for Consideration by Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since taking over the responsibility for the Department of Health and Social Services, it has been very demanding on the time, both from a staff point of view and my own, to try and get up to speed on all of the areas and with all the changes that have happened since the 13th Assembly, as I stated in my Minister's statement, the number of areas that the department has dealt with in ongoing change. The department has provided me with what I believe is much-needed information and I feel that I have adequate information to deal with the concerns that were raised. For example, the department is always listening to the concerns that were raised. One of the big concerns that we have heard over a number of times is incidents in communities where nurses felt their ability to carry out their duties was affected severely. We have heard, in the Delta this year, the concerns that were there and the department feels we must address these as we are heading in the Northwest Territories as

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we know it now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 147-13(7): Material for Consideration by Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. OOTES:

There is certainly an understanding from my point that the Minister has a very difficult portfolio and one with a lot of challenges. There is no question about that, I

think, by any of the Members here just to address his comments. But the area that I am concerned about is just the area the Minister referred to in his latter part of his comments. There has been identification of problems out there. What I am concerned about is, is the Minister creating this forum to rationalize the decisions that need to be made and in other words, is he asking the forum to make these decisions for him, rather than him sitting here saying yes, these are the problems and this is what we can do about it. We are going out to the public again, saying, okay, tell us what all the problems are, but how many of those do we already know about? Really, the decisions need to be made by Ministers. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 147-13(7): Material for Consideration by Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree that the Minister is the final point of the decision. But as we have heard in this House, since we have come together as the 13th Assembly, how we are being an open and transparent government and working with the people of the territories. No longer is there the day where, in this Assembly alone, decisions are made without the input of the people. Mr. Speaker, I agree fully once the decision is made, it will be made from my level. But at this point, I feel that it is necessary to go out to the public and in the areas that we have heard over a number of months to a year and the concerns of health and social services and the delivery of programs, that we inform the residents of this territory of the extreme pressures that we face and the staff face at their level. As well, the cost factors involved with delivery of services in the territories and help them understand as well as the department, to understand from a bottom-up approach where the concerns lie and where we can make adjustments within our system to better deliver the programs of health and social services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Ootes.

Supplementary To Question 147-13(7): Material for Consideration by Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

MR. OOTES:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not think there has been a lack of consulting across the territory. We have had a number of areas where people have been consulted over the last several years. A strategic plan was developed from that. I do not disagree with the Minister that it is vitally important to consult people, but when we already know that we have problems, in certain areas, is the Minister not in agreement with me, that we should be making those decisions and implementing some changes? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The area as I feel it is my responsibility is, that the information that the department has and, has received and heard the concerns throughout the territory, is enough to cause me to say we need to go out there. There are other concerns I am sure that we have not heard and have not been brought up in this forum. For example, if we are going to implement the strategic plan as it comes through the previous reports, then we need to fully bring up to speed the people in the territories as to what that might take. As well, in the day that we are in, where we have, for example, block funded the health boards and they have the responsibility to carry out the duties that we once carried out from a central headquarters department, we have changed that structure significantly since the 13th Assembly has taken power and we want to ensure that with all the change that we are first and foremost looking at the services we provide to the people in the Territories.

As I said earlier, I believe that when it is time to make the decision, we want to make the appropriate decision and inform the people of the territories. We also want to inform them of the concerns and the cost-drivers that we face in making the decisions that we do today. I believe that once we have that information out there, people will see and understand probably a little more clearly, the pressures that we face as a department, as a government and especially those in the communities, the people who are front line, the nurses and the social service workers, when they go into their offices and request consideration for one of the programs or services that we deliver, they will be better able to understand the pressures that they are under to meet their needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Erasmus.

Question 148-13(7): Government Position on Giant Mine

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, in relationship to the Giant Mines. We all know that they have been in some very serious difficulties, a difficult situation that they have been going through. I believe that the GNWT's position is to have the arsenic trioxide that is stored underground, to have that cleaned up, and also to attempt to keep the mine operating. Could the Minister please indicate whether this belief that I have is true or not? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return To Question 148-13(7): Government Position on Giant Mine

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have said that we believe the mine is still viable at least on the short-term and we would like to see the private sector along with our government and the federal government, look at ways in which

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we could see the possible ongoing operation of Giant Mine. As a business, we have also said that the arsenic that is stored underground is a public concern. We have assured the public that there is no danger to the public whether the mine continues operating or is closed. What we have also indicated to the federal government is that we must work together to see what ways can be found to take the arsenic that is stored underground and remove it and ensure that it is turned into a product that is harmless or marketable for use in other places. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 148-13(7): Government Position on Giant Mine

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for that answer. I had questioned the Premier on this a couple of weeks ago but the Minister was at a meeting with the DIAND Minister at the time so I appreciate being able to question him. Could the Minister indicate why the government, since the mine is obviously producing more arsenic every day that it is in operation, for what reason would it want to keep the mine in operation? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 148-13(7): Government Position on Giant Mine

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Mr. Speaker, there is still an understanding that as a stand-alone operation Giant Mine is profitable, it can make a profit and it does employ well over 200 people full-time. It is still, in our view, a viable business operation and it should be allowed to continue. We have also said that there is some urgency to the federal government addressing the issue of what to do with the hundreds of thousands of tonnes of arsenic that are presently being stored underground. We have continued to pressure the government to come up with some suggestions as to how that could be cleaned up as well as to clarify who is responsible for the environmental liability. We do know that the federal government receives through taxes alone, somewhere in the neighbourhood of over \$9 million per year. That potentially could be set aside for potential use towards the cleanup and stabilization of the arsenic trioxide. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 148-13(7): Government Position on Giant Mine

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very glad to see that the government is concerned about the welfare of the workers. I, too, am concerned and, in fact, what I am wondering is, we know that the mine is operating with

poor equipment, outdated, and we have been told that there needs to be an infusion of cash to bring the mine up to modern-day worker safety standards. Could the Minister indicate whether this government would consider putting some money into this mine in order to modernize the mine so that safety standards are at an acceptable modern level? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 148-13(7): Government Position on Giant Mine

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mine is continuing to operate, as I understand, today under the authority of the receiver that was appointed by the courts and the receiver will look at ways in which to deal with the operations at Giant Mine for instance, whether or not the private sector may pick up the property and continue to operate it. There are, I am sure, a number of possibilities that could happen and the receiver, I believe, is working on that. The federal government has announced it is interested and supportive in looking at options as well and is working with the receiver to look at the variables. It is not our intention as a government to put money into the operation at Giant Mine at this time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mr. Erasmus.

Supplementary To Question 148-13(7): Government Position on Giant Mine

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to the arsenic that Giant Mine is storing underground, it also emits a lot of pollution in the form of sulphur dioxide and this government had drafted some legislation some time ago to control this and it has not been put into place. Would the Minister make a commitment to put some pollution controls into place so that we can at least assure the people living in Yellowknife that the pollution that is going into the air will be controlled? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return To Question 148-13(7): Government Position on Giant Mine

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is clear that the Giant Mine, if it was to start today as a new operation, would have to change their mode of operation because the roasting mode of deriving the gold from the ore would no longer be an acceptable way to operate, that is certain. Also, some of the other modes of operation, the emissions, would no longer be acceptable. That is clear, but what we are trying to do, is to make sure that the mine is not shut down without due regard for the impact it would have not only on the city of Yellowknife, but on, for instance, the grant you receive from the federal government to operate as a government because there would be an impact on the amount of money that we receive through our formula. There are a number of factors which compel us to look at ways in which we could support the ongoing operations, at least in the short term, while solutions to the fiscal difficulties of this government, the environmental concerns, are looked at by both governments and there are avenues looked at to see what role the private sector could play, not only making sure it continues to operate even on the short term, but also in clarifying by whom and how the environmental liability would be owned up to. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Morin.

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MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to extend question period.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Do I have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Morin, you may continue.

Question 149-13(7): Cost of Strategic Review Initiatives

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, I have a request from my constituent. They would like to know how

much money was spent on the Minister's Forum on Education. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 149-13(7): Cost of Strategic Review Initiatives

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the budget figure that we are looking at for the completion of the whole strategic review, including the ministerial forum, with a final document being produced at the end of June, is \$350,000.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Morin.

Question 150-13(7): Support for New Home Owners

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask the Minister of the Housing Corporation to picture himself as a young couple from Fort Resolution that are just starting out in life, they have just been married for a couple years, they have lived in public housing for a couple of years, they have just had a child and they turn to the Housing Corporation. They turn to the Housing Corporation for advice and also for assistance to buy a home. They do not know a lot about carpentry, plumbing or electrical, but they do know that they can afford to own their own home and pay the rent or pay the mortgage. When they turn to the Housing Corporation they do put their trust in the Housing Corporation to assist them. Is the Minister willing to develop a program or a policy to ensure that the people that assist this young couple from Fort Resolution to buy a home will also assist them to let them know whether they are buying a sound home or not, not only to protect the young couple's investment, but to protect the Housing Corporation's investment. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 150-13(7): Support for New Home Owners

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although my grey hair might make me look old, I do consider myself fairly young and I can picture easily myself in that position. I have a large family and I do have a mortgage. When I bought the home I am in, I knew much less than I know now because I have now assumed the responsibility of the Housing Corporation. I understand the concerns that the Member is raising and I cannot see a problem in looking to develop a program that would, for example, an information item that would be given to potential homeowners or when they come to the corporation for assistance that we would provide them with a statistics sheet as to what they would need to look at. I would have to see, as I stated in an earlier question, what we do as a Housing Corporation when potential clients come in, what kind of assistance we provide in going through the process to see if we can support the individuals that file for applications through the EDAP. I will work with the Housing Corporation to see if we can develop a policy that would see us providing some assistance in informing potential new homeowners as to some of the things they would need to look for before purchasing a home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 150-13(7): Support for New Home Owners

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary to the same Minister, that is very good and I would just like to assure the Minister that I do know some of the project staff and I have had some experience with the project staff in our region and with how they assist our people and they are excellent people from the Housing Corporation in our region. They do an excellent job. Also, Mr. Minister, I think it is important that yourself, as a Minister who represents the government, protect the investment that you make ultimately in those units. I think it is important that you not only protect the investment through the banks, which you do already and you protect your own investments, you are taking a second mortgage is my understanding, so that the banks do not end up with the units, the Housing Corporation ends up with the unit in the end if somebody does not pay their mortgage. You also have to protect your investment to make sure the house is sound, that it does not end up being

condemned six months after you bought it and that has happened in the past. You need a program, or a policy at the minimum, in place to protect your investment. Will you be doing that, protecting your investment? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Just a reminder to the House to keep your supplementary direct and do not elaborate too long. The same thing with your responses to the questions, get to the point.

--Applause

The Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

Further Return To Question 150-13(7): Support for New Home Owners

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To be direct, I will work with the Housing Corporation staff to see what we can do to try and reduce the risk. I agree with the Member on what he said about protecting our investment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 150-13(7): Support for New Home Owners

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I compliment you on your wise advice, and I will take Hansard from today and keep

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it on my desk so I can share it with other Members that may not be in their seats today at future dates. Mr. Minister, the construction season is starting now in the South Slave region. It is very important, as well, since springtime, people have more of a tendency to buy units now. It is also because you are passing the budget here today and the South Slave Housing Corporation will have a new budget so it is important that this policy is looked into fairly quickly. So can I get a commitment from you that it will be a priority and be looked into fairly quickly just to save, in the future, the Housing Corporation any headache and most importantly, the homeowner. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 150-13(7): Support for New Home Owners

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, we will look at what we can do in this area to protect those that would be using our programs as well as the Housing Corporation. We will look at what we can do and we will have to see how we can do it within our existing means. We will see what we can do. And understandably, yes, we are entering into construction season so, as I committed earlier, will look at what we can do in protecting investments of the people that come through our program and that we guarantee as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mr. Morin.

Question 151-13(7): Reconstruction of Highway 3

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question will be for the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday when the Minister presented his budget in the committee of the whole, the deputy minister stated that the Highway 4 reconstruction program line item in the budget, money was being spent already on that line item because of the interim appropriation that the Minister of Finance passed in this House. I ask the Minister, were any dollars spent prior to that interim supplemental appropriation brought into the House? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return To Question 151-13(7): Reconstruction of Highway 3

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was advised, I believe it was around \$80,000 was spent prior to January of this year, prior to the interim appropriation being passed, but it was spent on the understanding that it was a multi-year project, therefore it was

allowable under the Financial Management Act.
Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 151-13(7):
Reconstruction of Highway 3

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Has the Minister looked into this issue already and has he assured himself that the Department of Transportation did not spend money prior to it being voted on in this House or approved by Cabinet through a supplementary appropriation or whatever? Did you assure yourself of that? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 151-13(7):
Reconstruction of Highway 3

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clarification. I should correct myself in saying that the money was spent, the work was done to the extent of \$780,000. The money was not actually spent nor the work paid for until the interim appropriation was passed.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 151-13(7):
Reconstruction of Highway 3

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just so I understand this correctly, the contractor did the work. The contractor did not submit a bill to the government because the money was not voted on yet. The contractor will submit a bill after the money is voted on. This is done in accordance with the Financial Management Act? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 151-13(7):
Reconstruction of Highway 3

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is my understanding, yes. As the Member indicated, the work was done, the work was actually paid for after the Interim Appropriation Act was passed. It is my understanding that this is allowed under the Financial Administration Act.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Final supplementary, Mr. Morin.

Supplementary To Question 151-13(7):
Reconstruction of Highway 3

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister commit to request, from the Minister of Finance, whether or not this project was carried out according to the Financial Management Act and then share with myself, for sure, the answer, or this House? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return To Question 151-13(7):
Reconstruction of Highway 3

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will confirm with the Finance Minister the fact that this, that I complied with the Financial Administration Act and get back to the Member. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

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Question 152-13(7): Pupil/Teacher Ratio

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. There has been a lot of discussion in this House with respect to the classroom sizes in our NWT schools and the pupil/teacher ratio. Could the

Minister please, for the benefit of the House and the benefit of the public, explain to us how the pupil/teacher ratio is arrived at? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 152-13(7): Pupil/Teacher Ratio

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The pupil/teacher ratio is part of the funding formula and is currently averaged out at about 18 students per teacher. It is part of the formula funding arrangement used to block fund DECs. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 152-13(7):
Pupil/Teacher Ratio

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister said that this is what the pupil/teacher ratio is. I am asking how is that average or that ratio arrived at? Does it include every school in the Western Territory and every number of classrooms and divided? How is the average number arrived at? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Minister.

Further Return To Question 152-13(7): Pupil/Teacher Ratio

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The pupil/teacher ratio is a ratio of students to classroom teachers, support teachers, vice-principals, and principals. It excludes language specialist teachers and classroom assistants and categories requiring less than two years post-secondary training and restricted from full teaching duties. It is used as part of the formula funding for all schools and DECs in the Northwest Territories.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 152-13(7):
Pupil/Teacher Ratio

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not intending to be repetitive, but how many schools are included in the rate that the Minister has quoted of 18 students per teacher? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 152-13(7): Pupil/Teacher Ratio

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All of the schools are included. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 152-13(7):
Pupil/Teacher Ratio

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, is there any grouping of schools with respect to, does this include large communities, small communities, and is there a trend based on the size of the community? Would the size of the classrooms, for example, be smaller in a small community or larger? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 152-13(7): Pupil/Teacher Ratio

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can give the Member an indication by region if that would assist her. The information I have in terms of the pupil/teacher ratios indicates, for instance, in the Deh Cho it is 15, in the South Slave it is 18/1, in Yellowknife Number One is 19.6, Yellowknife Two it is 19.5, Sahtu is 17.6. For the North Slave and Dogrib, the Divisional Board, it is 18.4. Beaufort Delta is 17.7. This is the average

between K and nine, and ten to 12. The territorial average works out to 18.1.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Mr. Morin.

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to Members' Statements.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Morin is seeking unanimous consent to go back to Members' Statements. Are there any nays? Mr. Morin.

REVERT TO ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 139-13(7): Absence From the House

MR. MORIN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not be in the House tomorrow or the next day, in the Legislative Assembly. I do have a seriously ill patient in Edmonton that is in critical condition, one of my constituents. I will be leaving in the morning for down there, so I would just like to thank all the Ministers for their fine answers and see you guys when I get back. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Members statements, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement 140-13(7): Dynamics of a Small Sized Legislature

MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did not make a Members' statement earlier, but there was something that was going through my mind but I had not had a chance to prepare it and put it on paper. Mr. Speaker, an interesting observation now comes to light with the event of division and ten Members gone from this House. What we are left with is 14 Members in the west, and there has been very much debate and discussion on the issue of the number of Members that it would take to effectively run this Legislature after division. It was something that was talked about at the time of the electoral boundaries and has been talked about several times since. So now we have had an opportunity to see how the

operations of this government works with 14 Members. Mr. Speaker, I think that it has probably become obvious to some

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people that certain scenarios can occur when you only have 14 Members, a scenario whereby unforeseen circumstances will take Ministers and Ordinary Members out of the House, a situation which can actually result in, for something as important as budget consideration in the committee of the whole where you could have as few as three or four Members on this side of the House and we would have what they have in other jurisdictions in Canada which would be a majority government and a minority opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to draw this to the attention to Members of this House and to the members of the public that it can have a significant impact and change very much the way that this government does business when that situation arises. It is not something that has ever happened in the past. It is a significant change in the way that the consensus government, as we have known it in the past, has worked with a majority of Ordinary Members and a minority of Cabinet, which we refer to as the government. I just wanted to bring that observation to light today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Members statements. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Mr. Steen.

ITEM 13: TABELING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 34-13(7): Government of the Northwest Territories, Office of the Fire Marshal, 1998 Annual Report

HON. VINCE STEEN:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Government of the Northwest Territories Office of the Fire Marshal, 1998 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Mr. Roland.

Tabled Document 35-13(7): Terms of Reference - Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Terms of Reference, Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Erasmus.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 19-13(7): Tabled Document 31-13(7) To Committee of the Whole

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River, that Tabled Document 31-13(7) entitled Report to the Minister of Public Works and Services, April 15th, 1999, regarding issues raised in the Report of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, be moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, I notice a change in your motion. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? Motion is carried. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in the committee of the whole of bills and other matters, Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

I call the committee of the whole to order. Before the committee today, for consideration, we have Bill 17 and Committee Report 1-13(7). What is the wish of the committee for today? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In continuation of consideration of the Main Estimates, we would like to

proceed with the Legislative Assembly followed by Health and Social Services following a short break.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):

Thank you. We will resume after a short break.

--Break

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

I would like to call the committee to order. We are dealing with the Main Estimates for 1999-2000. The budget for the Legislative Assembly. I would like to ask on behalf of the Speaker, if the Deputy Speaker, Mr. Krutko, has any opening comments.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and honourable Members, I am pleased to present the 1999-2000 Main Estimates for the Legislative Assembly that will take us into the new millennium. It has been a long time getting to where we are today, as we have been working through the difficult task of division for years. This historic moment has passed and we can, as an Assembly, focus on our planning for the future. It is time to focus on the Northwest Territories as we know it now. We might be smaller in land and water mass and a smaller Legislature, but we still have many of the same problems to deal with. As elected leaders, we must have the individual and collective resources to help us do our jobs.

Mr. Chairman, the Main Estimates before committee today are for \$11.618 million in operations and maintenance and \$450,000 in capital for a total appropriation of \$12.068 million. We have endeavored to ensure our Main Estimates more accurately reflect our financial needs. At the time our estimates were prepared the direction and best approach was to reduce the estimates to reflect a 14 Member Assembly for the next fiscal year. Any resulting changes to the number of Members will have to be reflected in supplementary funding during the next fiscal year.

This size of the Legislature dictates the resources, financial and human, required to serve the House, committees, Members'

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services and to operate the Legislative Assembly Building. Again, at this stage, without knowing the structure of committees and Cabinet, it would still be difficult to deal with the human resources required. Some certainty as to the operational structures will be required so that we can bring some stability to the staffing of the Office of the Clerk. Mr. Chairman, I have asked the Clerk to initiate a renewed focus on the management of the human resources at the Legislative Assembly. To that end, a number of elements to arrange human resources are being put into the plan for the Legislative Assembly. The elements of the plan will include a performance development system, succession planning, affirmative action, pay for performance and other accountability and performance measurements.

Mr. Chairman, two Youth Parliaments are planned for this year. Youth from across the Northwest Territories will be able to take advantage of this exciting educational vehicle. Our leaders of the future will have the opportunity to participate and gain a greater knowledge of our Assembly and legislative process. In addition, we are also planning an Elders Assembly for later this year as the Member for Hay River referred to in her Member's statement yesterday. We will also be developing an Art Acquisition Program for the Legislative Assembly building to reflect the rich heritage in the west.

Mr. Chairman, the interim political structure for the first half of the budget year, modernization of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, a general election in the fall of 1999, and to top it off, establishing and celebrating our identity as a new Territory will all impact on our operations over the next year. The modernization of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act will include the recommendations of the Conflict of Interest Review Panel and the establishment of a global constituency operating budget and salary for MLAs elected to the 14th Assembly. This concludes my opening remarks and I will be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Are there any comments on behalf of the committee? Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your indulgence, I would be pleased to give the report of the standing committee on the 1999-2002 business plans and the main estimates for the Legislative Assembly.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Please proceed, Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The activity structure of the Legislative Assembly establishes the accountability framework for the Office of the Legislative Assembly. The program delivered by the Office of the Legislative Assembly is divided into five ongoing activities: Office of the Speaker, Office of the Clerk, expenditures on behalf of Members, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and Commissioner of Official Languages. The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Commissioner and Conflict of Interest Commissioner are included in the Office of the Clerk.

At the time the 1999-2002 business plans and the 1999-2000 main estimates for the Legislative Assembly were being developed, the number of Members in the 14th Assembly was undetermined. The business plan utilized a 17 Member Assembly for its projections and the main estimates were developed on the basis of a 14 seat Assembly. With the formation of two new Territories, there will be a reduction in the overall operations and maintenance. The amount of this decrease is difficult to forecast, as the number of seats in the Assembly has not been finalized. The recent Conflict of Interest Inquiry has been concluded. All parties had until December 15, 1998 to submit their invoices. The financial details of the Conflict of Interest Inquiry have been covered in the Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 5, 1998-99.

A review of the Legislative Assembly in regard to Year 2000 compliance has been completed. The review concluded that neither performance nor functionality would be affected by dates before, during and after the year 2000. The review further indicated that the telephone system must be replaced; the cost of which is \$56,000. Recabling will result in one outlet handling all electronic linkages and allow for video-conferencing. The total funding for this project is \$230,000 which will be spent over the years 1998-1999 and 1999-2000.

The Assembly is following the government policy of no more layoffs until further notice. It is difficult to predict precise staffing requirements as the number of Members in the Assembly has not been finalized. The eventual committee structure and the workload of Members are also undetermined. This may result in either an increase or a decrease in the number of staff. In the review of the main estimates, committee Members requested that the Legislative Assembly try to hire aboriginal individuals to fill summer student positions.

Members noted that there was a lack of measurable indicators in the presentation of the business plans. In order to have a fair and consistent evaluation there must be discernible performance measures for Assembly goals and strategies. Without these measurements, it may be difficult for future Assemblies to evaluate progress. However, staff noted that it is difficult to establish measures as the political landscape changes frequently and the Legislative Assembly must be flexible to accommodate this.

During the review of the Main Estimates, the Members were informed that the Speaker has plans for an arts policy to be developed for the Legislative Assembly. This would enable outstanding works of art from the new Northwest Territories to be exhibited in the building. The committee expressed support for the policy but suggested cultural activities, such as drumming, should also be included.

A Youth Parliament Program has been started at the Legislative Assembly. The first program, with Yellowknife students, will be held in April. The second program, with students from throughout the Northwest Territories, will be held in May. The staff are also working on an Elders Parliament. This will be the first program of its kind in Canada.

Not included in the Main Estimates are amounts for the purchase of video-conferencing units. The Assembly will be requesting money to purchase one portable and one stationary unit. This initiative will be a joint venture with the Departments of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Health and Social Services, and the Financial Management Board

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Secretariat. The stationary unit will be located in the Assembly building.

The Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories has provisions for mandatory review every ten years. According to the Act, the Legislative Assembly or a committee designated or established by the Legislative Assembly, shall review the provisions and operations of the Official Languages Act. This review is to be done at the next session following December 31, 2000. Presently the Languages Commissioner presents her business plans and Main Estimates directly to the committee. The budget for this office falls under that of the Speaker. The committee questions the rationale as to why the Languages Commissioner presents her business plans and Main Estimates to the committee and not to the Speaker. The committee felt that this protocol should be reviewed in the near future. Mr. Chairman, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee of Government Operations on the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. I would like to recognize Mr. Erasmus to present the report of the Languages Commissioner which is part of the Assembly's main estimates and part of the committee report for the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the mandate of the Languages Commissioner is to ensure the recognition of the rights, status and privileges of each of the official languages. The Languages Commissioner ensures compliance with the spirit and intent of the Official Languages Act in the administration of government institutions, including any of their activities relating to the advancement of the aboriginal languages in the territories. The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, under the Official Languages Act, appoints the Languages Commissioner. The four-year term of the current Languages Commissioner will end on May 31, 2000.

The preservation, promotion and development of aboriginal languages in the Northwest Territories are fundamental to the retention of aboriginal cultures. The committee noted that there are a number of northern aboriginal languages that are on the verge of extinction and felt that the government must assume a more proactive approach. With the dissolution of the Language Bureau, there has been a lack of organization and direction in the promotion, development, and preservation of aboriginal

languages. The committee Members noted that the disbanding of this unit may have been premature and it may be necessary to revive it. The committee expressed discontent with the lack of consultation between language communities, language services of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Languages Commissioner's Office. This lack of consultation leads to the inefficient use of funds, duplication of roles, and the absence of a cohesive approach for aboriginal languages. The Languages Commissioner presented three initiatives in her 1999-2000 business plan.

The first initiative was the development of a media strategy to link communities with the Office of the Languages Commissioner. The second initiative was to host a languages conference to prepare for the upcoming review of the Official Languages Act. The third initiative was to establish an advisory council to the Office of the Languages Commissioner. In her presentation to the committee during the review of the Main Estimates, the Languages Commissioner reported that she has dropped the first initiative from her agenda but wishes to proceed with the remaining two. Further, in the review of the Main Estimates, the Languages Commissioner readjusted the cost estimates for the conference from \$95,000 to \$150,000.

The committee acknowledges the value of the remaining two initiatives, however, further planning, intergovernmental consultations, and a more realistic budget must be developed to ensure the success of these initiatives. The committee recommends that the Languages Commissioner and the language services unit of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment meet to collaborate and coordinate efforts in the development of an aboriginal languages advisory council and a conference to prepare by review of the Northwest Territories Official Languages Act. The meeting should occur without delay and a progress report should be presented to the committee.

Mr. Chairman, under financial planning, the committee Members noted incongruities between expenditures and budget allocations of the Office of the Languages Commissioner. The committee acknowledges that financial reporting guidelines are sometimes difficult to fulfil without qualified staff and suggest that the commission better utilize the financial services supplied by the Legislative Assembly. The committee requested the Languages Commissioner to re-examine and further substantiate her office's proposed budget. Under review of the Northwest

Territories Official Languages Act, Mr. Chairman, presently the Department of Executive is responsible for the Official Languages Act. Under these auspices, a minister of the Executive Council is assigned the responsibility for overseeing the act. However, the budget of the Languages Commissioner is allocated to the Legislative Assembly. Further, the Legislative Assembly is responsible for review of the act after December 31, 2000.

Currently, one department executive oversees the act. Another department, mainly the Legislative Assembly, is responsible for the delivery of support services to the office. A third department, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for the promotion of official languages and the employment of language programs. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, in the role as a Member of the Executive Council, has been assigned the responsibility of overseeing the act. As a result, responsibilities are blurred.

One of the responsibilities of the Office of the Languages Commissioner is to ensure compliance of government with the spirit and intent of the act including any activities relating to the advancement of the aboriginal languages in the Territories. This means that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, in his role as Minister responsible for Official Languages, is also responsible for ensuring that his department complies with the spirit of the act. The Northwest Territories Official Languages Act is due to be reviewed in the first session after December 31st, 2000. As part of the review, the committee recommends that the role and mandate of the Languages Commissioner be examined and that the relationship between the Languages Commissioner and the various government departments be clarified.

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Committee Motion 18-13(7): Coordination of Efforts Between the Department of ECE and the Languages Commissioner (LA)

Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Languages Commissioner and the Language Services Unit of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment meet to collaborate and coordinate efforts in the development of an aboriginal languages advisory council and a conference to prepare for the review of the Northwest Territories Official Languages Act.

And further, that the meeting should occur without delay and a progress report should be presented to the Standing Committee on Government Operations. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Erasmus.

Committee Motion 19-13(7): Clarification of the Languages Commissioner's Mandate (LA)

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the role and mandate of the Languages Commissioner be examined and that the relationships between the Languages Commissioner and various government departments be clarified as part of the review of the Northwest Territories Official Languages Act which is required to occur at the next session after December 31, 2000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. There is a motion. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. I would like to call on Mr. Krutko, the Deputy Speaker on behalf of the Speaker, if he would like to bring in witnesses.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Yes, I would.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms then to bring in the witnesses. Mr. Krutko, could I ask you to introduce the witnesses please?

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Mr. Chairman, to my left I have Mr. Hamilton, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. To my right is Myles Moreside, director of corporate services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Are there general comments or questions by the Members on the Legislative Assembly? Do you wish to proceed to the detail of the estimates?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 1-9, Office of the Clerk, operations and maintenance, \$6.564 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Office of the Clerk, details of capital, land and buildings. Total headquarters region, \$450,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total land and buildings, \$450,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total capital \$450,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 1-13, Office of the Speaker, operations and maintenance, \$150,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 1-15, Expenditures on behalf of Members, operations and maintenance, \$3.453 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, operations and maintenance, \$1.106 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 1-19, Commissioner of Official Languages, operations and maintenance, \$345,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 1-20, information item, active positions. Any questions? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 1-21, details of work performed on behalf of others. Total department, \$65,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Back to program summary, page 1-7. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you missed my hand up on that detail of work performed on behalf of others. Could I get some explanation on the \$65,000 as it has got to do with the Nunavut election? Is this after the fact? Could we have some clarification? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Krutko.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we have the person sitting next me who is in charge of elections, I will allow Mr. Hamilton to answer that question.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

Mr. Chairman, yes, Members will note that there are two amounts. One was \$649,000. That was for 1998-1999 which was the agreement between the Government of Canada and the Legislative Assembly to conduct the first election for Nunavut. The \$65,000 remaining for this fiscal year is to cover off the official report that is required to be made to the Nunavut Legislative Assembly on the conduct of its election and also covers the cost of potential investigations and prosecutions under the Elections Act for infractions under the act. That is what the \$65,000 is to cover in this fiscal year, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for greater clarity, this \$65,000 is recoverable? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Hamilton.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton):

This item in the budget is under Vote 4 and 5 which is a contribution from the Government of Canada, so the total amount of \$714,000 that covers the first election, this is why it is under work performed on behalf of others. It is an agreement. This money is coming from Canada.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Hamilton. Further questions? Details of work performed on behalf of others. Total department, \$65,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Back to the program summary, page 1-7. Operations and maintenance, \$11.618 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Capital, \$450,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total expenditures, \$12.068 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

I want to thank Mr. Krutko and his witnesses for appearing before us today. Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Per the previous agreement, we will deal next with the Department of Health and Social Services, and I will call on the Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Roland, to see if he has opening comments.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 1999-2000 Main Estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. The Main Estimates are based on the strategic plan and business plan presented to the Western Caucus last November. The department continues to work towards an integrated system of care that meets the needs of northerners and is financially sustainable. Our success depends upon effective collaboration with boards and professional associations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

Across Canada, there is serious public concern about the future of our national health care system. In the NWT, we face many of the same pressures. Some of these challenges include a shortage of nurses, physicians and social workers; an aging population; a high birth rate; an increase in preventable conditions and diseases; an increased reliance on rapidly changing and expensive technology and new drugs; and increased public expectations.

These are just some of the factors that are driving up costs. Unless these pressures are addressed, health care costs and social services pressures can be expected to increase. We need to take bold steps today to ensure that we will have an effective health and social services system in the NWT in the future.

Part of the answer lies in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our health and social services system but perhaps the greatest challenge is finding ways to divert limited resources from acute care to prevention and early intervention.

The department is requesting a total of \$166.466 million for 1999-2000. Key features of the Main Estimates. Over \$1.8 million has been committed to the ongoing implementation of the recruitment and retention strategy announced earlier this year. The strategy has three key goals: developing a northern health and social services workforce; stabilizing the health and social services workforce; and increasing competencies in the northern health and social services workforce.

Developing a northern workforce is a long term goal. The department has partnered with Aurora College, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the NWT Registered Nurses Association to increase opportunities for Northerners to train as nurses. We are also expanding and revising our northern nursing programs to ensure that our graduates have the skills they need to deliver high-quality care to our people.

The government has also allocated an additional \$3 million over the next two years for the recruitment and retention of nurses. As outlined in my earlier Minister's statement on this matter, Canada faces a national shortage of nurses. Additional funding is urgently required to ensure that the Northwest Territories is able to compete for a diminishing pool of nurses.

Medical travel continues to be an integral part of our delivery system. The budget includes a \$500,000

increase in medical travel, or about 8 percent. The boards are looking at ways to contain these costs and are working together to find system-wide solutions. Physicians continue to play a vital role in our delivery system. Over the past several years, the NWT Medical Association has voluntarily agreed to decreases in the fee schedule in response to fiscal restraint. The current fee schedule will be renegotiated in 1999-2000.

A number of commitments have been made to help improve the health and well-being of northerners, including the development of new strategies for health promotion, mental health and services to children and youth. A new territorial health promotion strategy will focus on healthy pregnancies, tobacco

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harm reduction and cessation and active living.

It is often said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This is especially true when it comes to children. New research about brain development in infants and children tells us that the first five years of a child's life are the most critical. Preventing Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect must be a priority. In human terms, the cost of FAS and FAE cannot be measured. In financial terms, the costs are also great. The number of children who require special needs assistance in our schools is rising, as is the number of children who will require a lifetime of institutional care and community support. Mr. Chairman, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect are completely preventable and we must do more to help ensure all babies are born healthy.

Mr. Chairman, there is a lot of concern in our communities about cancer. Unfortunately, most of the cancers we see in the NWT are tobacco-related. Tobacco is also linked to a number of illnesses in children. The benefit of smoke-free homes and smoke-free public places where children are present cannot be overstated. Our health promotion strategy will address tobacco use in two ways: reducing the harm caused by tobacco and helping people stop smoking.

The third thrust of the health promotion strategy is active living. We look forward to partnering with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, boards, and communities to promote the benefits of exercise. Mr. Chairman, northern people were always very physically active. Today, like other Canadians,

northern people do not always get the exercise they need to prevent illnesses and stay healthy. Many of our traditional activities, like fishing and hunting, not only provide good physical exercise in the great outdoors, but also an opportunity for families to have fun together. Mr. Chairman, as the father of six children, I believe that strong families are the key to healthy communities. Without good parents and healthy homes, the programs governments provide have a very limited benefit.

The Strategic Investment Fund will continue this year with an investment of \$1.5 million. This fund helps boards invest in community initiatives that focus on health promotion, early intervention and prevention activities. I am pleased to report that many of the community projects funded in the past have focused on parenting and early childhood activities. Investments in these areas will reap long term benefits by building healthy families and communities, and by preventing diseases and thus avoiding costly interventions. The rules for the Strategic Initiatives Fund will change this year, making the funding more accessible to boards.

Care and protection of children and youth is a continuing concern. An additional \$1.2 million has been allocated to meet the growing demand for foster care services and for sending youth to treatment facilities in southern Canada. The social envelope departments are working together on an integrated strategy for children and youth. The strategy will establish baseline information on the health and social status of northern children so that we will have benchmarks against which to measure progress. The strategy will also identify cost-effective improvements to programs and services for children and youth. The approach will be evidence-based, drawing on the experience and research on best practices undertaken in other jurisdictions in Canada and internationally.

Moving to the capital side of the budget, minor capital is proposed to increase by \$3 million. Part of this investment will be spent to develop and implement a comprehensive capital planning system for both equipment and buildings. The results of this work will allow the boards and the department to better forecast capital replacement needs in future years. It will also ensure that limited capital dollars are spent where most required.

Work is progressing on schedule with the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Centre replacement project. As this project is being

developed under the P3 policy, no funding is requested in the Main Estimates. The Main Estimates also include funding for work on children's facilities in Fort Smith and in Yellowknife. These projects will be further elaborated once a review of children's programs and services, now underway, has been completed in the fall.

Mr. Chairman, earlier today I announced a Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services in the Northwest Territories. This forum will build on the strategic plan released last spring. The goal of the review is to find ways to ensure the sustainability of our health and social services system. Northerners generally have good access to good care, but demands and needs are growing. At the same time, our ability to meet those demands is challenged.

In addition to the fiscal realities outlined by the Finance Minister in the Budget Address, the system faces many challenges. The national shortage of nurses has resulted in high turnover and high vacancy rates, particularly at the community level. We also see alarming increases in the number of preventable illnesses and conditions, some of which are very costly to address, in both human and financial terms.

Mr. Chairman, I want to once again be very clear and upfront with the Members of this House and with the public. This forum is not a fishing expedition to raise public expectations that we can get more money for health and social services. The focus of the forum will be how to preserve the sustainability of the health and social services system.

There is a need for a review of spending practices in the entire health and social services system to ensure we are obtaining optimal value for our expenditures. As part of the review, information about health and social trends and cost-drivers will be shared with the public, so that we can have an informed and constructive discussion about how to ensure the sustainability of the health and social services system.

Mr. Chairman, I am confident that with continued good cooperation and support of all of our partners, the boards, the professional organizations, communities, non-government organizations and the social envelope departments, we can continue to have an excellent health and social services system in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Are there comments on behalf of the standing committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

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MRS. GROENEWEGEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will start to read these comments. If I cannot continue, I will have to call for a quorum. The Standing Committee on Social Programs met on November 25 and 26, 1998, to consider the business plan for the Department of Health and Social Services and again on March 15, 1999, to consider the 1999-2000 draft Main Estimates for the department.

The Department's business plan shows a high degree of correlation to the recent departmental strategic planning exercise. Committee Members were impressed with the linkages that the department showed between its strategic directions and government and departmental goals. Committee Members were, however, disappointed in the lack of detail provided by the department as to how it intends to measure success in meeting its stated goals. Without knowledge of the starting points and definable targets, the committee, and indeed the department, has no method of measuring its success in meeting stated goals and objectives.

The committee noted in the 1999-2000 draft Main Estimates an increase of \$4.605 million in operations and maintenance over the numbers contained in the business plans, and a \$541,000 decrease in capital attributable to the postponement of major code upgrades and renovations until after the assessment is done during the upcoming fiscal year. Cost of administration. Committee Members, expressed concern during the business plan review that administration costs must not increase. In the view of committee Members the present level of spending on administration is approaching the maximum and no increases should be contemplated without corresponding increases to actual program spending.

Committee Members continue to be concerned that administration costs within the social program envelope be kept as low as possible. With the inability of the committee to examine the government-funded administration costs at the board level during the business planning and Main Estimates review process, there are concerns that the true cost of administration for the department is hidden at the board level. Committee Members would have greater

faith in the Minister's assertions that administration costs are kept as low as possible if they could examine the board's annual reports at some point during the business plan or Main Estimates review process.

Level of detail on territorial-wide treatment programs. Many of the programs of the Department of Health and Social Services are administered at the headquarters level as opposed to the board level. Some activities such as the Northern Addiction Services and the Community Wellness Programs are hidden within one all-encompassing line item in the Main Estimates. Committee Members, while understanding the accounting principles that make this an acceptable practice, would like to see greater detail included as an appendix to the Main Estimates.

Recruitment and Retention Program. The committee understands that this activity is just in the process of being established. In these days of increased competition for health care professionals, it is vitally important to the health and welfare of all residents of the Northwest Territories that the government does all that it can to recruit and retain qualified personnel. Committee Members would appreciate updates on this activity as plans are formulated.

Integrated strategy for children and youth. Committee Members are very interested in the progress the departments in the social program envelope make on establishing baselines and identifying cost-effective improvements to services for children and youth. While committee Members can understand the need for extensive consultation with the health boards, there is a concern that the process will take so long as to be virtually impossible to implement for the next business plan. Committee Members have expressed their dissatisfaction in the past with the lack of identifiable targets for many of the programs that they examined during the business plan review. Members are disappointed that they will have no opportunity to examine any of the results of this strategy during the life of this Assembly. It is, however, important that any progress made on the Integrated Strategy for Children and Youth is incorporated into next year's business plan and Main Estimates review process.

Treatment centres. Committee Members believe that the current departmental review of the activities of the Northern Addictions Services is crucial to the long term success of addictions programming in the Northwest Territories. Members are concerned, however, that as a result of the review of the treatment centre at Detah, more program space for

addiction treatment will disappear. Committee Members would like to remind the department that this activity has already experienced significant reductions in funding during the forced budget cutting exercise that occurred early in the life of this Assembly. Committee Members are of the opinion that we cannot afford to lose another treatment centre. Members also believe that the department, in its review, must look at holistic approaches to addiction treatments as opposed to the current 28-day based programs. The root causes of addiction must also be examined and practical solutions effected.

Long term care bed shortage. Committee Members are concerned there is a developing shortage of long term care beds in the communities of the Northwest Territories. It is vitally important that the department develop a strategy to deal with the developing bed shortage. Committee Members look forward to being apprised on future initiatives and strategies in this area.

Child Welfare Information System. The Child Welfare Information System does not accurately track the number of children in care. The department has admitted that the system does not meet the needs of the program. This has been a major concern of the Standing Committee on Social Programs since the beginning of its mandate three and a half years ago. Committee Members were pleased to hear that the Child Welfare Information System will be finally developed and implemented over the upcoming fiscal year.

Tobacco cessation programming and BC lawsuit. Committee Members believe strongly that the Government of the Northwest Territories should join in with British Columbia's lawsuit against the tobacco companies. It is felt that any monies realized from the successful conclusion of this suit could be used to combat smoking in the Northwest Territories, particularly among our young people. The committee looks forward to seeing the statistics on smoking in the new NWT compared to other Canadian jurisdictions. Members of the committee also feel that any smoking cessation programs developed by the department

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should contain provisions for assisting with the cost of products designed to help the smoker quit. Members believe that spending money now on products that help northerners break the grip of nicotine will translate into reduced costs to the health care

network later on in the smokers' lives. The committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories join with British Columbia in pursuing a lawsuit against the tobacco companies to attempt to recover the extra costs to the social envelope caused by dealing with the long term effects of smoking to northerners.

The committee recommends that any smoking cessation program developed by the department include provisions for assisting with the cost of products designed to help smokers quit.

Informatics. Committee Members believe that there is an opportunity to develop common computer programs and platforms in conjunction with other departments in the social programs envelope. The departments serve a common client base and should be able to develop a system that allows for multi-departmental access but restricts the information the user can access on the client. Committee Members understand that there are policy and legislative reasons for the department's reluctance to co-operate in the development of common computer systems. However, in light of the major policy reform initiative recommended by the committee elsewhere in this report, this may be an opportune time to also examine the development of common computer systems.

Committee Members were pleased that the Department of Health and Social Services is examining the Yukon computer system that is being adopted by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Committee Members would like to be apprised on the department's evaluation of the Yukon system. The committee recommends that the department work in conjunction with other government departments, particularly with those in the social programs envelope, to develop common computer systems and platforms.

Cooperation with other departments. Committee Members feel that the relationships between departments in the social programs envelope are not as fully developed as they should be. Many of the government's goals will require a high level of cooperation if any measurable results are to be achieved. Programs that are designed in isolation from other departments could create situations where one department's program is at direct cross-purposes to another, while in fact both programs were designed to meet the same government goal. When the Department of Health and Social Services talks of encouraging physical activity in children, it is apparent to committee Members that the department must work

in concert with Education, Culture and Employment and Municipal and Community Affairs to develop relevant programming and services to address the issue.

Committee Members believe strongly that regardless of any confidentiality or proprietary concerns, there is an opportunity for the departments in the social envelope to work together to develop a common tombstone computer system, that would allow selective access to data to track the common client base. This would include the removal of policy and legislative roadblocks. The Committee recommends that the departments in the social envelope work together in greater cooperation in developing programming that meets the needs of northerners and accomplishes the government's stated goals.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Erasmus, would you continue.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

Health and Social Services board issues. Committee Members wish to encourage the department in cooperating with the regional health and social services boards to develop a formula-financing agreement that meets the needs of boards in delivering services to northerners. Committee Members were pleased by the department's efforts to improve the quality and quantity of support to the regional boards. It was felt that an improved support structure at the headquarters level would result in less interference by the department in board affairs at a later date. A central contact point for the boards should make it easier for them to get quick answers to crucial questions.

It was also felt by committee Members that the boards and the department have to do a better job in communicating to people and families that they have to take responsibility and ownership in meeting their own health issues. Northerners have to be educated as to the long term health consequences for engaging in high-risk behaviors. Committee Members encourage the department to develop preventive strategies that would lessen the impact of high-risk behaviors on the social programs envelope.

Mr. Chairman, under Human Resources. The department's Human Resource Strategy focuses on how the department will deal with the health care

personnel shortage in the smaller communities. The hiring of a retention and recruitment specialist and the development of nursing programs in northern colleges are a good start in dealing with the health care personnel shortage. Committee Members were disappointed in the lack of detail on affirmative action. The business plan process is one of the few opportunities that the committees have to gauge the success of the department's efforts in meeting the government's overall goal of building a representative workforce. The committee appreciated being provided with a further breakdown on affirmative action by employee task or occupation.

Committee Members realized that these are trying times for all departments and appreciated the candor the Minister and the deputy minister showed during the business plan review in admitting that not all positions in the department had a job description. The committee was pleased to note that the job descriptions were completed by March 31, 1999.

Repatriation of northerners from southern institutions and facilities. The committee encourages the department to repatriate northerners presently institutionalized in southern medical care facilities to ones in the north wherever possible. It is felt that it might be possible to realize savings to the government through reduced payments to other jurisdictions and provide an environment for patients that encourages greater contact with their families and communities.

Children in care. Committee Members were concerned that with the exposure of systemic abuse within the residential school system, similar conditions may have existed for past permanent

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wards under the Child Welfare Act. Committee Members feel that given the similarities between group homes and residential schools, it is only a matter of time before cases are made public. The department should develop a contingency plan to deal with this in co-operation with other departments in the social envelope.

Probation services. The decision by the Department of Justice to develop a stand-alone probation service should bode well for social services workers in the Northwest Territories. Combined with the income support worker administering income support, this should allow the social worker to make more home visits and spend more time on individual files.

Committee Members believe that this will result in better service to the clientele and more made in the community solutions by the social worker. In addition, social workers should be able to supervise more special needs cases in their home communities, without having to refer the clients to outside resources or southern facilities.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes the report of the standing committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Erasmus.

Committee Motion 20-13(7): Support for the BC Lawsuit Against Tobacco Companies (H&SS)

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories join with British Columbia in pursuing a lawsuit against the tobacco companies to attempt to recover the extra costs to the social envelope caused by dealing with the long term effects of smoking to northerners. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when I see this motion I am not sure whether I can support the principle that tobacco companies from the profits that they have made should take the responsibility and help with the health problems that they have contributed towards. At the same time I think we are all very aware of what amounts of financial resources that it takes to go to court and the length of time it takes. Although we do not have a guesstimate of what types of money we are going to spend to try and obtain these funds, I would ask the mover of the motion to give some indication of what types of scarce financial resources he would be encouraging the government to commit to a project like this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Does the mover wish to speak to this? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whatever it costs. In the United States several state governments went together and started a lawsuit and if I remember correctly, I think they received a couple of billion dollars in an out-of-court settlement with the tobacco companies and I suspect that a similar thing might happen here. Considering the amount of dollars that we have to spend dealing with ailments caused by smoking, we know that we probably have the highest rate of smokers in Canada and this causes harm particularly to young children. They have hearing infections. Smoke inhalation causes damage to their lungs while they are still developing, and it causes a lot of long term effects. We also know that children start smoking at a very early age in the Northwest Territories. You can walk down the street any day and see a little kid smoking. The committee feels that it is time that the tobacco companies stood up and became responsible for the damage that they are causing to children and adults alike. Mr. Chairman, in response to the question, whatever resources it takes is what they should put into this endeavour. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Mr. Erasmus

Committee Motion: 21-13(7): Assistance for the Cost of Smoking Cessation Products (H&SS)

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that any smoking cessation program developed by the department include provisions for assisting with the cost of products designed to help smokers quit. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried. Mr. Erasmus.

Committee Motion: 22-13(7): Departmental Coordination to Develop Common Computer Systems and Platforms (H&SS)

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the department work in conjunction with other government departments and particularly with those in the social program envelope to develop common computer systems and platforms.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Erasmus.

Committee Motion: 23-13(7): Cooperation Between Social Envelope Department (H&SS)

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the departments in the social envelope work together in greater cooperation in developing programming that meets the needs of northerners and accomplishes the government's stated goals. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Does the Minister wish to bring in witnesses?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Does the committee agree to bring in witnesses?

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SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Mr. Roland, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my left is the Deputy Minister, Penny Ballantyne, and on my right is Warren

St. Germain, director of financial and management services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Are there any general comments on the department? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister, in his opening statement, had indicated that there are several factors that are driving up health care costs and that we need to take bold steps today to ensure that we will have an effective health and social services system in the future. That is definitely true. At the very start of this statement he indicated, is we have to find ways to divert limited resources from acute care to prevention and early intervention. Mr. Chairman, I believe we heard that last year. I was just wondering, is this not already underway? Have we not been working towards this for some time now? I am just wondering at the wording which says the greatest challenge is finding ways to divert limited resources. What I wanted to know is have we found ways to do this already and if we have, could we hear of some ways? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department has worked with the boards in the area of trying to address the concerns in the acute care program. The department feels that we have worked with the boards in trying to address those concerns, but those areas continue to put pressure on our existing budgets to maintain the level of service we provide. As I stated earlier as well in my opening comments, that some of the more expensive methods of intervening after certain health conditions have been arrived at are significant. One of the focuses we are trying to work on in the area of prevention is tobacco cessation and reduction. That is an area where the disease of cancer catches on and is directly linked to tobacco. Trying to step in and provide services at that point becomes very costly. This is one of the areas we are looking at and working with the boards in trying to come up with methods of addressing those increased driving costs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Further questions? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the area of staff recruitment, retention and training, the Minister spoke about the nurses' training program that is an ongoing program at Aurora College. I know that the program has been a two-year program but that in the south, most provinces are moving towards a three-year training requirement for their nurses. Could the Minister indicate whether our course is still a two-year training program or is it a three-year program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At present, the training we are involved with is still a two-year program. However, we are working with Aurora College and Education, Culture and Employment and the Nurses Association in trying to establish a full degree program here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Further questions? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there any indication of when the program may actually be implemented?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are going to be reviewing the plans for the fall of this year and hoping to implement and start the program in the year 2000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for that information. That is very good to know. I am pleased to hear that it is going to happen

that quickly. When the nursing graduates finish their training program, they have to get practicums. In the past, some of those graduates have experienced difficulties in getting practicum placements in the north. Has the department moved to assist graduates so that they are encouraged to do their practicums and to stay in the north after they have completed their courses? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department has been doing work in that area as well. We have worked with the Nurses Association to develop a mentoring program and continue to work with them in that area and finding mentors for the nurses that have recently graduated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Further questions? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Chairman, I am sorry, I did not quite hear the tail end of what the Minister said. Could he repeat the last part of his answer?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Could you repeat the last part of your answer, Mr. Minister, please?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will go even one step further. Mr. Chairman, as I said, with the mentoring program we have been involved with the Nurses Association. The department, along with the Nurses Association, have identified and continued to identify mentors for the graduates out of the nursing program who work with them through their practicum. So there is ongoing work in that area. Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Further questions? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does this include help assisting them to actually find places to do their practicum?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been told that we do work with boards to try and locate placements for the graduates. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Further questions, Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under medical travel I see that the Minister has included a half a million dollar increase in medical travel. Now the boards are looking at ways to contain these costs. Mr. Chairman, I understand that Nunavut was able to negotiate a deal with the airlines servicing Nunavut and they have been able to save a lot of money through that method. If they can do that in Nunavut truly we can do the same here. Have there been any efforts to try to do this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I stated we have been working with the boards and the boards have been working with each other to try and look at how they can contain these costs and still maintain quality service. There has been ongoing work in the area of medical travel with the boards and I think I can get Mr. St. Germaine to give us a bit more detail on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. St. Germaine.

MR. ST. GERMAINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The boards in the western Arctic have been working together to look at options for managing the medical travel including how they could look at ways to reduce costs. They contracted a consultant earlier this calendar year to help them with that review and they just recently received the

report and one of our recommendations is in fact to look at negotiating preferred rates or tendering for preferred rates with the commercial carriers. At this time they have not acted on this recommendation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus your time is up. Further questions from other Members? Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a short comment and a number of questions of the Minister. I will start at the end of the Minister's statement where he talked about where we continue to have an excellent health and social services system in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Chairman, I would be inclined to agree with the Minister, at least from my own experience. That is not to say that there are not problems that we can work on, and I think the Minister and the officials have recognized that with some of the initiatives that are being taken. I have not had a lot of personal contact but I have talked to some of the clinic operators in Yellowknife and they are very concerned with the shortage of doctors and their ability to attract doctors to the city and I believe that it is fair to say that there is a shortage at the present time. It is certainly not critical but there is a shortage and we have an excellent facility in the capital city which serves all of the Northwest Territories. I am a little concerned that if there is difficulty in attracting medical professionals to the north, that all of the territories will suffer by not having that expertise here. My first question to the Minister is could he tell me about any assistance or plans that the department has in place to assist clinics or hospital to attract medical staff to the north? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are as well concerned with the recruitment of new doctors to the whole Northwest Territories and we have committed to work with the Northwest Territories Medical Association to sit down and look at the specific areas where we feel it can be addressed to try and improve the outlook that lies before us when it comes to physicians in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Further questions? Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note in the Minister's opening remarks that he talks highly of the co-operation of all the partners. I also note in his statement where he points out, I believe, correct me if I am wrong, that the professional staff's doctors have not had a rate increase in a couple of years and if this is in fact correct, would this not be a good indication as to why it is so difficult to attract medical professionals to the north and what proactive steps is the Minister prepared to take rather than waiting for the Medical Association to maybe come and make the suggestion. Is the Minister prepared to take into consideration that compensation and the lack of any increases in the past three years may be strongly contributing to the lack of professionals here in the territories? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Medical Association, as stated in my Minister's statement, have voluntarily took some decreases when we were going through our reduction scenarios and we do recognize compensation is one of the factors but there are a number of other factors that are included in recruitment of doctors or keeping them here for long periods of time. For example, a clear majority of our doctors are from other jurisdictions and when they travel up here for long periods of time they at some point consider the placement or where they call home. So that is one of the factors and I think that is something we are trying to work on. The government as a whole is trying to have more professionals come through the system that are residents of the territories, born here so they do not feel the urge of moving on at some point. It is one of the concerns as I stated, it is one of a number of concerns and we are going to be meeting with the Medical Association to discuss the fee schedule in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not believe that

doctor recruitment was a major concern for a number of years and as I note the Minister pointed out, there was a rollback and there have been no increases for a couple of years and the Minister did mention that some of the doctors did choose to move on. I am sure that the incentive of higher remuneration did attract them in the first place, so I am wondering if that is not the main reason that we are not being able to attract more doctors to the north? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

I take it you are asking a question, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister do you wish to comment?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As stated earlier, remuneration or compensation packages for doctors are part of the concern which we have in recruiting new doctors to our territory. I do not believe it would be the main reason for it. It is a number of factors. We have had a stable physician group for a number of years. One of the concerns is as the physicians are moving on to retirement, finding younger replacement doctors who have young families coming to the north is a concern. We have tried to address that, for example, out of the Alberta Medical School we have purchased a seat at the University of Alberta to try and have northern doctors trained through that facility. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are the medical schools, or does the Minister have any information to say that the medical schools in Canada are producing less doctors than they were a few years ago? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the concerns throughout Canada is with the reduction phase that Canadians went through with the federal government

and the provinces, there has been a drop in potential graduates that would come through the system or entering into it. There has been a drop and there is a concern throughout Canada as to the number of physicians that will be available for Canadians. We are facing competition from other sectors in that area as well so it is a concern.

One of the areas in the Northwest Territories, it is a little more difficult to measure or try to receive numbers or get numbers on physicians because the majority of physicians in the Northwest Territories practice privately. Whereas for nurses, they are employees of the government and the boards so we can, with much work, pull the numbers together to track. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going on to comments on the Minister's opening remarks regarding care and protection of children and youth and I note the Minister has a continuing concern with that. I also note that there is an additional \$1.2 million being allocated to meet the growing demand of foster care services and youth treatment facilities. The \$1.2 million sounds like a lot of money. What is the amount of money spent in this particular area annually or what did we spend last year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would require a bit of detail so I will get the specialist on the finances for our department, Mr. St. Germaine, to answer that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. St. Germaine.

MR. ST. GERMAINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For children's services we have budgeted for 1999-2000 approximately \$6.4 million for children's services delivered by the health and social services boards and we have budgeted a further \$3.2 million for services provided by southern

institutions for children who are placed in the south for treatment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. St. Germaine. Mr. Henry, your time has expired. Are there further questions from Members? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as was indicated in the report of the standing committee the Members of the committee are concerned that the treatment centre known as Northern Addictions Services, the organization that operates it had been in trouble for a while and a lot of that was due to the way the department had changed its funding. They based it on per diems, the number of people who were in the treatment centre. Another factor that came into play was the fact that the Northern Addictions Services Board had to pay a mortgage for the building that they are operating out of and of course they had to pay maintenance and the rest of that and what I would like to know is whether the treatment centre on the Hay River Reserve known as Nats'ejee K'eh, is that a private facility that the people in the Hay River Reserve have to pay a mortgage for or did the government build that building through a grant? How does that work there? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The facility on the reserve in Hay River is a government-owned facility and, through the department, was built and the organization on the reserve runs the program on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories. I might point out that the changes that did occur, as the Member mentioned on the per diem rating, did happen at that facility as well. They have managed to sustain themselves throughout. There is still, I believe, a 50 percent core funding that was provided to the facilities and is maintained at that level. I am aware, as well, on the NAS facility, that a mortgage is held by the group out of the NAS board. As well, in that agreement, they did receive some assistance through the Housing Corporation on a 2 percent write-down, I believe.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Further questions? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The maintenance costs and the total operations and maintenance costs for Nats' Ejee K'eh operations and maintenance, are those costs covered through the per diems and the money that goes to the Nats' Ejee K'eh or does the government contribute in any way to the maintenance or the operation costs? Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am informed that we do not pay any extra above and beyond the per diem rates, so out of that they would take care of their operations and maintenance costs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does any government staff, say from Hay River, do any maintenance work on that building? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are not aware of any government staff providing maintenance for that facility on the reserve. We are not aware of that occurring. We would have to check into that and provide information back to the Member on it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate if we excluded the costs for the mortgage payments

that Northern Addictions Services has to make, how would that affect their budget? Would they still be in such dire financial straits? I imagine they would not be as bad, but they must pay a big mortgage, several thousand dollars a month. Could the Minister indicate how badly that mortgage affects them? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way the per diem structure was set up was to incorporate the costs of the facilities and to ensure that if they were, for example, to keep the facilities at 80 percent occupancy, that they would be able to maintain all of their costs and provide the services without running into any financial problems. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee's concern, as indicated in the report, is that this addiction treatment center should not disappear as a treatment center for alcohol and drug addiction. Could the Minister indicate what the plans are for this particular facility? Will it still remain as a treatment center, or is the focus going to change? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A review has been started regarding the NAS facility, at what reprofiling might occur. We, as a department, do not want to see a reduction in the drug and alcohol treatment facilities we have in the territories. We are looking at the NAS facility and looking at what can be done in the area of addictions treatment or other areas that we, as a department, feel we need to address concerns. There is ongoing work, at this time, to try and come up with a suitable solution to the concerns that are raised and the problems that have been ongoing for some time at the facility. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This review that is being done, there is an indication that it has not been completed yet. How long does the Minister think that this review will continue for?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The results of the work done to date were presented to the board of NAS and we are waiting for a response from them on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, your time is up. Are there further questions from Members? Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my time was up the last time around when I was talking about treatment centers. I would like to carry on from there, if I may. The Minister talked about sending youth to treatment facilities in southern Canada and the high cost of that. Is it more cost-effective to send our youth with problems south as opposed to treating them in the north? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department has been looking at, on an ongoing basis, repatriation of all the clients we have that are out-of-territory. We have been looking at the cost-effectiveness of having our own facilities versus sending our clients, as we would call them, to southern jurisdictions. Because our numbers are increasing for sending youth and children to southern facilities, we are looking at that once again as to the cost-effectiveness of that and looking at, whether it would indeed be more fiscally prudent to have facilities in the Northwest Territories and treat from within the territories instead of sending residents south. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What facilities are in the Territories presently offering services to youth? What treatment facilities are here? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are a number of facilities. We have Trail Cross, we have the Territorial Treatment Center. It depends on what level you want to go to, we have a number of group homes in the territories. And again, to the level you want to go to, we can include foster parents as well. It depends on what level you want to go to, to what degree of detail. There are a number of facilities in the territories that do take care of children in care. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It sounds like we have

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sufficient facilities, or I assume that we have sufficient facilities by the response of the Minister. My question is, why are we sending youth south? Is it that we do not have the expertise here? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the considerations that is taken into, whether we would keep the youth in the territories or send them to southern placements depends on the kind of treatment that would be required or the level of treatment. We are finding here in the territories that we do not have the highly specialized care that is required in a lot of these cases. As I said earlier, because we are finding that

the number of children we are sending to southern placements is increasing, we are coming to the point where we could provide those services in the north and have a level of specialty care up here that we could not provide in the past due to the numbers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, earlier today I had asked a question to the Minister, and I believe he indicated that he would have the information later on today, which hopefully is now, regarding the costs involved in having health boards in each of the regions in the territories. What is the direct cost to the government to have that function? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we would get into the detail of the budget, we would be able to give him an exact breakdown of what happens there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, hopefully I live that long. The Minister's forum is going out looking for feedback and he identified that it was not a fishing trip and I also agree with him that the system is probably good but needs changing. I would assume too that the Minister is intent on keeping the hospital and medical boards in place that are there now, so I would assume that he has a lot of faith in their abilities. I am wondering, was there any consideration given to, rather than a costly forum of which we do not know how much it is going to cost, but the last Minister's forum cost over \$300,000, so I would assume that it is going to be in that same range, was there any consideration given to bringing the representatives or the boards together for a conference? I note that the Minister is planning a conference at the end of the forum, but was there any consideration given to just

having a conference of the hospital or medical boards that are in the territories come together? I think they have identified over the last three years what the problems are. Was there any consideration given to that type of a forum as opposed to the travelling road show? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The boards do get together with department officials on a number of occasions to review ongoing concerns from their perspective. The Minister's forum that I am in the process of establishing and sending out is to review the concerns of the public in general, to inform them of our concerns and the cost-drivers we have within the system, as well as address the concerns raised of members in this forum. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Any further questions? Are you ready for detail? Page 6-9, directorate and corporate services, operations and maintenance, \$22.210 million. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering could the Minister indicate where in the budget the questions that I was looking answers for will be found so that we do not slip past them, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Would you be able to indicate that for Mr. Henry, Mr. Minister?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In fact, the contributions to boards is spread throughout the document, but for clarification on the question he raised earlier, the contributions to boards is in the area of \$116,000 which includes the capital. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for that. Of that \$116,000, how much does it cost to have the boards in place and administration of those boards? The information I am looking for, Mr. Chairman, is Nunavut are planning to disband their boards for a saving of \$4 million. I am wondering what the potential savings, if the crunch ever came, what could the Government of the Northwest Territories look at saving if a similar action is taken? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The administration at the board level would range, it all depends on how you would break out the numbers because I could give the Member a number, but it would include a number of activities or program delivery activities that we would not see a savings in if we were to compare ourselves to what Nunavut is doing. For example, if you worked on the numbers, we could be looking at, for example, \$7.6 million for all of the boards. Again, as I stated earlier, that includes program delivery portions of administration so, looking at that number and trying to compare it to Nunavut, we would not be comparing apples to apples, in a sense. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Further questions, Mr. Henry?

MR. HENRY:

Fine for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Erasmus, you had questions.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted clarification. The funding for the treatment centres, is that under the community health programs?

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For that level of detail, I will pass it on to my fine Deputy Minister, Ms. Penny Ballantyne.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Ballantyne.

MS. BALLANTYNE:

Yes, it is found in community health programs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, further questions? No. Okay, back to detail. Directorate and corporate services, operations and maintenance, \$22.210 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Directorate and corporate services, grants and contributions, contributions, \$2.376 million. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it was noted in the Budget Address by the Minister of Finance last week that the government intends to provide funding to establish a labour market supplement for nurses. The proposed objectives of this market supplement are to provide an incentive for current nurses to stay, to encourage new nurses to accept permanent full-time employment with health boards and to encourage northerners to pursue training for careers in nursing and in the medical field.

Committee Motion 24-13(7): Labour Market Supplement for Nurses

Therefore, I move that the amount of \$1.5 million be added to the operations and maintenance, Main Estimates of the Department of Health and Social Services under the activity, directorate and corporate services, grants and contributions, to provide funding to establish a labour market supplement for nurses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

Directorate and Corporate Services, grants and contributions, total contributions, as amended, \$3.876 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 6-13, Health Insurance Programs, operations and maintenance, \$30.993 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Health Insurance Programs, grants and contributions. Total contributions, \$5.479 million. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the supplementary health programs, has there been any change to the Metis Health Benefits Program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has not been a change in the program that has been administered by the department since the last change that happened which brings the level to 80 percent of the non-insured health benefits for status Indians and Inuit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could we get an indication of how someone establishes their eligibility for Metis health benefits? For instance, how long do they have to be in the territories before they are eligible for this?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In an agreement with the Metis organization, we have established that they would administer their enrolment and criteria that is met. They have managed that now since the program has been developed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Further questions? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the criteria, though? Can they just come in on a plane from Alberta and apply for Metis health benefits or do they have to be here from 1950? Can we get some indication, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. They developed a criteria for what they would consider to be enrolment as a Metis in the Northwest Territories. They, since the inception of the program, have monitored and developed guidelines that are fairly stringent, I believe, we have not seen, since the inception, a large increase in the total number of applicants that would use the system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Further questions? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is the Minister quibbling? Mr. Chairman, I have a copy of a page from Webster's dictionary and it says, quibble, an evasion or shifting from the point at issue. What I wanted to know is how long does a person have to be in the north before they are eligible for Metis health benefits? Maybe the Minister does not have that information at his fingertips.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try and reassure that the Member that in answering the question I have told him we do not develop the criteria, but we will endeavour to get that for the Member and provide it to him. On

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that, we would be able to get that, I believe, through the agreement that is in place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Further questions? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister had indicated that the agreement is with the Metis Nation, I believe. Are North Slave Metis and other Metis organizations that perhaps do not belong to the Metis Nation, are they also eligible for Metis health benefits?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The agreement is for the Metis in the Northwest Territories, so they would be eligible for it if they meet the criteria that have been set out. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Further questions? Health Insurance Programs, grants and contributions. Contributions, total contributions, \$5.479 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Primary and Acute Care Programs, operations and maintenance, \$76.630 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 6-19, Primary and Acute Care Programs, grants and contributions. Contributions, total contributions, \$76.455 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Primary and Acute Care Programs, details of capital. Contributions, headquarters, total headquarters region, \$4.5 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total contributions, \$4.5 million. Agreed? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The health care facility going into Inuvik, is that indicated in here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister, could you indicate where the Inuvik Health facility is indicated in the budget? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is under page 6-30, Public/Private Partnerships, in that area. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Primary and Acute Care Programs, details of capital. Contributions, headquarters, total headquarters region, \$4.5 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total contributions, \$4.5 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Land and buildings, headquarters, total headquarters region, \$550,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Fort Smith region, total Fort Smith region, \$975,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total land and buildings, \$1.525 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total capital \$6.025 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 6-22, children's programs, operations and maintenance, \$9.414 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 6-24, children's programs, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$7.116 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 6-25, children's programs, details of capital, land and buildings, headquarters region, total headquarters region, \$250,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total Fort Smith region, \$750,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total land and buildings, \$1 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Total capital, \$1 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS:

Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Page 6-27, community health programs, operations and maintenance, \$20.174 million. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister inform the committee if the rules or procedures for supporting non-profit community groups has changed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

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HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

No.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Further questions? Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had meetings with some of the groups that I believe the department

funds. They had concerns about service-based funding. Their main concern was that it had to be broken into so many different services that they offer that if they did not get one particular component of it, it threw their whole funding and services into chaos. I am wondering, the Minister was very emphatic that there was no change to the way these groups apply for their funding. I am just wondering if he could help shed some light on what the concerns would be from these groups like the Canadian Mental Health Association? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To be a little clearer on the answer I made earlier, with community-funded organizations or non-government organizations, they would apply for funding through the regional or local community boards. One change that has happened is Yellowknife now has a health board for the city of Yellowknife and funding from the community organizations or non-government organizations would be accessed through that board. The only ones that receive funding directly from the department are the territorial organizations. For more detail, I can get Ms. Ballantyne to respond.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Ballantyne.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Further questions? Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe most of these organizations, and we will use the Canadian Mental Health Association as an example, are they funded directly from the department or from the boards? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If they operate on a territorial-wide basis, they would receive their funding from the department. If they are a local mental health

association, they would apply to the board of the region or community. For example, the Canadian Mental Health Association proposal under the Community Wellness Program is in the range of \$140,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The NWT Mental Health Association has provided a service of a helpline for a number of years. I believe their fiscal year is the same as the government's, March 31st. Has their funding been approved or is it contingent on the approval of the department's budget? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As with all other funding that comes from this government, it is based on the approval of the budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, is there any possibility that consideration could be given to these agencies such as the Canadian Mental Health Association that provide extremely valuable services to people in the territories? Is there any way that special consideration could be given to those organizations by moving their year-end up three months ahead of what the government is so that they know what their funding is for at least three months? I understand that a lot of them are having great difficulty because when they find out when the funds have been committed by the government, it is usually well into time periods when they have had to make commitments on office space and other services. Is there any way that the department can look at working with these organizations that are providing a valuable service, certainly I would anticipate much cheaper than the government can do, if there is any way that they can be assisted in the financial crunch

that they run into at that time of the year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Within the existing guidelines that we have to operate under, we can work with the organizations to try and keep them in tune with what is occurring, but that would have to be within the existing guidelines we operate under as a government. If we were to pursue any further changes, we would have to get the Department of Finance involved to see what other processes can take place, but within what we have, I am sure we can work with them to some degree to try and notify them of any possible changes. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if the department would consider multi-year funding so that at least it would be an overlap, at least a couple of years, so they could work six months prior trying to get funding in place for an overlapping year. Would there be some consideration of that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the concerns we have as a department is in the area of trying to provide multi-year funding. For example, we have contributions with health boards, but they know that the level of funding they would receive would be dependent on the budget getting passed

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or if we were to get different targets as a department, we would have to reprioritize our initiatives. Multi-year funding, in that sense, would be a difficult process to commit to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have these voluntary groups that the department funds annually, were they taken into consideration when the departments put in for their interim appropriations because we are past our usual year-end of March 31st? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As is past practice with interim appropriations, what would happen is that a contract would be led into or an agreement would be put in place that would provide for three months of service. That would be the extent of it, knowing that the interim appropriation is only a portion of the budget and would include, for example, if there was a lot of capital, capital dollars would be approved probably on a slightly higher basis, but operations and maintenance would be, as we would enter into agreements, until this budget is passed, on a three month basis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Henry, your time is up. Questions? Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These boards of management threw me off. Does that include the health boards like the health and social services boards?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that includes the health boards. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board, for example, have a choice over which programs and services it wants to deliver?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The contribution agreements with the boards, in the agreements, it is established that they would deliver core services. Within that, though, they are allowed some flexibility as to how they would see those core services being delivered. Yes, they do have some flexibility, but they do have to meet the criteria when it comes to core services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Who figured out the core services? Who has determined what the core services are? Was this an agreement? Do they negotiate that at the beginning of their contract, or is this something that they have to agree with?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did not quite get the last portion of the Member's question, so if he could give it to me? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus, could you repeat your question please?

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I am wondering is has the government developed a set of what it calls core services and the health board has to take those or take nothing? Is that the way it works? Or can the board negotiate which services it wants to provide?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way it would work is the contribution would be entered into and they would, within that contribution, have to deliver all the services that would be included. They would not be able to pick and choose certain items which they felt they could deliver or leave others out of it. So, in fact, it is take it all or not be involved in it and let the department handle those services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am assuming that social workers are involved in this. In the past these people have been covered by what is called crown immunity and could not be sued. For instance, if they apprehended a child from somebody's home and the parents were upset, they could not sue the department or the social worker. Does this crown immunity extend to these health boards, particularly the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Erasmus. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is an area that I will have Ms. Ballantyne make the response to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Ballantyne.

MS. BALLANTYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we have been working with the boards on the issue of liability insurance for board members. In fact, there is a group effort among all the boards to ensure that the proper liability insurance is in place for boards. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This means that the crown immunity does not extend to the boards, is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would have to take that question under advisement and get some further clarification to that question. Right now, for example, employees with the boards still fall under the UNW agreement we have for all employees of the government. We will have to look at that and get back to the Member. Thank you.

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CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Erasmus.

MR. ERASMUS:

Mr. Chairman, the reason I am asking is because I have been informed by a person who went to a conference on this type of thing that whoever is in charge of the money has the liability, so once you transfer that money to the board, the immunity ends because the government no longer is spending that money, the health board is. I just wanted to bring it to the Minister's attention in case they have not looked at that particular issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Did you wish to comment, Mr. Minister?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As stated earlier, we will be looking into that question and coming up with a response for the Member. The boards are an agent of this government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Further questions? Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I ask the Minister how many organizations the department funds along the same lines as the NWT Mental Health

Association, the non-profit organizations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe we are looking at approximately five organizations that would deliver services on a territorial-wide basis. There are a large number of organizations and non-government organizations from our community level or regional level. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. Mr. Henry.

MR. HENRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was involved with one of these organizations some years ago. If my memory serves me correctly, it was reasonably complicated for non-professional people to provide the level of detail and criteria that were required by the department. I would draw it to the attention to the Minister that most of these organizations consist of volunteers, and the boards are volunteers and they do not necessarily have a lot of financial expertise available to them. If the boards have to employ some financial expertise to put these requests for proposals to the department, it takes away valuable funds that could be helping the board provide services to the groups they serve. I am wondering if the Minister would commit to, seeing as there is only a small number of them, five organizations, having his staff over the next year sit down with representatives from each of these five organizations and try and come up with something that would be reasonably straightforward and simple to make their application for funding.

I think it is fair to say that the department, with the resources they have and the personnel they have available to them, there is probably sufficient expertise there that they can and would be able to identify that the requests are reasonable even though they may not be in the exact detail the department requires. My question to the Minister is, would he consider sitting down with the representatives of these organizations, over the next year, to try and get something that is uniform and reasonably straightforward to fill out for funding? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Henry. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can look into trying to streamline the process. One of the things we have to be very aware of is any of the funding that we distribute out to, organizations are spending it on behalf of this government, and at the end of the day we are still accountable for those expenditures and delivery of programs to, for example, a majority of our funding comes from the federal government and we have to meet certain criteria as well. We will look at doing that with those concerns in mind. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you. I regret that I recognize the clock, and I will rise and report progress. I want to thank the Minister and his officials for appearing before us.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The House will come back to order. We are dealing with item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Ootes.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ootes):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 17 and Committee Report 1-13(7) and would like to report progress with seven motions being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you. Seconded by Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 14, notices of motion.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Minister is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 14. Are there any nays? We do not have any nays. Mr. Dent.

REVERT TO ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 20-13(7): Extended Adjournment

HON. CHARLES DENT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, honourable colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, April 30th, 1999, I will move the following motion.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife North, that notwithstanding rule 4, that when this House adjourns on Friday, April 30, 1999, it shall be adjourned until Monday, May 10, 1999;

And further, that any time prior to May 10, 1999, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon, the House shall meet at the time stated at such notice and it shall

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transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Dent. Notices of motions. 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, the meeting of the Standing Committee on Government Operations at 11:00 a.m. tomorrow.

Orders of the day for Thursday, April 29, 1999:

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 Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 18, Loan Authorization Act, 1999-2000
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 17, Appropriation Act, 1999-2000
 - Committee Report 1-13(7)
 - Tabled Document 31-13(7)
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned to Thursday, April 29, 1999, at 1:30 p.m.

--ADJOURNMENT