



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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**Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Monday, June 16, 2008**

Members Present

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Michael McLeod, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Hon. Norman Yakeleya.

The House met at 1:33 p.m.

Hydrate Research Program Team; and the Elders Wilderness Camp.

Prayer

Prayer.

Speaker (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the House. Orders of the Day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is currently undergoing some change in order to meet the vision and goals of this Assembly. Change is never easy or undertaken lightly, and we all recognize the work of the public service and wish to say "Thank you." Please join me in expressing appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the public service and in celebrating National Public Service Week.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 68-16(2)
NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE WEEK

Hon. Bob McLeod: Mr. Speaker, June 15 to June 21, 2008, has been designated as National Public Service Week. As the Minister of Human Resources for the Northwest Territories public service, it is my honour to stand in the House today to recognize the significant contributions made by the approximately 5,700 Government of the Northwest Territories public service employees.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Yakeleya.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 69-16(2)
SUMMER HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION 2008

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, someone once said that the North has two seasons. The first season lasts about nine months and is called the winter season. The second season is very short, lasting only about three months. This short season is called the road construction season.

It is public service employees who make it possible for the government to deliver services to the residents of the Northwest Territories. These services range from front-line health care to maintaining our highways to educating our children. As you can appreciate, delivering these services requires a great variety of skills on the part of public service employees. We have a public service that exhibits a high degree of professionalism and commitment to providing quality services to all residents of the Northwest Territories.

This road construction season, reconstruction, drainage, surface and grade improvements are proposed across the entire surface-transportation system. This work is already underway to improve our aging infrastructure and maintain a safe and reliable system. In the North our construction season is very short, and to get things done we have to take full advantage of every day we have.

Mr. Speaker, last Thursday we had an opportunity to recognize some of these exceptional employees at the annual Premier's awards. Staff were recognized for individual awards, and there was a team award for the Aurora College Northern Nursing Program. These awards also included collaborative awards with partners such as the Tlicho Healing Wind Project — Promoting Sexual Health Team; the New Deal Capital Planning Task Team and Administrator's Working Group; the Aurora Research Institute; Mallik International Gas

This afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I would like to go over the major projects the Department of Transportation has proposed for this construction season. It is a very ambitious construction plan, and we need the patience and the cooperation of the public to ensure we have a safe and successful construction season.

Mackenzie Highway No. 1 is our vital transportation link to Alberta and part of the core national highway system. One of the major improvements we are undertaking along this route is a new bridge across the Kakisa River. Safer approaches, improved vertical and horizontal alignments and a wider, full-

width two-lane bridge deck will improve safety. The structure capacity of this bridge will also be increased to accommodate the very large, heavy loads that travel north on this route.

Mr. Speaker, you will be pleased to hear that construction delays are expected to be minimal, as the traffic will continue travelling on the old bridge while the new bridge is under construction. Work will also continue on grades, drainage and safety improvements on Mackenzie Highway No. 1 route between kilometres 256 and 272. I urge the travelling public to be aware and cautious, as heavy equipment will be on the highway throughout the reconstruction season.

Reconstruction on Ingraham Trail, Highway No. 4, will be focused between kilometres 32 and 35. Widening and roadway improvements such as the installation of guardrails will improve the traffic flow for seasonal residents, recreational users, tourists and heavy industry traffic accessing the mineral-rich Slave geologic province.

Across the entire system rehabilitation work, including culvert replacement and bridge rehabilitation, and chipseal replacement will be ongoing throughout the construction season. The department also hopes to be crushing and stockpiling granular material in preparation for future chipsealing surfacing.

This year the department plans to chipseal over 170 kilometres of highway. This includes the 20 kilometres of Highway No. 2 leading to Hay River, 20 kilometres of Highway No. 5 leading to Fort Smith, and also planned this year is a new chipseal surface for the Hay River Reserve road.

The Liard Highway No. 7 is an important link to B.C. The department will continue to rebuild this highway over the next season between kilometres 14 and 20 south of Fort Liard. The highway generally is structurally weak and vulnerable to damage during the spring thaw. Due to lack of proper drainage, the subgrade becomes saturated during the time of increased rainfall, causing potholes, rutting and muddy sections. As we experienced this spring, the road deteriorated to the point of closure. The continuing reconstruction will help address these critical areas.

In the Mackenzie Delta the department will continue on the Dempster Highway No. 8 with reconstruction and widening between kilometres 34 and 40 and culvert replacements up to kilometre 60. Reconstruction to date has improved roadway geometrics and driving surfaces, contributing to a significant reduction in collisions.

Mr. Speaker, construction of the Deh Cho Bridge is also underway. The department has been working

with the Deh Cho Bridge Corporation and the contractor, Atcon Construction, to ensure that traffic flows through the construction site smoothly and that ferry operations are not disturbed. The general contractor for the construction of the Deh Cho Bridge is scheduled to make progress on four of the eight piers of the bridge structure during this construction season. Ferry passengers will have a front-row seat to watch the bridge progress.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, these are the Department of Transportation's construction season highlights for 2008. If they happen to be driving by these projects this summer, I would remind Members and their constituents to slow down and follow the signs and obey the flag people in the construction zones.

As reinforcement the department is also implementing the necessary regulatory amendments to double the speeding fines within these construction zones. Please help us to protect and maintain the safety of the crews and the contractors working on these important improvements. Remember that we can do our part to drive alive. Mahsi.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH ENERGY COSTS

Mr. Menicoche: [English translation not provided.]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know the Northwest Territories has some of the highest energy costs in the country, and these high costs have a big impact on our cost of living. Community government leaders are struggling with these escalating costs, and there does not appear to be any relief in sight.

At the recent NWT Association of Communities annual general meeting in Fort Simpson, community government representatives passed two resolutions that raised concerns about the cost of electrical power and the management of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. These resolutions are driven by the frustrations they have with our current system. They are looking for alternatives in order to obtain the best value for money for their residents.

Large non-hydro communities like Fort Simpson, Norman Wells and Inuvik are considering a number of options, including finding alternate energy suppliers. If these three communities withdraw from the NTPC, this could have a serious impact on the

remaining Northwest Territories Power Corporation customer base and the overall operations of the NTPC.

Mr. Speaker, community government leaders have met with the Premier, the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation and the Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board and discussed two options they would like the government to consider. One would be to treat every resident in the territory the same and bring in the one-rate zone and bring Yellowknife and Hay River back under the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

The second option would be to sell the Power Corporation to another energy supplier with the capacity to develop some of the vast hydro potential in our territory. This alternative would allow the GNWT to rid itself of the debt load associated with NTPC and could lead to a reduction of electrical costs in our communities.

The government will be reviewing electricity rates, regulations and the Power Subsidy Program over the next year. This is a real opportunity for the government to consider all the options and look for solutions that will provide all residents with affordable energy. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH COST OF LIVING IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. (English translation not provided.)

Mr. Speaker, last week I spoke about the cost of living and the impacts on our residents in the smaller communities. This is an everyday concern for my constituents, and today I would like to summarize this concern.

This issue is an everyday concern for many residents in smaller communities. Many are struggling to make ends meet. I talked about a young mother of three who has to pay \$8 for two litres of milk and almost \$90 for formula. If one of her children requires medical attention, this could mean leaving her home and her community to get this service, and that's an additional cost.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to cost-of-living issues, I've talked about the gap between services available to residents in larger communities and those in smaller communities. For example, homes in smaller communities use a water and sewage tank system, while other larger communities have piped systems. They have to accept this by default. That is, where we live in smaller communities, our

homes will have to be built differently. This is the wrong approach. This is a basic but very important service we need to start thinking differently about. We should start thinking that every home should have basic services. Presently the infrastructure is not there to do this, and this clearly illustrates the real difference in infrastructure needs in larger and smaller communities.

It's good to hear the Premier say he does agree there's a difference in services between larger communities with a vibrant economic sector and those smaller communities that are traditionally based. I also agree with the Premier when he says it will take some work to address these issues.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to hear the Premier say he will be establishing a joint committee of Ministers and Ordinary MLAs to specifically look at the cost-of-living issues and the gap in municipal infrastructure services between the smaller and larger communities. Today I may have a couple of questions for the Premier on this.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH ENERGY COSTS

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to follow up on a Member's statement made by my colleague from Nahendeh on the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that the cost of living across the Northwest Territories is very high. Even Cabinet recognizes that, because they have a cost-of-living committee. They need to look no further than the Northwest Territories Power Corp to help try to bring down the costs across the Northwest Territories.

As Mr. Menicoche said, there are three large communities on the grid that are seriously considering pulling off the grid, and that will affect the costs for the rest of the people across the NWT. They'd like to have the same price, or a fairly level price, as what they have to pay down here.

Mr. Speaker, when NTPC in Inuvik converted to gas, I really thought their power was going to go down, but that didn't happen. If anything, it went up even further. We've got the gas 20 kilometres from town, yet the price still didn't go down. I'm sure that if they piped that gas down to Alberta, they'd pay less for it down there than we do up here.

Taltson hydro project is another one I have a hard time selling in the Beaufort-Delta, Mr. Speaker, because they want to know who is to benefit from this other than the diamond mines. Who will pay?

It's hard to sell that back home. There are no immediate benefits to the residents of the Beaufort-Delta, so they have a concern with that.

In April of 2008 the Beaufort-Delta Regional Council had a meeting up in Inuvik. They passed a motion that said the NTPC is a corporation that's accountable to the government and the residents of the Northwest Territories. They've also asked that this Assembly strongly consider instructing the Auditor General of Canada to conduct an audit on the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and see what they can do to improve their services without giving themselves huge bonuses in the process.

These folks represent communities that have to live with extremely high costs of utilities. This Assembly should listen to these people, and we should act on their recommendations. It's important to them, Mr. Speaker. It should be important to us. As residents of the Northwest Territories affected by a corporation that's owned by the Northwest Territories, I think all of the Northwest Territories should benefit from this corporation.

I'll have questions for the Minister of NTPC at the appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INVESTMENTS IN YOUTH AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last several weeks as we've discussed the budget, there have been many references and discussions about this Assembly's priorities and youth being high on our list.

It's a well-known fact there are positive effects from being physically active for anyone, no matter what their age. It's also well known that involvement in sports and recreation activities can have a profound effect on a young person and that they benefit mentally, psychologically, physically and economically. Youth who are physically active are far healthier than those who are not. They generally live a healthier lifestyle, are less likely to abuse alcohol or drugs and often do better in school.

Many lessons can be learned through competitive physical activity, and these lessons have a positive impact on the developing character of a young person. Youth are usually looking for rules and guidelines to help them find their way as they grow up and mature. Sports and recreation activities often provide that for them.

This Assembly, through our goals and priorities set in December of last year, has identified both youth

and healthy living as important to us all. We need to ensure we put our money where our mouth is, as the saying goes, Mr. Speaker, and invest in our youth and the activities they need to develop their potential.

I was very pleased to hear that sport and recreation officers would be retained in our communities instead of considered as a budget reduction. That move is one in the right direction, and we need to continue to move in that direction over the life of this Assembly. Our budgets must commit significant funds to youth and youth activities such as sport and recreation.

GNWT is lucky to have several sports and recreation bodies committed to the advancement of a healthy, physically active population, particularly our youth. Organizations such as Sport North, the Council of Sport and Recreation Partners, NWT Parks and Recreation Association and the Aboriginal Sports Circle all work for us for the betterment of our residents. They're successful in large part because of the efforts of volunteers who believe in the cause of youth, sport and recreation.

As an Assembly I urge us to take advantage of this unseen, valuable workforce, to allocate the dollars necessary for the operation of these organizations and thus ensure the continued, positive advancement of our young people. I look forward to seeing concrete evidence of that in next year's budget.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGH ENERGY COSTS

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to talk about the high cost of energy in our communities and the high cost of power, especially in diesel communities, and the continued rise in regard to diesel and in regard to the effect it will have on our power rates, home heating fuel and, more importantly, on this government's ability to provide programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, we have a public application process for riders, yet we just saw a major increase in that last application process. It is costing the government something like \$2 million every time we file an application through the PUB process. Also, our Territorial Power Support Program continues to rise and is in excess of almost \$10 million and rising every day.

Mr. Speaker, the whole energy costs in the territory — where we pay for riders from residential-energy-cost riders to general-energy-rate riders to diesel riders to shortfall riders to water-rate riders — are almost to a point where these riders are overtaking

people's costs of maintaining their own homes and also the cost for businesses to sustain themselves.

Mr. Speaker, this effect has probably one of the biggest impacts we're going to see in the 16th Assembly. We do have to react to it sooner rather than later. The cost of producing energy in our communities is related to diesel. We have no alternative means of generating power in a lot of our diesel communities. More importantly, this is having a major effect on our business communities, from the northern stores to the co-ops to any entrepreneur who wants to run a business in our communities but cannot keep the lights on. I hate to say that a few people may have to turn the lights off and move their businesses where it's less expensive to operate and maintain them.

Mr. Speaker, this government has to take action on this matter. At the appropriate time I will be asking the Minister responsible for the Energy Corporation questions on exactly where we're going with this matter.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to support language diversity in the Northwest Territories.

There is so much that's embodied in a language: ways of being, ways of knowing, incredible understanding, a whole framework for the way the world works.

Mr. Speaker, I was facilitating a workshop in Whati with elders and youth a number of years ago, and I finally realized they all spoke the Tlicho language, except for me. So I said, "Why don't you guys go ahead?" and they did. But at the end the elders told me it was sad they didn't speak strong Dogrib and didn't understand the layers of communication that were happening.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start here by recognizing the speakers I hear frequently in this House: Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Menicoche and now Mr. Yakeleya. When I used to tune in to this House in the old days, this facility would be ringing with all kinds of languages. I'm very happy to hear the ones that are being spoken now. I hope I'm going to hear more and more of them. But I'd like to really put in a plug. About three-quarters of the languages in the world are now extinct. We've got to really work to retain what we've got. There's a huge key role for our Languages Commissioner.

I pay tribute back to our first one, Betty Harnum, who was multilingual in many respects. I think the commissioner needs to bring this to this facility, to

this position. She needs to be a huge champion, a fierce champion, to really bring the programs that we need throughout this government to support the culture that goes with the languages. That will then keep those languages going. The Languages Commissioner needs to speak out loudly, prominently, frequently, and she needs to be active in an awards program that especially recognizes youth and lets our youth know that we value this attribute, that we recognize all the things it can bring.

Let's have a more aware process from this government, and let's really call on our Languages Commissioners to be super fierce in leading this retention. Retaining is so much easier than recovering. Let's hear it for our Language Commissioners.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SEXUAL HEALTH

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recent years the subject of sexual health has been a growing concern across the country and, in particular, in the Northwest Territories. Sexual health consists of many aspects of health care, covering both emotional and physical well-being. This topic ranges from the detection and management of sexually transmitted diseases to family planning and contraceptives, breast and cervical cancer screening and the assessment, treatment and counselling of sexual health care. High-risk behaviours also contribute to transmission of HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Many of these areas of health care are crucial for people of all ages, but our youth are particularly at risk with the increasing numbers of STDs that have been reported. Sexually transmitted infection reports have increased by 30 per cent in the 15- to 24 age group over the past five years.

The statistics on sexually transmitted diseases are alarming. The NWT has a sexually-transmitted-infections rate nine times higher than the national average. The NWT has consistently higher rates of some sexually transmitted diseases, and gonorrhoea rates have increased by 300 per cent in the last two years in the Northwest Territories.

These increases are a cause for our concern and for implementation of immediate action against the incidence and further transmission of disease. We need to be proactive in providing intervention and prevention strategies to our health care workers and medical centres across the North. The present sexual health prevention and promotion programs in Hay River are not that effective. The incidence rate of STIs in Hay River from 2000 to 2006 shows

similar trends compared to the rest of the Northwest Territories. However, comparatively in Hay River, for both males and females combined, the data strongly suggests that a significant number of STIs are not reported. This also means they are not likely being treated.

There is no program designated to addressing the needs of Hay River in the education, early detection and prevention of STDs and other serious aspects of sexual health. It is important to address these needs, and this should be done immediately for the health and safety of our people.

We talk about priorities. I would like to suggest that this is not often talked about and not so nice to talk about but should be a high priority for our government to address.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TIERED VEHICLE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk a little bit about the environment and the consumer. There's little to no question that global warming is a reality. Permafrost is melting, carbon emissions are up, greenhouse gases are all over the place. There's a lot we're doing in this government to help, but more can be done. I'd like to applaud ENR for their support of the Arctic Energy Alliance rebates for vehicles and other high-energy-use equipment and machines. But it's time for us to think about other areas where we can really be working on reducing emissions.

I've been doing a little bit of research lately with my constituency assistant, and we've been looking at auto-registration rates in other jurisdictions around the country and around the world. It appears that many jurisdictions have actually gone into a tiered auto-registration rate that is based on different things. In some jurisdictions they're using weights of vehicles to have different rates for registration. In other jurisdictions they're using carbon emissions. In other jurisdictions they're going based on mileage. I think it's time for us in the Government of the Northwest Territories to change how we think about registration. In the Northwest Territories we have one rate. It's about \$87 a year regardless of the type of vehicle you're using, whether it's low emission or high emission.

As a government I think it's one of our responsibilities to help encourage our consumers to make better, or more productive, environmentally responsible choices. As such, this afternoon I'll have some questions on our registration system for the Minister responsible for Transportation. I understand we're currently implementing a new

registration system for automobiles. Now would be the opportune time for the Department of Transportation to do greater research into a tiered registration system that could take into consideration things like mileage or carbon emissions, which would help the consumer make choices that are more environmentally responsible.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT OF CANADA RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL APOLOGY

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I listened to the Prime Minister's apology to residential school survivors. I wanted to speak about the historic announcement but felt I needed a few days to digest the statement so I could properly address it on behalf of my family and Nunakput constituents.

Mr. Speaker, as many of my colleagues have talked about, this is a very tough day for a lot of people in my riding and in the ridings of Inuvik Twin Lakes, Inuvik Boot Lake, Mackenzie Delta, and even for the Member for Sahtu and the whole Northwest Territories. All our constituents have been affected tragically by the whole residential school experience.

As you know, there are many angles to this apology. Some benefited; others suffered. Did the apology go far enough? Is the apology what they were waiting for? I can say one thing, Mr. Speaker: the apology brought back old scars to survivors, and last Wednesday was very trying for them. Few people escaped the consequences of residential school. Families were torn apart. Even though residential schools in Inuvik closed in the early '90s, we can still see effects of the experience as they also created a new generation of victims.

Mr. Speaker, individuals in the families have been dealing with their experiences in their own ways. Many are still grappling with the need to accept what happened and are only now beginning to deal directly with it. Last week's historic announcement by the Government of Canada means a new beginning for many survivors and relatives of survivors in that we've had to look at it — a new beginning that needs to be addressed by strong, committed partnerships in resolving all the issues and working on them together.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FORMAT OF INFRASTRUCTURE
ACQUISITION PLAN

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wanted to talk about the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan and its format. We're all familiar with the format of the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, which lists each project individually along with the specific amount budgeted for each item. Projects range from \$50,000 for a new patrol truck to millions of dollars for major infrastructure like schools. I'm concerned that this practice of publishing the budget for individual items may be preventing us from getting the best deal on our capital projects.

Suppliers, armed with the knowledge of the government's maximum budget for an item, might easily bid higher than they would for other customers' projects. Businesses certainly don't publish their bottom lines in public documents, because to do so would obviously jeopardize their negotiating position. Is it any more reasonable that the government would do this? I've spoken to constituents who are in the business community, and they say that what this document, our Main Estimates, talks about helps them maximize their bidding opportunities, so they don't leave money on the table.

I would like to suggest that our government consider reformatting the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan so that only the combined dollar total amounts are shown for small capital in this public document form. In this way we still leave the details in this project but not attached with a dollar amount. Regular Members, of course, would still want to see these details on individual items, but this information could be provided to us, like so many other items, in confidence. I've heard about this problem from a number of people. It only gets worse when it gets to large capital projects like schools or buildings. With a few hundred thousand dollars of opportunity here and there, this would add up to a large opportunity to save money.

This is being treated as a reference guide by many constituents. They say that when they want to go bid on a building envelope project, they go to our budget. If they want to go bid on a jet boat, they go to our Main Estimates. It goes on and on and on.

If the government wants to maximize its potential for saving money when we budget projects, we might want to keep that part of the project undisclosed when we go out. I've seen recent examples where by not publicizing our amount, we've been able to maximize construction of a school. We've been able to get good value for good dollars and good investment in quality projects. We need to go forward with a better plan.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

**Recognition of
Visitors in the Gallery**

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce two former residents of Inuvik and, more importantly, Inuvik Twin Lakes, Anne and Bill Crossman, who are here in Yellowknife this weekend for their daughter's wedding. Anne is also the editor of Permafrost Media, and Bill worked at the Aurora Research Institute in Inuvik. He totally agrees with me that the Arctic Institute belongs in Inuvik. Thank you.

Hon. Sandy Lee: It is my pleasure to recognize a constituent, Timothy Riviere. You can see he has shaved his head to raise money for cancer. He's raised \$2,500 dollars, and his hair was used to make wigs for those suffering from cancer.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. I'd like to welcome everyone in the gallery today. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings. It's always nice to have an audience in here.

Item 6, acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Hawkins.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 6-16(2)
JESSICA HOPKINS
HIGH SCHOOL AWARD RECIPIENT

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great pleasure to acknowledge a constituent of mine. Jessica Hopkins, a graduate of Sir John Franklin High School, recently won the Canadian Millennium Scholarship for excellent academic performance, innovation and her exceptional community service. Jessica won this because she strives to nurture in others a love of reading and helped to implement the project that matched middle and elementary school students for one-on-one reading and word games.

She is also active in environment matters. She took on the responsibility of researching and implementing an alternative energy source for her school. She presented her findings on wind power to her school board and later attended a youth conference to talk about the issue. With her outstanding work and contributions to her community, Jessica has shown that our future leadership is secure and brighter than ever.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 339-16(2) SINGLE RATE ZONE FOR POWER RATES

Mr. Menicoche: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation with reference to my Member's statement. We're struggling with electrical costs all through the Northwest Territories. In my Member's statement I referenced that three of our larger non-hydro communities are looking for some alternative ways of providing power at a cheaper rate. In fact, I believe all communities should have the right and access to cheaper power rates through a one-rate power zone. I'd like to know how much work the ministry's office has done in light of the many motions we have passed on this side of the House in moving toward a one-rate zone or levelized rate system.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I, too, was at the NWT annual meeting with the municipalities in Fort Simpson. I certainly heard several mayors — specifically the mayors from Norman Wells and Inuvik — talking about the one-rate zone issue.

We have a committee that's being led by Mr. Bob McLeod in terms of the Ministers' Energy Coordinating Committee. We're looking at the motion that was put forward by this Assembly to look at the rate structure and the regulations. We're looking at options and discussing with committee members what we can do to come to something that is satisfactory to people right across the Northwest Territories.

I've also noted in the past that the Public Utilities Board has looked at the one-rate zone system on several occasions. They certainly have information we can use in our discussions in looking at alternatives to bring down the rates for all people in the Northwest Territories that would be satisfactory to all Member in this House.

Mr. Menicoche: Once again I'd like to reiterate to the Minister that it's a cry from our whole territory, as well as a request from this side of the House, that the ministry and the government look at a one-rate system or a levelized rate system. I'll just ask again: what kind of work will this government be doing to work toward that?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: I will also let the Member know that I also come from a community that has

high power rates, high energy issues. In terms of our communities, certainly the energy committee will be looking at the merits of a one-rate zone. We'll be having discussions with Members from the House to look at the best options and what avenues we have available for us to implement whatever recommendation we agree would see a rate zone stabilized or a rate zone that would be satisfactory to the people in our communities.

Mr. Menicoche: I'll ask it a different way. The Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation has been instructed by this side of the House, by several motions, to look at moving toward a one-rate zone or levelized rate zone. I'd like to ask: what work has been done to work toward this, to develop a proposal, to look at the different ways of providing that type of service?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Certainly, we have our marching orders from the motion that was passed in this House in terms of looking at the issue the Member's talking about.

We have worked with the lead Minister, Hon. Bob McLeod, in terms of heading up the Ministers' Energy Coordinating Committee. We have set down some terms of reference as to how we're going to carry out our work. We have looked at this with our own Crown corporations in terms of our capital costs and how NWTPC does its capital costs. That will help with looking at the rate issue. We certainly are on our way. We'll be eagerly waiting to sit with the Members to start looking at the process for, once and for all, making some announcements in terms of how we go about reducing our costs in the North.

Mr. Menicoche: That's exactly the point. We are looking toward how we are going to implement a one-rate or levelized zone. It doesn't mean the government has to do it, but the government should take a good, serious, hard look at it. I believe you do that by developing proposals and bird's-eye view outlines of it. I'd like to know when this government will start that.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the understanding from the lead Minister, the Hon. Bob McLeod... The Ministers' Energy Coordinating Committee will start as soon as possible. We do have the terms of reference and are ready to go to work. As soon as we are done here, we are ready to go to work taking action on the motion that was passed in terms of looking at the restructuring in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 340-16(2)
HIGH ENERGY COSTS

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, I, too, have questions in regard to the high cost of energy in the Northwest Territories. My question is directed to the Minister of the energy committee, Mr. Bob McLeod. In light of the motions that have been passed in this house, and also realizing we have a major threat on our hands with the high energy costs and the effect they're going to have — from governments to our residents to our business community — I'd like to ask the Minister: how soon will we be able to see some correspondence back from the ministerial committee in regard to acting and moving on some of these recommendations and motions passed in this House?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for energy initiatives, Hon. Bob McLeod.

Hon. Bob McLeod: We've undertaken this work, and we've submitted draft terms of reference. As soon as we get some feedback on the draft terms of reference, we'll be able to start the process on the review of the rate. We'll be looking at hopefully having something we could introduce in 2009.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the 15th Assembly, I believe work was already undertaken by the Northwest Territories Power Corporation board, but it happened that they all got axed for doing that. I'd just like to ask the Minister: since the work has already been done, have you looked at reinstating the work that has been done in the 15th Assembly by the Northwest Territories Power Corporation?

Hon. Bob McLeod: It is our intention to resurrect all of the work that has been done in the past and utilize that in the review of the rates by the committee. It is also our intention to talk to the public and other stakeholders. Certainly the work that was done on the single rate would be very useful in determining the options we would be bringing forward for review.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Speaker, just a verification: I believe that was the 14th Assembly.

My question to the Minister is: what's exactly the next step? We do have questions with energy costs. We have problems with our territorial power support program. I know it's a large thing we are talking about with hydro expansions and whatnot, yet we can't lose sight of the biggest cost we have, which is diesel costs. I'd like to ask the Minister: are you looking at the whole — diesel fuel for transportation, the logistics and, more importantly, the cost of where we can get cheaper diesel fuel to run our diesel communities?

Hon. Bob McLeod: There are quite a number of different aspects of the energy costs, and through the Energy Corp coordinating committee we are trying to ensure that all the Ministers who have responsibilities have input into the process. I guess the most urgent thing is to look at ways to reduce the cost of resupply for diesel fuel. I think we're doing that through the Department of Public Works.

Also, as part of this rate review we'll be looking at the cost of the regulatory process. We want to see if that's adding to the cost of fuel for people in communities. We will also be looking at the way the Power Corporation establishes or recovers their costs and sets their rates. We would also be looking at how other jurisdictions do it to see if there are better ways of doing business.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final short supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister mentioned that they're looking at having a report out in 2009. Is there a possibility that Members on this side of the House could see a draft report prior to that, say before this fall sitting, so we can have an idea of where you're going with this and so we can also have input into the process?

Hon. Bob McLeod: It's our intention to work very closely with the standing committees and any Member who is interested in the high cost of energy in the Northwest Territories. We're starting the process with the draft terms of reference. We're looking forward to receiving comments from the standing committee.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 341-16(2)
SEXUAL HEALTH

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about the need for a sexual health program in Hay River. I wanted to ask the Minister if she was aware of a proposal that was submitted back in December of 2007 from the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority in this regard — I know we're in a budget restraint time — and if there are any federal, or any, monies she may be aware of that could initiate this. In Hay River, as with many communities in Canada, we have a relatively unstable complement of physicians, and we have a high turnover in that area with locums. Building community capacity to deal with some of these health issues would be a great benefit.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of the proposal submitted by Hay River Health Authority to give them funding to deliver community-specific programs. The last time I talked to my officials, I believe that was under active consideration in an effort to put it into the next business-plan process. I could also advise the Member that we have been successful in getting some money from the Public Health Agency of Canada for a coordinator position for a three-year term. That position is starting this May. I don't have a whole lot of details on that, but we are making some progress in that area.

Mrs. Groenewegen: With regard to this, I do applaud the efforts of the staff at the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority for coming up with some of these innovative programs. They have very good programs dealing with diabetes and some specialized areas that we see as emerging problems and issues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if I could advise the authority and the people of Hay River that there would be a very good opportunity for such a program to be funded and staffed in our community.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Mr. Speaker, I could tell the Member we are actively considering that proposal from Hay River. I can't give the Member an answer as to what the outcome of that might be. We are looking at a territorially coordinated approach to address STI concerns. We do have an STI strategy the department's working on, and that includes looking at specific programs not only in Hay River but in the Tlicho area as well, where there is an active proposal coming forward.

We're looking to expand the Tele-Care program to include STI components. There is some work being done to do some social marketing in this area. There is a lot of work being done to address this in a territorially coordinated way. I will undertake to get information from the department again as to exactly where we are with the Hay River proposal, but there is a coordinated approach being taken.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I'd like to ask the Minister: is there any precedent for any units within any other health authorities that are dealing specifically with this challenge?

Hon. Sandy Lee: Yes, the department has funded different programs and proposals such as the conference that the Dene Nation sponsored on STI issues, and the Tlicho community has their own proposal. We do have quasi-independent authorities who are interested in addressing some specific issues that are of more interest to their area. The department does pay attention to those.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 342-16(2)
TIERED VEHICLE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Transportation. I understand the Department of Transportation is currently putting through a new vehicle registration system. I'm curious: is that new system capable of facilitating a tiered vehicle registration rate system?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The new vehicle system we're about to implement into the department's main office here to upgrade our system.... I'll have to get back to the Member regarding the capabilities in terms of upgrading to a two-tier system.

I hear the Member's comments on how we could benefit people in the North in terms of carbon emissions and vehicle registration. I will certainly take his comments into consideration and pass that on to the deputy to work with the Member regarding his suggestion as to our vehicle registration system.

Mr. Abernethy: I look forward to finding out whether that system is actually capable of doing a tiered system.

Obviously, the reason I ask is I think it's time for us to re-examine how we do registration rates in the Northwest Territories. Currently we have one rate. All vehicles are the same. If you look at other jurisdictions, like I said in my Member's statement, some jurisdictions use different systems such as carbon emissions, mileage or gross vehicle weight.

I was wondering if I can get the Minister responsible for Transportation to commit to exploring the possibilities and conducting some research into tiered vehicle registration systems to see which one would be the most appropriate for the Northwest Territories in order to help us help consumers make more productive, environmentally responsible, choices when it comes to purchasing and registering motor vehicles.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, certainly the Member raises some very interesting, good ideas in terms of our service and what we can do to help the consumers in terms of the carbon emissions in relation to their issue with the vehicle registration. I will be happy to sit down with the Member to talk with him and bring forth other ideas we could implement in our new system to help our consumers in the Northwest Territories with the vehicle registration system.

Mr. Abernethy: I look forward to sitting down with the Minister to talk about a tiered vehicle registration system.

I guess the one question I need to know before we move any further forward on that is: what is the timeline on implementing the new registration system for vehicles? Is it something that's going to happen in the next two, three, six months, or is it something scheduled for a year or two down the road?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, if all things go according to plan, we hope that within less than two years we would have our system iron out the kinks, iron out the things we need to have a smooth transition of our new vehicle registration system.

Also, this will allow us some time to have some discussion. I have heard about the two-tier system for some time. I have talked to my deputy about it and asked if it's possible. Anything is possible in terms of ideas that would enhance our program and certainly enhance the ability of our consumers to reduce some of the carbon emissions in the North here.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 343-16(2) COST-OF-LIVING CONCERNS

Mr. Beaulieu: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I spoke about taking steps toward addressing the high cost of living, gaps in municipal services, infrastructure needs in small communities and a joint committee to address these issues.

I'd like to ask the Premier: when can the Members on this side of the House expect to receive notice of a meeting for this important joint committee?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Hon. Premier, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since I made that commitment to Members, we've had staff pulling the items together to see how we would structure this and some of the initiatives in that area that could be looked at. I'm hoping we can have something for Members, at least a draft form, to review and get some input on, if not by the middle of the week, early next week.

Mr. Beaulieu: Will the Premier commit to placing the cost-of-living item on the Cabinet agenda so his Cabinet representatives can keep the committee informed and keep the cost-of-living issue on the front burner?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, the issue of the cost of living in the Northwest Territories is one we

realize needs to be addressed. That's why it forms one of our strategic initiatives. As we proceed forward, we will be dealing with that on an ongoing basis. Once we have this committee set up, we will be working with that committee on an ongoing basis to keep that forward.

Is it a type of situation where we actually have to have the item on *Orders of the Day*? I think as we deal with the initiatives that lead into the budget, working with the committee will help keep that going.

Mr. Beaulieu: Can the Premier commit to assigning public service duties to a department that can support this important initiative?

Hon. Floyd Roland: If I understand the question right, assigning responsibilities for delivery in this area to a department.... All of our strategic initiatives involve a number of departments, so we would have a key Minister working with departments and then a committee.

I would be prepared, as well as committee, once we sit down with Members — and we're hoping to have that before Members head off after session here — to look at how we can structure that. I'm prepared to add that to the list, to see how we can formulate and make this work.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Beaulieu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the Premier for his support in this important cost-of-living issue for the Member for Tu Nedhe.

Mr. Speaker: No question there. This is question period. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

QUESTION 344-16(2) GENERAL RATE APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke about NTPC in my Member's statement. I'd like to direct my questions today to the Minister Responsible for NTPC, Mr. Yakeleya. I'd like to ask the Minister, first of all, if he has any indication of when the next general rate application is coming forward from NTPC.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister Responsible for NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are in phase 2 of the general rate application presently, and we're just waiting to conclude that. We have our general rate applications every three years.

Mr. McLeod: I'd like to ask the Minister if NTPC has to bring forward their request for a general rate application to the Minister's office to justify it, and does he approve that?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the question raised by the Member is very good. I'm being notified by the Crown corporation board of directors through the chairperson. The Crown has its own strict guidelines and legislation. When they go before the Public Utilities Board, they file the GRA. However, the Minister is aware and is in contact continuously with the chairperson of NTPC.

Mr. McLeod: I'll thank the Minister for that. I'd like to ask the Minister: because NTPC is a Crown corporation owned by the people of the Northwest Territories, would it not be possible for any applications for a general rate increase to be approved by the Legislative Assembly?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, the Member is certainly correct on that: the Crown corporation is owned by.... We are the shareholders. My one responsibility in the Cabinet is to work on behalf of the shareholders in trust in terms of the corporation. If the legislation was to change and how we do business within our Crown corporation changed, we certainly should be having the discussion with the House Members from this side and from the other side in terms of talking about how to restructure our corporation. Certainly, Mr. McLeod, under the Minister coordinating the Energy Committee, we are looking at all options of how we operate Crown corporations such as NTPC.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, on this side of the House, have heard from the shareholders of this Crown corporation, which is why we continue to raise the issue of the high cost of utilities. They would like the Legislative Assembly to play a major role in approving general rate applications that NTPC wants to bring forward.

I'd like to ask the Minister my final question. There's obviously a cost to delivering power. I would just like to know from the Minister if that's the same cost that people pay? If it costs a dollar to deliver the power, are we paying exactly a dollar, are we paying \$1.20, or are we paying less? The NTPC has a surplus, and my understanding is that half of that goes back into the power subsidy, which is a good thing. But I would propose putting all that money back into the power subsidy and just having whatever it costs to generate power — charge that to the people of the Northwest Territories. Is that possible?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: For me, certainly along with the Ministers' Energy Coordinating Committee, Members have a role. I look forward to some good discussions with Members of the House in terms of our rate structure, our power and the high costs of our communities. My understanding is that we request the dividends from our Crown corporation, and from there we top up the dividend in terms of the surplus. We requested that from NTPC.

We certainly look forward to having some further discussions in terms of the operations of NTPC and remind the people of the North that the Public Utilities Board scrutinizes every step we have in our operations, and every cent is accounted for in terms of us doing operations and having reliable service in the Northwest Territories for our communities. We look forward to having discussions about the operations of our Crown corporation.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

QUESTION 345-16(2)
EFFORTS TO AVOID BELUGA WHALES
BEING STRANDED IN HUSKY LAKE

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question is for the Minister of ENR. The last two years we had beluga whales stuck in Husky Lake, just east of Tuk. Can the Minister advise me what the department will do this summer to try to stop them from entering the lake and help avoid their suffering?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, fundamentally and initially, this is a federal responsibility, but ENR tries to be as responsive and as involved as possible. Of course, I would defer to the superior knowledge and expertise of my colleague. If he has any specific suggestions in anticipation of the coming fall, I'd be most happy to sit down and talk to him about that.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to that, Mr. Minister. I'm here for you. We must have lost about 300 to 400 beluga whales. Just hearing that the Minister has already committed to me in regard to working with me, I'd take that as a yes.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. I don't know if there was a question there, but the honourable Minister Miltenberger.

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, clearly, I appreciate knowing the Member is there for me. I look forward to maybe sitting down with him before the end of session to talk about some specifics we could move on collectively.

Mr. Jacobson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question. The department of ENR should really do something before these whales become Species at Risk and my people cannot hunt these. I look forward to working with the Minister.

Mr. Speaker: No question there, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 346-16(2)
FORMAT OF
INFRASTRUCTURE ACQUISITION PLAN

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During Member's statements I raised the issue of the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan. It's like an open book for businesses out there to bid, tender and whatnot because they have our clear reference guide as to what we're willing to pay, not to say we don't pay more at times. My questions really go to the Minister of Finance to find out what he would be willing to do to help update the process to ensure we don't show all our cards when it comes to going out there for bidding opportunities. Is he willing to look at updating the infrastructure plan, as I had suggested earlier, where we list the details of the project but keep out the dollar amounts?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The area of infrastructure acquisition has been one of concern for the Government of the Northwest Territories. We've initiated an Infrastructure Cabinet Committee led by the Hon. Michael McLeod, who's been working with a number of other departments to come up with options, timing of when we release the Capital Acquisition Plan. As well, for example, the Member has raised the issue of having some of our smaller capital items in a grouping.

That is all under consideration at this point. We'd have to work with the committee to see if there's an acceptable way of proceeding forward.

Mr. Hawkins: It's really appropriate, although we're not allowed to waive items here, that the colour of the Main Estimates is gold. I had a reference to it recently as "it's the gold book for tendering," and this provides a reference.

The issue really is: would he be willing to look at this and address this? I didn't hear that clearly. It sort of was a wishy-washy answer. I want to hear that this government is willing to act, to operate in the best way for the people of the Northwest Territories, and giving the numbers out is not sound management. Will the Minister commit to including this item as an issue to deal with in their planning?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Member is not hearing what I'm saying, or there's something not connecting here because I believe I committed to working with the Members on the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan. In fact, it is a concern to us. That is why we've put an Infrastructure Cabinet Committee group together and are working with Members on the budget process, looking at timing, looking at how we bundle our projects together, and how they're presented to the people of the Northwest Territories. We will work with committee on that. So yes, we are working with committee, and we'll continue to do so.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Speaker, my humble apologies go to the Minister of Finance if he actually had a commitment in there. Usually, they're so thinly veiled they're hard to recognize. Well, they're even worse from the Minister of ENR. But can we expect to see something in a timely way by this fall, before business plans, on this specific subject?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Obviously, our briefings are working because the Member is aware we're planning to go to committee. We're looking at the timing of the budget. We're looking a number of issues around trying to come back with a way of limiting the forced growth in our Capital Acquisition Plan.

We'll continue to work with Members on the timing of it. We're hoping that in this budget, this fall, we should be able to present the Capital Acquisition Plan at a different time from what we've done and a different practice from what we've done in the past.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Capital Acquisition Plan. We're going to look at a new schedule, and that's good. That's good. But my question really was: before the business plan starts, will the Minister be bringing forward a plan of how to address this? As he said already, it's coming to committee, but will we see it before the business plan starts this fall?

Hon. Floyd Roland: We've made the offer to committee to work with committee closely on this process of how we proceed and come up with a common practice we can support going ahead. So yes, we're going to be working with committee before a draft acquisition plan and before committee members. We have quite a number of issues to deal with in that time.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 347-16(2)
 ACCOUNTABILITY OF
 THE LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER
 (RULED OUT OF ORDER)

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of ECE on the Languages Commissioner. I'm wondering: given the report that we've seen, where budget wasn't spent and communities weren't visited, what kind of oversight does the Minister have? What sort of oversight role does he play in the performance of the commissioner's duties?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. That commissioner has their own role, to implement the operations of the Languages Commissioner within the communities and regions. My understanding is that she is a statutory officer. With our ECE department we work closely with her as well. I believe there have been some recommendations brought forward, and we are working on those recommendations, so she is in that role. Mahsi.

Mr. Bromley: I'm wondering what sort of accountability here.... As I understand it, this commissioner hardly visited any communities. To me, as just a member of the public and so on, I saw very little profile for the Languages Commissioner. I think back to a few commissioners ago when it was huge, in the news all the time; it was a big part of.... To me, this is a really important role, so I'm wondering what sort of accountability.... How does this commissioner get feedback about the job she's doing and so on, to make sure things get happening as they should?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Before I go to the Minister on this one, the Languages Commissioner is a statutory officer answering to the Legislative Assembly and the Board of Management. I would suspect that would be the avenue to approach regarding areas of accountability about statutory officers, so I'm going to rule that question out of order right now.

Thank you, Members. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 348-16(2)
 TERRITORIAL POWER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up on the questions that have been asked in the House today by my colleagues with regard to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, but I want to direct my question to the Minister Responsible for the FMBS, because the FMBS oversees the Power Subsidy Program. People talk about levelized rates, and I know that the PUB has commented in the past on the issue of

one-rate zone, or levelized rates, suggesting that it is completely within the proper mandate of this government to be the social engineers of power rates in the Northwest Territories. To that end, we have something called the Territorial Power Subsidy Program, and this allows everyone to pay the same rate in the Northwest Territories as Yellowknife, up to 700 kilowatts per hour.

When was the last time this program was reviewed? Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that if it is colder and darker with longer cold seasons farther north, why would it be 700 kilowatt hours across the board when you know full well that somebody living in the southern part of the Northwest Territories in a small community is going to require far less support than a person living in the high Arctic?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Member Responsible for FMBS, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The program itself hasn't been reviewed for quite some time. In fact, the Member is right: everyone above the Yellowknife rate would pay the first.... We would provide the Territorial Power Support Program for everyone up to the first 700 kilowatt hours. We are concerned and want to look at this. That's why the Energy Coordinating Committee will be looking at this power support program, its structure and how it's used in the Northwest Territories.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, does the Premier consider it would be sensible to pro-rate the power subsidy based on the part of the territory you're living in, in terms of your demand and your consumption of this utility?

Mr. Speaker: Mrs. Groenewegen, you might be asking the Premier for an opinion, but I'll allow the Minister to answer. Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Territorial Power Support Program has grown substantially over the last number of years. Questions about energy and its supply and how we provide this subsidy program need to be reviewed. For the most part, on average, when we do a comparison, most households can live within the 700 kilowatt hours, and that is something we also take into consideration when we set the program parameters.

Again, it will be one of the areas as we proceed forward on the energy file: reviewing this program and seeing how it best works in the Northwest Territories. At the existing pace, we're going to quickly run out of options as we proceed, and we'll have to be finding more money to keep topping up the program. We do need to come forward with a comprehensive plan on how we will proceed on energy and energy use in the Northwest Territories.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Mr. Speaker, to the issue of finding money to top up the program: right now, where do the funds come from for the territorial support program?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, part of it is a request we make of the corporation. We request a dividend on an annual basis, and then we top it up from general revenue for the rest of the program. In fact, in the last few years of the budget it has been \$3.5 million from the Power Corporation. The rest has been from general revenues of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask if the amount of the contribution to the territorial support program through a dividend from the NWT Power Corporation has been declining in recent years. At one time didn't the NWT Power Corporation's dividend completely finance the territorial support program?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, at one time, in fact, the dividends used to pay for the Territorial Power Support Program when it was less than 4 and a half million dollars. It used to be that the amount covered it off 100 per cent. It now covers less than 50 per cent. We reduced the dividend to 3 and a half million dollars, and we have to fill up the rest. For example, we're looking at just under \$10 million to cover off that program during this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

QUESTION 349-16(2)

TERRITORIAL POWER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going back to my questions from my Member's statement again. Back in the 15th Assembly there was a Member for Sahtu. He used to speak on many occasions of NTPC because his communities were hardest hit. He had some excellent ideas, by the way.

I'd like to ask the current Minister if he's acting on any of these excellent ideas that the former Member for Sahtu brought up in the 15th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. That's a pretty vague question, but I'll allow the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation to respond. Mr. Yakeleya.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Member for Twin Lakes, for reminding me in terms of some of my earlier discussions in

the House. The Member is correct, and those ideas are still alive and well. Certainly, I'm very happy the Premier has asked if I would work with the other Members in terms of the energy file. Our committee is looking at the options of: how do we bring the cost of energy down to an acceptable rate for people in our smaller communities, who rely on a good power source in terms of reducing their cost of living?

Mr. McLeod: Mr. Speaker, going back to NTPC and the bonuses paid to senior management, I'd like to ask the Minister if those are based on the overall surplus or the surplus minus what goes back to the Territorial Power Subsidy.

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: As the Member is well aware, this was at one time and possibly still is an issue to be discussed. The corporation has had consultants, has had some experts look at the bonus system. We now have an at-risk pay system for our senior management. We have made a huge reduction in terms of at-risk payments in terms of work to our senior management team. This was brought forward to the Public Utilities Board, which reviewed it and gave the stamp of approval for our operations within the NTPC management.

Mr. McLeod: The Beaufort-Delta Regional Council passed a motion, as I mentioned before. I'd like to ask the Minister: do we have to pass a formal motion in the House requesting that the Auditor General audit NTPC, or can the Minister provide that direction or ask the Auditor General to do that?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: The Member raises a very good point. Our last financial statement books were audited by the Auditor General of Canada. Certainly, if it's the wish of the House, I would make a request to the board in terms of the Auditor General looking at our books again and looking at specific issues that could be raised, to have some further discussions in terms of our operation in the Crown corporation.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if he answered my question. I'd like to ask the Minister: would this House have to pass a formal motion to request the Auditor General audit the NTPC?

Hon. Norman Yakeleya: Mr. Speaker, I do apologize for not answering directly to the Member. If the House does wish to pass a motion to have the Auditor General look into our Crown corporation, if it pleases the House.... We have accountants, and we have the Public Utilities Board that scrutinizes very well in terms of our operations. If he does have a motion in the House, that is something we certainly will look at.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Written Questions

QUESTION 25-16(2)

COST OF REGIONAL OFFICE OPERATIONS

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two written questions for two different Ministers. The first questions are for the Minister of Finance.

- 1) Can I have the complete cost breakdown of each individual regional director's office for the budget years of 2007–2008 and 2008–2009?
- 2) Please provide all the costs associated to establish each individual regional office, such as lease, lease improvements, one-time capital expenses like vehicles and small equipment, and any other expenses to make each individual office open and relevant.

QUESTION 26-16(2)

COST OF NWT PC OPERATIONS

Mr. Hawkins: The second question is to the Minister of the NWT Power Corporation.

- 1) I would like to request a detailed breakdown by community from the NWT Power Corporation for the last three years specific to:
 - a) profits and losses,
 - b) distribution and power subsidy, and
 - c) the dividends raised.
- 2) Please provide any details of a prescribing document that states that the NWT Power Corporation needs to make a profit, and what is that profit based on?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question 15-16(2), asked by the Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro, on May 30, 2008, to the Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger, Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, regarding the Somba K'e Healing Lodge.

The lodge was not operational from 2003 to May 2008. It was last utilized by Northern Addiction Services. The lodge is not designed for the purposes of housing to residents in the Northwest Territories.

The lodge can be refurbished to be operational based on a purpose that is aligned with the design of the lodge.

While the facility was vacant, the NWT HC North Slave District Office (NSDO) staff members monitored the facility on a daily basis, and the NWT HC bore the cost of keeping the facility in operational status. The NWT HC is not funded by the GNWT for these expenditures or for the monthly mortgage payments. Staff time is not included in costs.

Since 2004–05 the NWT HC has funded the following operating and maintenance costs for the facility:

2004–05	\$ 87,000
2005–06	\$ 68,000
2006–07	\$ 49,728
2007–08	\$ <u>77,205</u>
TOTAL	\$281,933

The NWT HC is carrying a CMHC mortgage of approximately \$2.299 million on the facility with a monthly mortgage payment of \$15,614.98. The facility was appraised at \$2.4 million in September 2001.

Since taking ownership of this facility in 2003, the Housing Corporation has incurred operating and maintenance costs related to this facility totalling approximately \$1 million.

With regard to the future plans for this facility, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has reached an agreement for the utilization of the former Sombe K'e Healing Lodge near Dettah. Effective June 2008 the corporation began leasing this facility to the Deton'Cho Corporation, which is owned by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. They will operate the facility as a training centre in partnership with the Mine Training Society and Aurora College. The initial contract is for a three-year period. The NWT HC continues to be interested in either selling the facility or leasing it on a cost-recovery long-term basis.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Clerk.

Tabling of Documents

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a response to Petition 6-16(2), tabled by Mr. Menicoche on May 27, 2008, to table.

Document 62-16(2), Response to Petition 6-16(2): Johnny Berens Ferry Service, tabled.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 18 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 1, 2008–2009

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, June 18, 2008, I will move that Bill 18, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No.1 2008–2009, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 9 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 4, 2007–2008

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 9 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, read a first time.

BILL 13 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT

Hon. Jackson Lafferty: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 13, An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act, read a first time.

BILL 14 AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 14 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, read a first time.

BILL 15 AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 15 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, read a first time.

BILL 16 WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS ACT, 2008–2009

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 16, Write-off of Debts Act, 2008–2009, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 16 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 16, Write-off of Debts Act, 2008–2009, read a first time.

BILL 17 FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2008–2009

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 17, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2008–2009, be read for the first time.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 17 has had first reading.

Motion carried; Bill 17, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2008–2009, read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Minister Responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 9 SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT, NO. 4, 2007–2008

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2007–2008 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker: Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, has had second reading.

Motion carried; Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, read a second time and referred to Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker: Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 8, Bill 11, Bill 12, Committee Reports 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, Tabled Document 37-16(2), Minister's Statement 62-16(2), with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I call the Committee of the Whole to order.

Some items to deal with today: Bill 8, Bill 11, Bill 12, Committee Reports 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, Tabled Document 37-16(2), Minister's Statement 62-16(2), and Bill 9. What is the wish of the committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee would like to deal with the Legislative Assembly's Main Estimates, Bills 9 and 11, and Committee Reports 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, please.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Is the committee agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay. With that, we'll take a short break and begin with the Legislative Assembly.

The Committee of the Whole took a short recess.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to the adjournment we all agreed that we'll begin this round with the Legislative Assembly.

MAIN ESTIMATES 2008–2009 LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, I'd like to call on the Speaker to make a presentation in regard to the estimates for the Legislative Assembly. With that, Speaker Delorey.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm pleased to present the 2008–2009 estimates for the Legislative Assembly.

As Members know, the Assembly's Main Estimates are drafted and considered by the Board of Management as opposed to the Financial Management Board. As an independent branch of government, the Legislative Assembly is not bound to implement the fiscal policy of the government

with respect to planned expenditure reductions. This being said, it has been the practice of the board in recent years to make every possible effort to implement expenditure reductions for the Assembly when these have been required across government. This year is no exception.

In applying roughly the same methodology to its budget as the Financial Management Board applies to the departments, the board identified a two-year target expenditure reduction of \$675,000. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to report that the Board of Management has fully met this target. The vast majority of the necessary reductions are included in the 2008–2009 estimates before you for consideration.

Mr. Chairman, the 2008–2009 Main Estimates for the Legislative Assembly include a target reduction of \$542,000, the largest component being a \$200,000 reduction to the constituency work expense budgets for individual MLAs. The board is aware this measure will put added strain on Members, particularly those who use the majority of their budgets to hire constituency assistants. Nevertheless, the board felt, and Members have agreed, that leadership by example is important in the current fiscal environment. This is a small reduction in the larger scheme of things, but an important symbolic measure.

Mr. Chairman, the reductions include the elimination of two vacant staff positions: one at the Legislative Assembly branch library, and a second at Elections NWT. They also include a \$102,000 reduction to the budget for the standing committees, reductions to Members' capital accommodations and telecommunications budgets, the elimination of the Cultural Enhancement Commission, and a reduction in the number of community visits under the Speakers' outreach program from two to one.

Mr. Chair, the Assembly's reduction target has been achieved in the face of significant forced-growth pressure in some of our contractor costs, most notably our Hansard contract. Increased utility costs and new initiatives, such as our broadcasting solution, the enhanced Page Program, the Members' constituency travel fund, and costs associated with the Human Rights Commission and the adjudication panel have also been addressed.

Mr. Chair, this year marks the first time we have sought direct input from our statutory board and agencies on their budgets. We reviewed written and in-person presentations from the Chief Electoral Officer, the Human Rights Commission, the Human Rights Adjudication Panel, the office of the Languages Commissioner, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner regarding their budgetary needs. I feel this direct input will allow a higher level of responsiveness to budgetary needs of our

statutory officers without impacting their independence.

Mr. Chair, it's not often I get to speak to issues in this House, so I want to take a moment while I have the floor to focus attention on a few important initiatives we have implemented in recent years.

Mr. Chair, as we speak, the proceedings of this Assembly are being broadcast and rebroadcast in 25 of our 33 communities, both live and throughout the evening.

By the end of the summer, an additional four communities will be added to the system, with a target of all 33 communities by next summer. In October of this year we will begin community-specific broadcasts and rebroadcasts in all of our official languages. Phase 2 of the broadcast solution involves expanding our programming to include standing committee meetings and other public affairs programming of interest to Northerners.

I want to recognize the efforts of Brian Thagard, Patricia Russell, Danielle O'Neill and Ella Mawdsley for their outstanding work in testing, implementing and monitoring this complex and exciting initiative.

Applause.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Mr. Chair, I am pleased to report that no reductions will be made to our popular and well-attended Youth Parliament. This year's Youth Parliament focused on language-preservation issues, and as always, our youth did us proud in this Chamber. We will be rebroadcasting their proceedings throughout the summer.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to report that I will continue to travel to at least one small community a year with our Mace to allow youth and residents who do not normally get to visit the capital to get a sense of the work we do in this Chamber.

Last year, Mr. Chair, the Commissioner and I, the Clerk, the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms, the public affairs and communications coordinator and the Speaker's assistant visited the community of Sachs Harbour. Mr. Chair, this was the first time our Mace has travelled north of the Arctic Circle and across the Arctic Ocean to Banks Island. It was an honour and a privilege to be part of this historic occasion. Watching the looks on the faces of the youth, elders and residents of Sachs Harbour as they were observing our Mace up close confirms to me the value of this initiative. Mayor Robert Eldridge and the elders of Sachs Harbour played great hosts to us, and the youth played a great volleyball game against us. This year we hope to visit a community in the Nahendeh riding.

Mr. Chair, I am pleased to announce that our self-guided tour system is now operational and available in nine of our official languages. Residents and visitors can now take a tour of this impressive and symbolic institution, in the language and timing of their choice, using iPod nano technology.

Finally, Mr. Chair, Members should have already taken notice of an increased number of pages serving us from constituencies throughout the Northwest Territories. This year marks the beginning of a new initiative that will see the Legislative Assembly sponsor up to four pages a year from each Member's constituency to travel to Yellowknife to serve us in the House. The quality of the service we have received from these pages thus far has been excellent, and I wish to thank them for their assistance.

Applause.

Hon. Paul Delorey: I also want to thank Brian Thagard, Donna Friesen, Lynda Comerford, Derek Edjericon and Bryn Herbert for coordinating and implementing this great new initiative.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I will now be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I'd like to ask the Speaker if he will be bringing in witnesses. Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Yes, I would, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Is it agreed the Minister bring in witnesses? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in. For the record, Mr. Speaker, can you introduce your witnesses.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me today I have, to my left, Olin Lovely, director of corporate services; and to my right, Mr. Tim Mercer, Clerk of the Assembly.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome, witnesses. I'll allow for general comments. General comments? Detail?

With that, we can move to page 1-7, Legislative Assembly, Department Summary: \$15.364 million, which we will defer until the end of our discussions.

Moving on to 1-8, Legislative Assembly, information items, Active Positions — By Region.

Legislative Assembly, Department Summary, Active Positions — By Region, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Information item, page 1-9, Active Positions, Community Allocations.

Legislative Assembly, Department Summary, Active Positions — Community Allocations, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 1-10, Revenue Summary, information item. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm just curious what "Gain on Investments" is. I see in 2006–2007 it's \$1.971 million, but then in '07–08 and '08–09 it completely disappears. Why is there nothing budgeted for '08–09? If someone could help me understand what that is, that would be great.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The gain on investments is related to the investment portfolio in the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Fund. It's calculated as the difference between the value of assets of the fund on March 31, 2006, and at March 31, 2007. It's totally due to investment performance.

Mr. Abernethy: Why is it zero on '08–09?

Hon. Paul Delorey: We have not got the numbers for the performance of the fund to put in for '08–09 yet, so we're depending on past years.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 1-10, Revenue Summary, information item.

Legislative Assembly, Department Summary, Revenue Summary, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 1-13, Activity Summary, Office of the Clerk, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$7.826 million. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note that our utilities are steadily increasing. I'm concerned that the price of oil has gone up over 60 per cent since I became an MLA eight months ago; that we are heating this building on the basis of oil; that there is proven technology, in town and operating right now, for much less money; that there's a proven source of fuel such as pellets available for long-term contracts — very cheap. In fact, the cost of the pellets are going down.

I have to admit to a conflict of interest, because I'm a carbon-neutral MLA, which means I have to offset the costs of fossil fuels used to heat my office and that of my constituency assistant. I'm partly speaking up on my own behalf to cut those costs down, but I'm talking full costs here, both the environmental and the monetary costs.

I know it's been brought up, but I don't know that I'm seeing the rigour and the commitment I'd like to here.

My question to the Speaker: is there a chance this could be aggressively pursued, and we could get off fossil fuel heat and onto biomass for this building?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is an issue we have been dealing with for some time now: trying to reduce the energy costs for the Assembly and keeping in mind, as well, the environment.

We have introduced some initiatives here to cut down on costs, such as lighting. Specifically to the fuel, there has been a proposal put forward for pellet heat for the building. We are looking into some of the costs involved in that, and not only that but location for the ability to put in a hopper that would serve that type of system. It's actively being looked at to try and come up with some costs and to find where we would put the equipment to handle that. It is one we're very interested in doing, and we're pursuing it as we speak, actually.

Mr. Bromley: Great. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I think it would be great, as leaders for the territory, to be able to point the finger at ourselves as leading in all ways. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We're on page 1-13. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I like to consistently bring this up each year: it's the matter of the parking in the Legislative Assembly and the grounds for persons in the public and the accessibility that creates.

I know it's been looked at and considered in previous years. There even was money budgeted in past years. I was wondering if I could have an update on that situation.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, this issue has been brought up a number of times, and it's one we continue to struggle with.

There had been a proposal a few years ago to put in an extra 21 parking stalls out front. We had budgeted approximately \$140,000 to do that. When we got an estimate to do those parking stalls, it was considerably higher than that, plus the fact that it was late in the fall when the bids came in.

At the same time, there was talk about a courthouse building being built on the precinct here. We wanted to make sure, when we did it, that it was going to be compatible with whatever was happening at the courthouse, so we delayed doing it.

However, we're at a point now where we have to look at that situation again. We know the roadway out front and parking, as well, are problems for us. We manage to keep security out front to try to control vehicles when there's an event going on here, but it's a constant struggle for us. That is something I'm quite sure Members can expect to see coming forward in the business plans this fall — something we're going to have to do to address our parking and roadway out front.

Mr. Hawkins: I appreciate the answer from the Speaker on that. The money that was allocated to it in previous years allowed the Speaker's Office to go out for tender on this project. Has that money lapsed or been set aside for later use?

Hon. Paul Delorey: It was money we were going to use from within anyway, and that money has lapsed. We do have a fund of \$75,000 that we use for minor repairs out front just to try to keep up with the situation of our roadway and parking lot. Quite obviously, we're going to have to get approval for a bigger expenditure if we want to do it half-decently out there.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, has the Speaker's Office, vis-à-vis through the board, ever considered winding the loop on the roadway? You could be seen as updating the road to somewhat better conditions. Furthermore, we could widen it for safety reasons, and that could help facilitate parking around the loop on one side when we do have these occasional big bursts of capacity being overtaken during special events here. Has that ever been considered or seriously examined? We could help avoid maybe blasting more rocks or carving into some other area, which seems a little unfeasible at this time.

Hon. Paul Delorey: As Members know, the area out front that we're talking about, for the road going around the loop and even the parking lot for that matter.... When it was built, they did it to disturb as little of the environment out there as they possibly could. The road is really narrow. We're still dealing with the swamp area out there regardless of what we do. The engineers have actually suggested we may widen that area, but it would be more or less for road stabilization — to try to maintain a half-decent road out there. We still want to be very conscious. I don't think the mentality on what we do out front has changed an awful lot as far as not wanting to disturb the environment around that area any more than we absolutely have to. One thing we

will be looking at is basically widening it for road stability.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, taking advantage of widening it due to road stability may be the opportunity to save on requirements for future parking. Again, it's the spillover problem that has people parking there anyway, and this would just help clean it up a little bit. I would seek some thoughts from the Speaker to see if they can include that in the review when they do the study to widen the road based on stability. My assumption would be that it would only be a few extra feet wide in order both to accommodate the stability and to ensure there is safe passage of vehicles. We parked on one side of that during occasions that required.... There aren't really that many occasions, yet you get people parking there anyway. So it would go a long way.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Again, we can look at that. Our main concern is to have some stability in the roadway out there and address the parking problem that we have, probably through adding some extra parking to the lot. That's certainly one thing we could look at — whether just widening the base out there would help us out with parking when there is a major event here. So we will look at that.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you. I look forward to any future discussion on that. I hope the Speaker would keep me informed. This is an issue I brought to the Speaker's Office. Since I've been here as a Member, it's been an issue raised to me on a number of occasions by constituents who've come here and there's no parking because the parking lot is full. I don't think creating a new parking lot specific to parking would be the right way to go. I think we could meet a couple of these problems head-on by widening the road. I look forward to seeing some details and also further encourage the Speaker to keep my office informed on this matter, because as he knows, I think I even wrote him as of November regarding this matter. Again, it continues to be an issue, so I'll take that as a commitment to keep me informed.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Yes, we will. Of course, all these issues are considered at the Board of Management level and through the Clerk's Office. We will keep the Member informed as to where we plan on going with this.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay, we're on page 1-13, Activity Summary, Office of the Clerk, Operations Expenditure Summary: 7.826 million.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Office of the Clerk, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$7.826 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 1-14, information item, Office of the Clerk, Active Positions. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a question. The Speaker indicated we are eliminating two positions, and I believe one of them is a vacant library tech position. But there's no change in the number of positions from '07-08 to '08-09. So if I could have an explanation, please.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we're eliminating one position. However, we're adding a new finance administration clerk position, so that offsets the position. That's why the total employees is the same.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Office of the Clerk, Active Positions, information item (page 1-14), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We'll continue on page 1-15, information item, Office of the Clerk, Active Position.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Office of the Clerk, Active Positions, information item (page 1-15), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 1-17, Active Summary, Office of the Speaker, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$253,000.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Office of the Speaker, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$253,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 1-18, information item, Office of the Speaker, Active Positions.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Office of the Speaker, Active Positions, information item (page 1-18), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We'll continue on page 1-19, information item, Office of the Speaker, Active Position.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Office of the Speaker, Active Positions, information item (page 1-19), approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 1-21, Activity Summary, Expenditures on Behalf of Members, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$5.769 million. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The compensation and benefits amount from '07-08 to '08-09 has increased significantly, and I was just wondering why.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Mr. Chairman, most of that comes from pension expenses and an increase to constituency budgets. If we want to get some further detail on that, we'll ask Mr. Lovely to expand on that.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Lovely.

Mr. Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In prior years the pension expense was budgeted under Fees and Payments, and it's more appropriately budgeted under Compensation and Benefits. In prior years, as well, the compensation and benefits for the constituency assistants were budgeted under contract services, but they are actually paid through our payroll system. So it was more appropriate to budget them up there to C&B.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Next on the list I have Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Lovely very efficiently answered my questions at the same time. Thank you.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Expenditures on Behalf of Members, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$5.769 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 1-23, Activity Summary, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$374,000. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, just a quick question regarding.... Although the Chief Electoral Officer doesn't oversee municipal elections, has there been any advancement on this issue to consider making the offer first to municipalities to oversee their elections through this office?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if there's been any formal discussion on it yet. I know that the Chief Electoral Officer is an area that, now that the elections are over with, is going to do some investigating on and working with MACA and the possibility of doing that.

Mr. Hawkins: That's the answer I'm looking for, and I'm glad to hear it. And, of course, I'm sure the Speaker will keep us up to date on the movement of that.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Mr. Chairman, that was actually a recommendation, as well, that was made by the Chief Electoral Officer, to look into that. We can expect some feedback on what her findings are there.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay, we're on page 1-23: Activity Summary, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$374,000.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$374,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Next page, 1-24. Information item, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Active Positions. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have the same questions with regard to numbers of positions as I did in the previous section. I gather we're eliminating a vacant position, but the numbers don't change from last year to this year.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was an error in your papers on the number of positions. That paper shows the Chief Electoral Officer as being a member of the public service, and it's actually a contracted position. That number should read 28 instead of 29. On page 1-24 it should be two instead of three.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Ms. Bisaro. That's good? Okay, we're on page 1-24. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Given that there's an error here, shouldn't we fix that in this book?

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This was basically an information item only. It doesn't affect the bottom line or the figures, so.... We can correct the page in the book if the Member wants a new page, but it doesn't affect the amounts we're talking about in appropriations.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We'll note for the record that we'll correct the number that's been mentioned. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Page 1-25, information item, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Active Positions — By Region.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Active Positions, information item, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 1-27, Activity Summary, Statutory Officers, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$1.142 million. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a matter that has arisen, not specifically with every commissioner in one of these positions, but as an issue with some, and it's the issue of residency. This is an area that's, of course, the establishment.... The legislation would fall under the appointment process provided by the Board of Management and the Speaker. I was just wondering if the residency issue will be taken on as an issue in this next coming year, through the Speaker's Office, through the Board of Management, to potentially update.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: The residency issue is one where we do our best, in our statutory officers especially, to have Northerners in those positions where we can. As far as residency for certain positions, there's no requirement to have that. However, we would like to do that.

There are some positions in our statutory officers that sometimes we prefer to have outside the Territories, or it makes more sense to have them outside the Territories, strictly because of conflict-of-interest issues. However, with the Languages Commissioner, when she was appointed for a four-year term, she was a resident of the North. Her term is up in February, I think, and we will be looking at her position when her appointment is up.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, I think the Speaker has well described the issue. I'm not suggesting every specific commissioner position should be a resident, and I think it was highlighted that, well, it's maybe conflict-of-interest issues that are more important to observe and that a non-resident would be more appropriate. As well, there's an expertise issue that from time to time will surface. But, Mr. Chairman, the issue I'm strictly raising is that for some of these positions we'll certainly have competent Northerners who are able to be there: attract them as Northerners and get them to stay here and hopefully fulfill their mandate in their period of appointment.

Therein lies the problem I'm raising, which is to ensure we have them as residents for the full period of their appointment. That's the matter I'm more concerned about, although I want to underscore that I recognize that on every position that may not be appropriate or necessarily feasible. But it's the issue of raising it so we can deal with it in the future, because if we have a commissioner who leaves the Northwest Territories, there is no mechanism to either retract them from their position or require them to return to the North as a resident. Then I think the Legislature looks a little silly, in the sense of someone being appointed, and then we have no way of dealing with them if they just pack up and move to another jurisdiction. That's really

my issue: that most recently we've had one who decided to vacate but not resign their position. There's my concern.

It's not just mine, by the way; it's a number of people in the constituency and in the community of Yellowknife who thought that was a bit of an anomaly and would prefer to see it addressed in some form or other. The issue I'm trying to raise here is: do you think it'll be something you'll be able to look at in this next coming year?

Hon. Paul Delorey: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if there's a way of making somebody commit when they're looking at a four-year appointment. They show an interest in a position, and we appoint them for four years. I don't know if we can make sure they're going to be here for the four-year period. Sometimes if they make a move out of the Territories temporarily or for a short period of time, that's grounds to revoke their appointment. Commissioners are statutory officers when appointed and become arm's length from government, and we have found no reason to revoke her appointment. Also, the one we're talking about has indicated that she is returning to the Territories to be a resident. However, that is something we will look at for sure and take into consideration in future appointments.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, I think it's the issue of up and leaving residency. I'm not talking about going for prolonged holidays or personal reasons: if there was a need that drew someone away, that's obvious and reasonable. It's the issue of packing one's bags, selling their house and establishing roots — whether it's a job or whatnot — elsewhere. That's the issue, really. It provides an element of a double standard, whereas if an MLA in this room picked up and moved their residence to Alberta or B.C., Ontario, who knows where, they would have been deemed to have resigned. That's really the clause I'm suggesting

The Speaker is quite correct. It's difficult to ask someone to commit to four years. But I look in this room, and there are 19 Members here who have committed four years of their life to a process and certainly a living experience in the sense of ensuring they're part of the North. It's the resignation process I'm stressing — I should say I'm requesting — be looked at, because again, you're appointed as a statutory officer.

You know, in a lot of these I think it's quite reasonable to assume you're a resident of the Northwest Territories at the time of appointment. I think Northerners are capable of doing the job, and there's certainly an interest. I would ascertain that from the public's point of view it seems insulting to the system that a commissioner is appointed to one of these positions and leaves. That's the issue: I'd just like to see if it would be raised in the context

where appropriate. Again, I'm not suggesting that every commissioner position needs to have that as a clause, but I think it's a reasonable suggestion from my point of view and from a number of people both in my riding and within Yellowknife.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Mr. Chairman, it's something we will look at. There's no legislative requirement for them to resign if they do move right now, so maybe even to put a clause like that in there we may need some legislative change. It's certainly something we can keep in mind, and wherever we can fill those positions with Northerners, it's something we want to look at.

Mr. Hawkins: I'll accept that as a commitment from the Speaker to review that in the next while.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay. We're on page 1-27, Activity Summary, Statutory Officers, Operations Expenditure Summary. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. Bisaro: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under Program Delivery Details on page 1-28, the Human Rights Commission has two fairly large amounts compared to the other statutory officer positions: \$335,000 and then grants and contributions of \$425,000. I'm just wondering why there are two different amounts there and why they are so large.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Paul Delorey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, these are details on the finances of staffing and the director's position. I would ask Olin Lovely to walk you through the detail on those.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The director of Corporate Services, Mr. Lovely.

Mr. Lovely: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$335,000 is for the salary of the director and deputy director of the Human Rights Commission, and it also includes the honoraria for the commission members. The \$420,000 is an amount appropriated and provided to the Human Rights Commission to undertake its activities and review on human rights cases.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay. We're on page 1-27, Statutory Officers, Activity Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$1.142 million.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Statutory Officers, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$1.142 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Moving on to page 1-29, Activity Summary, Statutory Officers, Grants and Contributions, Contributions: \$420,000.

Legislative Assembly, Activity Summary, Statutory Officers, Grants and Contributions, Contributions: \$420,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We can turn back to page 1-7, Department Summary, Legislative Assembly, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$15.364 million.

Legislative Assembly, Department Summary, Operations Expenditure Summary: \$15.364 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, that concludes the Department Summary.

We're going to Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, page 1-5, Office of the Clerk, Tangible Capital Assets, Total Tangible Capital Assets: \$540,000.

Legislative Assembly, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Office of the Clerk, Tangible Capital Assets, Total Tangible Capital Assets: \$540,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Activity: \$540,000.

Legislative Assembly, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Office of the Clerk, Tangible Capital Assets, Total Activity: \$540,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Department: \$540,000.

Legislative Assembly, Infrastructure Acquisition Plan, Office of the Clerk, Tangible Capital Assets, Total Department: \$540,000, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree we've concluded with the estimates for the Legislative Assembly?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): With that, I'd like to thank the Speaker and the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses out.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Okay. We can move on to Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. With that, I'd like to call on Mr. Robert McLeod, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

BILL 11
AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to provide opening comments on Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Bill 11 replaces the existing entitlement for Members to travel to their home community after ten consecutive sitting days with an entitlement to do so after eight consecutive sitting or committee days.

The Board of Management is of the view that the intention of the Legislature in providing this entitlement was that Members not be required to be away from their families for more than two weeks at

a time while attending to official Assembly business.

As the provision currently stands, Members are not normally entitled to home travel until nearly three weeks have passed when the House convenes on a day other than Monday, which is normally the case. This provision will allow members to return to their home community to consult with constituents and spend time with their families every second weekend. For this reason I am pleased to support this initiative.

I am available to answer any questions that Members may have.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): At this time I would like to ask Mr. McLeod if he would like to bring in witnesses.

Mr. McLeod: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Is the committee agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witness in. Mr. Robert McLeod, could you please introduce your witness.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you. I have Ms. Gail Bennett, Principal Clerk, Operations, with me.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Welcome, witness.

We're on Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Are there any general comments on the bill?

Some Honourable Members: Clause by clause.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Clause by clause? Okay. If we can move to page 1: Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

Clauses 1 and 2 approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the Committee of the Whole agree with the bill as a whole?

Bill 11 as a whole approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 11 is now ready for third reading?

Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, approved for third reading.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witness out, please.

The next item we need to deal with is Bill 9, which is Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008. At this time I'd like to ask the Premier if he'd like to make some general comments to introduce the bill.

BILL 9
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT,
NO. 4, 2007–2008

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, requests authority for additional appropriations of \$28.205 million for operational expenditures for the 2007–2008 fiscal year.

There are two items in this request:

- 1) \$10.9 million for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs to record a grant-in-kind for the costs associated with infrastructure that has been transferred to community governments. There is no outlay of cash as the funds were expensed in previous fiscal years. The impact on government operations is nil as the department will record an offsetting revenue amount.
- 2) \$17.3 million for the Department of Health and Social Services to provide contribution funding to fund the projected accumulated operating deficits of Health and Social Services authorities as at March 31, 2008.

That concludes my opening remarks. I am prepared to answer questions Members may have.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): At this time I'd like to ask the Minister if he'll be bringing any witnesses.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that the Minister bring his witnesses?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, could you escort the witnesses in.

Mr. Roland, could you introduce your witnesses, please.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, to my right I have the secretary to the FMB, Ms. Kathleen LeClair, and to my left is Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar, director of budgeting and evaluation.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Welcome, witnesses.

General comments in regard to Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008? Detail?

Some Honourable Members: Detail.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): We are on Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, and also the preamble and the schedule at this time, for which we will move to page 5 of the bill, Municipal and Community Affairs, Operations Expenditures, Regional Operation, not previously authorized: \$10.885 million.

Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, Municipal and Community Affairs, not previously authorized: \$10.885 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Total Municipal and Community Affairs: \$10.885 million, not previously authorized.

Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, Total Municipal and Community Affairs, not previously authorized: \$10.885 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Health and Social Services, Operational Expenditures, Health Services Programming, not previously authorized: \$17.32 million. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that this allocation is to address the various deficits in the operating budgets of some of the health authorities. Several are in financial deficit; several are not. This is not a new happening. This is something that has been happening with health authorities for a number of years.

In the past there was some level of participation sought from health authorities when they were in deficits to work with the government in terms of a recovery plan. I can think of one time when the health authority was expected to work with the government to come up with 50 per cent of the deficit over a period of time. The problem with that occurs when you get into this level of deficit and then with the forced growth and the continuing pressures on the government to provide seemingly an ever-expanding number of services, pharmaceuticals, competitive wages, salaries and benefits for our human resources component of the health system. There are just so many challenges that I won't go into naming them all; we know what they are.

If we did seek some kind of participation in the recovery process, I can't see that doing anything but putting more pressure on the delivery system. The last thing you want to do is do things that would impose hardship on the patients and the clients our services are meant to serve.

I'd like to ask about this. What are we doing to analyze why we are getting into this level of deficit

with some health authorities? Some are in good shape, some are breaking even and some have surpluses. What are we doing in terms of analyzing why the situation is occurring? Either we are perhaps underfunding the health authorities, or perhaps it has something to do with the management of the funds we do provide to them. I'd like to know from the Minister what we're doing to try and address the causes of such a substantive deficit.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of FMBS, Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct on the process, the program that's in place and the policy we have with authorities. On the side of deficits, the boards are to address the deficits through their annual plan. With surpluses, they are allowed to put 50 per cent into a reserve fund to offset future deficits. We have two health authorities who have deficits at this point.

I want to say for the record that the deficits have started as late as the year 1999. Since '98-99 a number of boards have been in and out of deficit. The Government of the Northwest Territories in past supplementary appropriation exercises has paid out half of the debt at that point but had health authorities working to come up with a plan to find the rest of that.

When we found that the deficits were going higher, FMBS had become involved with the Department of Health and Social Services and progressed to the point of doing a zero-based exercise. That exercise was initially to take a snapshot view of how the health authorities were spending their dollars. We started with Stanton, and we'll be going forward to the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority as well. From that, we're hoping to gain a better understanding of how the money was being expensed. Was it an area of underfunding, or was it an area of enhancing program delivery that was beyond the mandate of the Department of Health and Social Services and the authorities?

The Department of Health and Social Services has now taken that information under review and has been working with the authorities on coming up with a plan to deal with the expenditures going forward. FMBS has reviewed this scenario of where the authorities are and felt that to start this process and do a proper review, it would not be, as the Member stated, appropriate to burden the existing arrangement with an old debt that's been collecting and starting to grow.

Mrs. Groenewegen: I'm wondering what incentive managers of health authorities have to live within their means and stay on budget. This sends a pretty big message for a deficit of this magnitude to be addressed with a straight bailout, so to speak.

What incentive is there, then, for the authorities who have stayed within their budget or very close to it? What incentive is there for them to do that going forward, knowing that we can vote a \$17 million budget item to address a deficit?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the surplus and deficit policy allows the boards that are in a surplus situation to hold on to 50 per cent of that surplus. At one point all the money used to be returned to the department. Of course, there are a number of health authorities that are doing okay or holding surpluses. There are a few that are into a deficit, and the two major ones are Stanton and the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority.

A serious question we have to address, even going forward, is: what is the expectation? Right now I think a lot of not only authorities but also people of the Northwest Territories feel that health care is an important or crucial element of delivery in the Northwest Territories, to the point where we fund the programs and continue to fund health authorities to keep their operations going.

We're at the stage now in the Northwest Territories where we can't afford to let these situations continue to grow. There's a need to deal with that, and the Department of Health and Social Services has been putting a plan together dealing with the authorities and reviewing it.

Questions we have to ask ourselves in these areas are, for example: Stanton being the territorial facility, if other authorities are unable to provide a service because they're unable to find the right mix of doctors and nurses in the other facilities, do they send a larger load to the Stanton facility to take care of that? That is something we also have to look into as we proceed with this ongoing work.

Mrs. Groenewegen: This is a really sizeable amount of money, \$17 million. I want to know: are there any intermediate steps that would be taken when you're heading down this path to a \$17 million deficit, where at some point somebody might say, "We're in trouble here" and take some intervention steps to do some analysis along the way as opposed to trying to sort this out afterward, this far into deficit? It just seems like it's a little too much after the fact. Sometimes with health authority boards there has been a necessity in the past to step into the situation. The Minister will take on a role of appointing a public administrator to deal with situations when things seem like they are going off the rails to the point where the system is under this kind of pressure and there's this kind of exposure of public funds in public facilities and public programming.

I guess I'm concerned about how far down this path we are right now. Weren't there some warning

signs going off quite a while ago? This total amount came about as quite a surprise to me when we were actually starting to learn of the magnitude of it. I want to know what policies are in place to make some kind of an intervention before things get to this state.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, we work through the territorial health and social services act, and that lays out the relationship that departments have with the board and how FMBS can become involved in the operations of an authority.

Under the last government, initiatives were taken to bring FMBS to the table. That's how the zero-based initiative was started: with the involvement of FMBS, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Stanton facility to come up with a program on reviewing its expenditure patterns and looking at how it was carrying on with the management of delivery of that service. That was going to be the model that is used for other authorities that are facing a similar situation.

Now, Members going back in previous supplementary appropriations would be aware that previous actions have been undertaken with the Department of Health and Social Services, coming forward with 50 per cent of the deficit of that fiscal year and having departments or the authorities come up with a plan to recover the deficit from within that year. That has been the exercise undertaken. It has now gone to another level where FMBS has become involved in looking at the collections of the authorities to ensure we are receiving our revenue from providing services to other jurisdictions or the federal government, for example, as well, and the billing system that is in place.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Thanks, Mr. Minister. Next on the list I have Mr. Ramsay, and then Mr. Robert McLeod. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to follow up on my colleague's questions. It's interesting, I guess. I find it hard to believe that we'd be here today facing this \$17 million item in a supp, \$11.5 million of it for Stanton alone, when it was over two years ago that alarm bells were first rung over the deficits that were accruing at Stanton Territorial Hospital. That was two years ago. It's nice to see the government finally waking up and wanting to do something about it. But this is not a problem that just happened overnight. It's a problem that's been going on for awhile.

As for the previous public administrator I'm not sure if they were asleep at the switch or what was happening. We haven't addressed the unfunded positions at that hospital. To be honest with you, I just don't see a palatable game plan going forward.

I know the Minister has hired somebody from Calgary who's familiar with the hospital. They're not here on the ground. They're not out there every day trying to figure out what's going on at that hospital. To my knowledge they still live in Calgary. It's only a three-month time frame, so I'm wondering how you can fix what amounts to eight years of neglect in three months. I don't know exactly how that is going to work.

The Premier talked about it. The Minister of Finance talked about it. We went to a zero-based review, and you know what? As soon as the zero-based review is done, that hospital doesn't pay their payroll for six and a half months. Maybe it's ironic with the timing — I'm not quite sure how that works — but they're into FMBS for \$26 million. I'd like to ask the Finance Minister if we could get a breakdown of that \$11.5 million and what it went to pay. Is it all for salaries? There's been some discussion that maybe part of that \$26 million that the hospital is into FMBS for is part of that \$11 million. I'm not sure, but can somebody please try to help me out with that? I'd like a breakdown of the \$11.5 million.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of FMBS.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record the Member has, on a number of occasions now, talked about the fact that the payroll situation has only been six and a half months. It's been a couple of years since the department became involved. It was a lesser rate, and, yes, it has grown significantly over the last piece. That is a different piece of the puzzle. This is dealing with the accumulated deficit building over a number of years. We are dealing with it now and going forward with a newer plan.

For the actual details of how it breaks down, or the work that's been done to date, I'd have to go to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, and she can provide some of that detail.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Health, Ms. Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The breakdown for the \$11.5 million accumulated deficit is for \$7.4 million for the fiscal year '07-08, \$5.8 million for '06-07 and \$3.2 million for '05-06. Another thing I want to say is that the public administrator functions like a board but with detailed instruction and interaction with me as to what work he's doing on the ground at the hospital. It doesn't necessarily mean he has to be at the hospital. When he was here for three weeks, he interviewed staff and management extensively at the hospital. He continues to work on this issue even though he's not on the ground.

Going forward, one thing we are doing differently is that FMBS has directed me, as the Minister, to come back to the authority on a quarterly basis to get an update on exactly what the fiscal situation of each health authority is so we stay on top of the financial picture of the authorities. As a department we need to continue to work on system-wide initiatives to make sure we have a good handle on exactly what is a cost driver and what efficiencies could be found, if any, and what structural or other changes need to be made. I think the zero-based review gave us a good guideline, and it will be used to do work in Inuvik as well. Right now the public administrator at Stanton Territorial Hospital Authority is using the information gained from zero-based review and doing more detailed analysis on the ground level to get more information about what is driving the deficit and how we could prevent it from going forward.

Chairman (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank both Ministers for their response. It puts us as legislators in a very untenable situation when you're faced with these big deficits. Like I said, they haven't accrued overnight. They've been there, as the Minister broke it down for us, since '05-06. Now we're just finally going to wipe out \$11.5 million of accrued deficit with the stroke of a pen. That's just at one authority.

To me, Mr. Chairman, the accountability just is not there. Where's the accountability? Where has the previous Minister of Health been? This Minister of Health is trying to do something. Where was the previous government on these accrued deficits that were building up at this hospital? They knew about it. They didn't do anything about it. That's what I want to point out, again for the record. There's no accountability there. We just take it and wipe it off the sheet: \$11.5 million, almost \$17.5 million. It's a lot of money.

The last time I checked, we were in a reduction exercise. We're trying to run a tight ship here. Well, we're leaking like a sieve in our health authorities. Let me tell you: we'd better try to fix this. We'd better fix it fast. I'd like to see us come up with a plan on how we're going to get more control over the health authorities because if they're leaking like this, we need to ensure we have control and we have some mechanisms in place to allow us to manage the growth there and the cost overruns. It just doesn't make much sense to me how we let it get to this stage where we can just erase it.

As legislators we're put between a rock and a hard place because, as other Members have said, it's the health of the people we represent. We can't go out there and all of a sudden tell the Stanton Health Authority or the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social

Services Authority they have to cut services and they have to cut programs. That's just not acceptable to the public we serve. We wouldn't be looked on favourably in the public eye; that's for sure. Again, it's the accountability.

Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister of Health: how many unfunded programs are currently at Stanton and how many unfunded positions? What's the strategy to address that? In my mind that's a big part of the problem.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll let the Minister give some of the detail, but for the record, once again, the fact is that previous governments did initiate action. A zero-based review exercise was undertaken. A plan was being put together on how to move forward on this file to the point where FMBS got directly involved and remains involved to date.

In the other areas of the breakdown of services the Member is quite correct. When you look at the fact that we've had as much concern as Members of the Assembly about reducing to the levels we have, there'd be even a greater level of concern if we were to turn this back to health authorities and tell them to live within their means totally before we came up with a plan as to how to recover from this. That exercise is ongoing at this time.

For the actual detail the Member has asked for, I'll have the Minister of Health and Social Services respond.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Roland. Minister Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to echo the Premier by saying that the action we are taking right now is a stage. It has been led by incremental steps that have been taken since '05-06. The information we have is that the major deficit for Stanton as well as Beaufort-Delta began in '05-06. While the policy states that each authority should absorb 50 per cent of deficit and then the government will give 50 per cent of that, at that time it was thought to be too much for authorities to absorb.

As the Members have stated already, we do not want to be, or be seen as or be perceived as, rewarding that behaviour. Not that you could judge government department spending by good or bad behaviour, but it was incumbent on the government to figure out exactly what was causing the deficit.

It was in '05-06 that real discussions and earnest — well, intense — discussions happened. I know this from reading briefing notes between the FMBS and the department and the authority on how we

could get to the bottom of what was causing the deficit. Since the years of '05–06, '06–07 and '07–08, incremental small infusions of the cash were given to the authorities. In the meantime, any kind of major action like what we are doing here was deferred until we could get more clear analysis. The mode of doing that was the zero-based review that was decided upon, and that was instituted. It was talked about in '06–07. It was instituted in the spring of '07, and it was finished.

In April of this year we had a preliminary report on that zero-based review. It gives a cost accounting of how much it costs to deliver the programs we are doing in Stanton and Beaufort-Delta, but it doesn't give us extra information as to whether we're doing what we are doing as well as we can or whether we could do it differently. There are extra layers of analysis that we need to do, and that's exactly what the public administrator at Stanton is doing. What we are gaining from the zero-based review as well as the public administrator's work at Stanton will be followed up on with Beaufort-Delta.

Mr. Chairman, I have to say there is just a very complex set of factors that we think are contributing to the deficit. As the Member indicated, we need to be measured and careful about what steps we take because it does impact the front-line services and programs, and we need to do a good job at that.

Going forward, another action this government is taking is that we're asking the authorities to have a balanced budget this year and that they be accountable every three months. That's a step we've never taken before. We're taking it to make sure we're not in the same position as we are now. In order to do the balanced budget, we need to clear out the debt because there's no way for the authorities to absorb some of these deficits.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the other area of this is the review. Members are aware of that in Refocusing Government, looking at boards and agencies and their role in delivering the services across the Northwest Territories. This is one of those areas where we have to take that review and see how we do, in fact, deliver services to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of other questions. The Minister didn't answer the one question I had: how many unfunded positions are there at Stanton, and how many unfunded programs are at Stanton, and what game plan have we got going forward to address those? I'd like to get a better understanding of under what authority these unfunded positions and unfunded programs came into being. I'd like to start there.

While I've just got a couple of minutes, maybe the Minister can answer this question too. Going forward, she talks about having balanced budgets

for the authorities. How is Stanton ever going to be able to have a balanced budget when they're into FMBS for \$26 million? They're starting out at negative \$26 million. I'd like to ask the Minister — maybe the Finance Minister or the Health Minister — when we can expect that stuff to come forward so we can wipe that debt off, because it's going to be a huge one.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Talking about this year would be another matter. Talking about this supplementary appropriation for previous years' expenditures is one thing, but a large amount of what the Member's referring to is the fact that we need to collect on revenues that are owed to the Stanton authority as well as the Government of the Northwest Territories. For the 2007–2008 fiscal year, there are a number of unfunded programs. Of course, that would mean unfunded positions. But they're, again, delivered through the fact that they have some flexibility in the delivery mechanisms within the territorial health and social services act. I'll have the Minister respond to that detail.

Hon. Sandy Lee: I apologize for not getting to the unfunded positions. What I would like to say is that I don't think we could attribute the deficit in the authority to unfunded positions. Unfunded positions come in different shapes and sizes. These authorities are block funded, and they do have flexibility within to create positions where they think they are required.

Stanton, for example, has 53 programs. I believe they are mostly funded, but the important thing I want to say is that.... Mr. Ramsay is worried, and I can see why, that given the level of deficit these authorities are going through, how could they possibly be able to balance their budget?

But that is a requirement we have. We have to live within 3 per cent growth. Something different that this government has undertaken this year is to be fiscally responsible. It has raised the base of authorities by — well, the department as a whole got \$44 million extra funding. About half of that is going to the authorities. The department has been active in the last two to three months to let the authorities know right up front exactly how much they're going to get, and they have had to balance their budget based on last year's spending.

That also included taking some interim measures and taking measures, as much as possible, where it would not impact front-line service. They have to take steps to increase their revenue potential. Authorities like Beaufort-Delta and Stanton do provide services to third parties like WCB or out-of-town residents or Nunavut residents, where they are supposed to collect those monies. System wide we need to make sure those monies are collected.

We're looking at capacity issues to see if both boards have enough capacity there to do the work that is required to make sure they balance their budgets. It is a very aggressive but very fiscally responsible step we are taking. Part of the reason we need to have this supplementary appropriation to start with a clean slate is that we're taking more fiscally responsible actions going forward.

In terms of the unfunded positions in Stanton, the number I heard was about 27, but I can't verify that. Zero-based review showed it has 53 programs. I, as a Minister, think it's not a good measure to say we're going to be fiscally responsible and just eliminate all unfunded positions, because we need to ask the next question about why those positions weren't funded. Are there some unfunded positions that should be funded? Maybe some other positions that are funded should not be. That's the kind of program review the public administrator's engaged in.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lee. We'll go on to Mr. Robert McLeod next.

Mr. McLeod: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure if this is the forum or not, but I'm trying to understand the process of the hospital. That, I think, will go a long way to my understanding the reasons, especially in respect to the \$4.3 million at the Beau-Del regional hospital.

Maybe the first question I could ask is.... I'll ask two at the same time here. The \$4.3 — is that just for this year or is that over three years like Stanton? My second question is: when the Beaufort-Delta regional hospital provides services, they are required to invoice. I believe that's correct; I think that could be my second question, Mr. Chair.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Minister Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The deficit of Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services started as far back as 1998-99 and grew. At that point it was in the range of half a million dollars. It fluctuated. They came out of the situation for a couple of years, but back in 2003-04 it started again, and they continued to grow a deficit. At the same time we, as a government, over a number of years through supplementary appropriation, funded half of their deficit situation.

Some of this, for example, is when there are utilities costs that go up on an annual basis that were not budgeted for at the beginning of the year. They grow throughout the year, and we have to look at addressing that. We've done that with departments a number of times. When you look at, for example.... Fuel costs that were not budgeted for at the beginning of the year have risen; there has

been a number of supplementary appropriations that came back. From time to time we've — not only health authorities but departments — told them we would pay half of it and they would have to fund the other half. As we see costs continue to rise, we've realized it is not in the ability of the authorities to pay down those costs, which continue to climb and are out of their control.

Some of these are due to the fact they've also gone for a number of years having revenue owed to them that was not collected. That is where we, as FMBS, have become involved — in the collections side of the authorities as well.

Mr. McLeod: I thank the Minister for that. He did mention the collection of the revenue, but my second question is: the authority invoices for services they provide; if those invoices are not sent out quickly enough, is that reflected in this \$4.3 million too?

Hon. Floyd Roland: It is reflected in these numbers. When invoices are not sent out in a timely fashion, they become, for that year, a debt owed to the authority. It continues to grow after that. That's why we've become involved, now, in looking at the collections side of the ledger.

Mr. McLeod: So FMB is going to look after the collections and the invoicing. Do we have any idea how much we have outstanding in invoices? Were these invoices ever sent out? You'd have to send an invoice out to not get paid and then have FMB come and do the collection. I'm just concerned that.... Is there a box full of invoices that were never sent out and therefore can't be collected on? With FMB getting involved, were you going to go into the office there and go through all the paperwork and determine if we have a lot of outstanding invoices that haven't been sent out or haven't yet been collected? Thank you, Mr. Chair; I think there was a question there.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the Department of Health and Social Services in the previous Assembly did, in fact, send up an individual and help the authority go through its finances and begin to look at its books to see where it was having problems. So some of that work has been started. FMBS at Stanton, as I've stated, has become directly involved with the collections side. Invoices have been sent out and are due. We're working with the appropriate bodies to get payment on those.

Mr. McLeod: Just in closing.... I'm not one to point fingers, but if we're having an issue with collections or invoicing, my opinion would be that it's up to the CEO to monitor and make sure these invoices are going out and being collected on. It does, as the Minister said, reflect in this \$4.3 million. I think if

that gets tightened up just a bit, we may not see a deficit coming forward in the future — hopefully. The Minister did state that, before, there were a couple of years where we didn't have a deficit. Maybe those were the years the invoices went out in a prompt manner and were collected on as soon as possible.

Like I said, I'm not one to point fingers, but we talk about accountability and that in the Assembly here, and we all feel we're accountable. I think all the departments should be accountable to the Legislative Assembly. We're talking \$17.3 million here — that's quite an amount of money. I think I did ask the Minister before: does FMB have any idea of the actual dollar amount of unpaid invoices for the Beaufort-Delta regional hospital?

Hon. Floyd Roland: There's a number of questions there. The issue of the CEO and taking account for what's happening within a facility is one that is accurate, but the CEOs report to boards, and boards.... We work at arm's length through the territorial health and social services act in delivery of that service. That is one of the reasons we have to look at the boards' and agencies' work in this Assembly and come up with another model for delivery if we can't get a hold of what's going on, or change the process we're involved in, in this environment. FMBS has worked with the authorities, and we have come up with the figure from the authorities. For the Beaufort-Delta, we're looking at \$2 million dollars in receivables. At Stanton I understand we're about \$12 million in receivables.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just following up on those comments of the Minister and the collections brought up by my colleague. For Stanton, I believe about half of the debt for the Stanton Territorial Health Authority is due to billing disputes for services to Nunavut residents. I'm wondering if the basis of this dispute has been remedied. Are we no longer accruing debts because of billing disputes, and do we have a billing protocol that's acceptable now in place?

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Of the \$12 million, approximately \$6 million is billing to Nunavut. We have been working with Nunavut to try to come up with a satisfactory arrangement. For that detail I'll get Ms. LeClair to give some more information.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Roland. Ms. LeClair.

Ms. LeClair: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At Comptroller General I have been working with my counterpart in Nunavut to bring to their attention the large accumulated amounts that are owed to the Government of the Northwest Territories. We've been making some progress in getting the detail on exactly what those bills are. I will be meeting in the next couple of weeks with Nunavut officials to go over those details and, hopefully, get this issue resolved.

Mr. Bromley: Thanks for those comments. So we don't know.... We may still be accruing additional debt here. It sounds like we're working on the process, though, that's causing that debt to accumulate. Is that correct?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Not getting into detailed information that would relate to individuals — that's best for another discussion we could have — there is some debt still accruing with the arrangement we have right now with Nunavut. As Ms. LeClair pointed out, we are working to clarify that and get that rectified.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Roland. Moving along to Mr. Krutko.

Mr. Krutko: My question is in regard to the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority at \$4.3 million. I'd just like to ask the Minister if he can give me a breakdown of the \$4.3 million. Exactly what's the deficit for?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, \$2 million of that debt is in receivables. For the other information I'd have to go to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Hon. Sandy Lee: The information I have is that it is an accumulated deficit over three years. That would take into consideration all the receivables and payroll, but it's an accumulated deficit over three years since '05–'06, '06–'07 and '07–'08.

Mr. Krutko: Is there a possibility we could get a breakdown of exactly what the deficit is? Is it a deficit by way of retention or travel or in regard to the cost of locums? We should have an idea of what those expenditures are.

Hon. Sandy Lee: We don't have that level of detail on exactly what's causing the shortfall there.

Hon. Floyd Roland: The breakdown.... Because it's over a number of years and because we fund Health and Social Services authorities by block funding, we do have certain areas that money is allocated to, but there's flexibility within that.

Part of it could be the different years. They may have had increased use of locum doctors or agency nurses or utilities costs going up. That's one of the reasons FMBS has become involved in looking at a zero-based review and exactly how the money's being spent on a day-to-day basis, coming forward with a plan and working with the Department of Health and Social Services on how we can rectify this so we don't end up in this situation again.

Mr. Krutko: One of the concerns I have — especially representing small communities — is that we seem to have seen a real decline in services in our communities in health and social services in regard to vacancies; lack of programs being delivered by mental health, alcohol and drug workers; doctor visits; dental care.

I'm wondering if one of the reasons we're seeing fewer services is because of the deficit situation at the Inuvik health board, which is affecting the ability of the board to deliver the essential services to our communities. Where we're seeing a decline in those services, I'm wondering if there's a correlation between those.

Also, I'd like to know exactly when the last time was that the Beaufort-Delta health authority had a surplus.

Hon. Floyd Roland: It fluctuated between years. It started as early as 1998–1999. There were a couple of years there that it did come out: 2001–02 was the year they had a small surplus; in 2002–03 they had another small surplus; and in 2003–04 they started going back into a deficit position. I believe the last time they had a positive entry was 2004–05.

I was saying, Mr. Chairman, the fact that the department has been working with authorities and trying to get them to live within their means.... But the simple fact that they had been spending more than they had been bringing in is an example of everything the Member's raised; for example, further increasing the costs of delivery across the Territories in a number of these authorities. It is something we're going to have to get a grip on and make the necessary changes to start living within the budgeted amounts that are provided.

Mr. Krutko: Mr. Chair, I think that if any review is going to take place, we also have to do a review in regard to looking at the services that are being provided through this funding, because every community — when you look at the tracking system we have in government — has earmarked a dollar amount for health and social services if you look at GNWT tracking. Every community says if we have this money, why is it not being spent or why aren't those positions filled in our communities? Someone else is spending that money on our behalf.

I think that if you are going to do any review, you'll have to also look at the service side of the review, ensuring that the fundamental programs and services are being delivered — and if they're not delivered, why not? For myself, I'd just like that question answered. When communities know there's a set amount for health and social services, education, policing, municipal services and whatnot budgeted by community through government tracking, and that money is not being expended in a community, then the question is: where is it being expended? If you are doing a review, is that something that's also going to be looked at?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, geographic tracking processes are done by the department and the FMBS as well. That breakdown is territorial, regional, community; looking at service delivery, looking at all departments. As Members are aware, although it's broken down, some of the pots of funding are held either in headquarters, even if it's for regional dollars, or in the regional centres if it's broken down for community dollars, depending on how it's set up. If it's application based.... If, for example, the jobs are put out but no one is applying, or the qualifications of those applying for jobs don't meet the standards set out, there are a number of factors that come in to that. I believe we are about to release, if we have not just released.... We are looking at 2005–06 numbers as our latest to be able to put out there for Members and the public as well.

Mr. Krutko: I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance: is there going to be some sort of a caretaker in place to look at the Inuvik Health Board review similar to what happened here in Stanton, where you basically point at someone to do the review independent of the CEO or the board, so you can get to the bottom of exactly why it is that we are continuing to run these deficits year after year?

People are running in deficit situations. Like I say, for me, we raise issues in this House time and time again in regard to health care services positions that we assume should have been in a community's mental health positions or alcohol and drug positions. Yet when we are dealing with a doctor, if you see him once a month, now it's coming down to seem like twice a month. Dental care is down the road a couple of months. Those services are affecting the health and well-being of people in communities, yet we seem to be focusing a lot of attention on these large regional centres and Stanton.

I'm wondering exactly what type of assurance I can get from the Minister that there will be accountability and that whatever review takes place it will get to the bottom of exactly why we're running into this situation year after year after year.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the fact that the authorities have been running deficits for a number of years is a concern. That is why the FMBS has become involved, both on the collection side and doing the zero-based review process. The model we put together with Stanton Territorial Health Authority is the model we will be using, or a very similar model, for all other authorities that run into this area.

We know the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority is the next authority that will undergo this review. Previously, the Department of Health and Social Services had sent someone in from outside that organization to look at its work in the financial area and pull the information together and try to help out. Yes, this next phase the Minister of Health and Social Services is undertaking is looking at the actual delivery and areas of delivery and looking at where we can then go with levels of service in the communities and across the territory.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay.

Mr. Ramsay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask for the third time — it's not the financial Minister; it's the Minister of Health. It's the third time I've asked the question, and I'd like a straight answer on how many unfunded programs there are at Stanton, how many unfunded positions there are. She guessed 27, but I'd like to know the exact number. I'd also like to know under what authority were the unfunded programs and positions approved and who approved it.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, the department has begun this review, a zero-based review, looking at program spending to determine in what areas the spending is occurring, whether it is authorized in the sense of mandated programs or has there been a growth in program delivery in areas we would call expansion of the service delivery, though it may not be directly tied to a mandate. That expectation has come in.

I'll give you an example, Mr. Chairman. The department, when they initially looked at the area of services provided to people in the Northwest Territories — this is a number of years ago — found that through the help of companies and individuals, the Stanton Foundation helped Stanton purchase some equipment to put in service for the people of the Northwest Territories.

I'll use the CAT scan as an example, a vital service that's helped a lot of people. Stanton was never set up initially to deliver that, so we've had to, over the

years, begin adding to that. They found after the first year of operation they had to double up their teams because the service was used at a higher rate than was anticipated or budgeted for. It's examples like that we will find come to the surface. It comes to delivery.

Now, who would say that we should stop that level of service? I don't think anybody in the North would agree with that. In fact, as we heard from a Member already, we should be enhancing some of our service delivery, whether it's territorial, regional or community. There's a need for a level of service across the Northwest Territories.

For the specific response, I don't know whether the Minister would have all of that, right down to who authorized it, and I don't think we want to get to that level of debate in this Assembly, at least in this forum. But for the information about unfunded positions and the unfunded programs I'll go to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Chairman (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Minister Lee.

Hon. Sandy Lee: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The number I heard was 27. I'm in the process of verifying that. I'd be happy to get that information back to the Member. When the zero-based review team went to do the zero-based review, they found that Stanton Territorial Health Authority was delivering 53 programs. They looked at the mandate and the direction that each program got, and they're all varying degrees of direction. In total, the authority does deliver 53 programs with varying degrees of mandates.

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Chairman, I find it awfully hard to believe we'd go through a zero-based review at that hospital and not know exactly how many unfunded positions there are or exactly how many unfunded programs there are. To me, that's unfathomable. I don't understand it.

It's a good thing we're not doctors, because it's taken us — and still taking us — over three years, and we still haven't figured out how to stop the bleeding. It's a good thing we're in the profession we're in, I guess, and not doctors. We really need to get a handle on what's happening out there.

If the Minister doesn't have the answers to those questions, I'd also like to ask the Minister of Health: how is Stanton going to pay back the \$26 million? I've heard varying amounts on what the accounts receivable are at today.

I know Nunavut owes us some money, but I think \$6 million is what I've heard. That doesn't come close to paying back the \$26 million. I'd like to know where we're going to get that \$26 million from.

Maybe the Minister can help me understand that a little bit better.

Hon. Floyd Roland: There's no \$26 million request in this supplementary appropriation. That, the department is working to come together on. Of course, FMBS is involved in some of that work, and some of that is receivables, and some of it is the ongoing delivery of programs and services. Again, that started a couple of years ago, intermittently, initially. But in this last number of months it's been on a regular basis.

As we go through this work and look at the service delivery, the mandates and the program levels, we'll be coming back to Members with this type of information.

Mr. Ramsay: I know the issue of the \$26 million is not in this supp, but I think it's germane to the debate we're having on the \$11.5 million of accrued deficit the government wants us to approve in this supplementary appropriation. I want to have some peace of mind that the cause of their accrued deficit at Stanton is going to be addressed.

I'm having another tough time understanding how it is that we could bring in a public administrator for three months and they're going to solve what's wrong with Stanton in three months. That contract's up. We're over halfway through that contract. I'd like to ask the Minister: what plans are there going forward for the administration of that hospital and the management of that hospital so Members can have some peace of mind that it's going to be run effectively and efficiently?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the first part — not all the work is going to be done within a matter of three and a half months. Most of that work has been undertaken already within the different departments, which are working with Health and Social Services to come up with the figures, the program delivery levels and what's been mandated for delivery.

There are a number of areas and departments working at coming up with all the information and the potential results of that in the sense of what levels of services we are going to continue to fund and what level of services we are going to say that, as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we can no longer stay in. I will almost guarantee Members that once we get to that level of debate across the Territories, in this Assembly, you will be getting lots of concerned calls about the fact that there's been any change in delivery of programs and services, much less than what we've had in the debate on the budget to date.

For the details of expectation — where that's sitting at, that work — I'll have to go the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Hon. Sandy Lee: The Premier is correct in saying the PA's work is not time specific. He's been appointed as the public administrator, and he will be in that office until such time as he's removed by me as Minister.

What I meant when I said in the House that I have given the public administrator three months to do some work and give me some recommendations is that it was specifically to the work following the zero-based review. As I stated earlier, the zero-based review gave us lots of information that required additional analysis, and he's using that information as a guideline. Also, he's on the ground looking at the programs and operations of the facility to see how we can address the issues arising out of what's causing the deficit and how we could move forward in balancing the budget without impacting the front line too much.

His specific task right now is three months, but his work will continue beyond three months.

Mr. Ramsay: I won't keep this going much longer. Getting back to who has the authority to put positions into place that are unfunded and to put programs into place that are unfunded, I think maybe we don't want to go there. I'm not sure. What other forum is there for me to ask questions about who has the authority to fund programs? We approve the budget every year. I'd like to have some say in who has the authority. I think that's part of the problem, why we're at the \$17.3 million. There are unfunded positions, there are unfunded programs, and somebody approved them along the way. It wasn't us, so who was it? I think that's a question that needs to be answered, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Floyd Roland: The relationship is spelled out, initially, quite clearly in the territorial health and social services act — the relationship between the authorities and the Department of Health and Social Services.

At times, working with authorities, the department would initiate new programs and program delivery. Telehealth was one the department initiated and worked with authorities in that delivery. There are examples of that where the department has become involved and has encouraged authorities to come on line.

When it comes to other service delivery and the level of delivery, the department gets involved with authorities again. So it's a combination. Ultimately, the authorities, through their management.... They meet. They discuss the spending and the requirements. They make decisions, and on a yearly basis they would come forward, first through the Department of Health and Social Services, requesting more funding. If they see a growth in expenditures — whether it's utilities or staff growth

or program and service delivery growth — that would be approved on an annual basis. When it comes right down to it, the Department of Health and Social Services would be aware of service delivery requests and levels of delivery.

Now, if they're not getting all of the information, then we've got a definite problem between the relationship of an authority and the department, hence the reason FMBS is involved in a zero-based review as well as the government overall. We're looking at boards and agencies and the role they play in delivery of health and social services and education across the North.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to ask my questions specific to Stanton, but they'd be true for all the authorities. I see the \$11.5 million that you're asking for, for Stanton. Does that bring them to a zero balance as far as debt is concerned, or are they still further in debt than the \$11.5 million?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Minister Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The request is asking for the accumulated debt, and that is a debt that grows year to year. It just keeps adding up. It does not take in this year that we're operating in.

Mr. Abernethy: So this clears up previous fiscal years, up to 2006–07, but doesn't deal with 2007–2008; they're going into this fiscal year with some additional debt. Do I understand that correctly? The current year's debt. The current fiscal year's deficit of \$26 million.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, in fact it does cover to March 31, 2008, because that's the end of the fiscal year for accumulated debt, and that's the time we have to bring forward bills of this nature, looking at the expenditures of departments during the final supp of the government. This being Supp No. 4, it would be our final piece for looking at the previous year's expenditures.

I'll go to Ms. LeClair for looking at how this.... There has been much talk about the payroll piece. I'll have Ms. LeClair give more detail.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Ms. LeClair.

Ms. LeClair: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the issues the Department of Health and Social Services is dealing with is how Stanton will be able to manage within its budget this year, as well as pay back any outstanding debts it may have.

I'm certain the Minister of Health and Social Services can give more detail, but we are looking at — as the Minister of Finance did say earlier — getting the receivables that are owed, which would be in the neighbourhood of \$12 million, and then there will have to be a plan on deficit management, going forward, for the department and for the authority.

Mr. Abernethy: So on top of what we're paying off now, there is still some additional debt, and you're hoping to get a fair portion of that back through collecting the receivables that the authorities have outstanding.

The authorities do have receivables from way back still outstanding. Does that \$12 million include last year's receivables, or is it also the accumulated receivables? I know, for instance, as one of my colleagues mentioned earlier, Beau-Del, as an example, has invoices that are outstanding for years — not just one year but many, many years, which is a lot of money outstanding — that they should have collected years ago. Where does that stand? Is that part of the number you quoted to me, or is that just this year's receivables?

Ms. LeClair: In the case of Stanton that is the accumulated outstanding receivables up to March 31, 2008. In the case of Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority, it is the accumulated outstanding receivables.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. LeClair. Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Abernethy: No, I'm good. Thanks.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Mr. Hawkins, did you have a question?

Mr. Hawkins: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have similar concerns as other Members do regarding this. I think it's important, on record, to exercise my concern in this regard.

When I see issues like this come before us, I often think of them as bread and butter, and I couldn't run my household like this in the sense of having unpaid bills.

For my clarity, Mr. Chairman — even if it's been repeated earlier, but for my clarity — how long has that outstanding billing been in arrears with the Nunavut government? Can I get a sense as to what this government's doing to recoup that money?

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

Hon. Floyd Roland: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish I had a tape recorder. Maybe I could replay the message we've answered on this piece.

The fact is that it goes back a number of years. In this particular case, as far back as 1999–2000 we started looking at some of the receivables as the overall accumulated debt started to grow.

There is ongoing work for the Department of Health and Social Services. FMBS is now involved in that collection piece. As Ms. LeClair pointed out earlier, we are directly involved in sitting down with Nunavut and trying to clarify some of these areas.

I'd be prepared at some point to sit down with Members to get into a little more detail, but that wouldn't be appropriate at this sitting.

Mr. Hawkins: I appreciate the fact that I was tied up with constituency matters, so I may have missed the earlier answers on this.

I needed a date for that. It causes me to wonder, and if no one's raised it — I certainly hope they have, but I'll ask it anyway — why do we continue to provide services that are outside of life and limb if we're not being paid for these costs? Is there a reason why we continue to provide services for Nunavut if they're not paying their costs? What does this represent as the greater amount of money, in the sense of business used with the Nunavut government?

Hon. Floyd Roland: I have not spoken with the Nunavut Minister of Health and Social Services or their Finance Minister regarding this particular occasion. I have in the past regarding their receivables. We continue to work with Nunavut on trying to clarify this. I don't know their overall expenditure and how much of the portion is equal to the GNWT.

The fact is, though, we could use that same scenario with the money that is owed, as we consider it, to the Government of the Northwest Territories from the federal government on delivery of services to aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories. As we have made public, we continue to pay for service and service delivery to people in the Northwest Territories and continue to invoice the federal government but have not been paid portions and have been denied in some areas. Some of that can probably fall into this mix as well.

For Nunavut specifically, there is an amount identified. It pertains to a number of caseloads that we deliver, from something as simple as laboratory tests for clients who go to the facility from Nunavut, to as high as specific programs for individuals. They vary in nature as to the actual costs that are there.

As pointed out earlier, Ms. LeClair will be meeting with the representatives of Nunavut government to try to nail down an actual payment process of

ensuring we have timely payments for services rendered.

Mr. Hawkins: I appreciate that the Minister is probably quite exhausted with these questions. I understand that.

What policy would Health and Social Services be operating under to allow them not to collect the fees or to fast-forward the fees? Obviously, if we've got outstanding debts from 1999–2000, that's a number of years ago — nine, as I read it. What policy creates that flexibility of not recouping these costs or putting them to some type of collection agency? Would the territorial government be charging a late fee of some sort, an interest charge on these past fees? As I see it, we are backstopping the Nunavut government when we're having troubles of our own.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Ms. LeClair.

Ms. LeClair: Mr. Chair, thank you. These amounts that are outstanding from Nunavut — we have not asked for interest payments on those as of yet. That decision has not been made. But we do have the authority under the Financial Administration Act to apply an interest amount to outstanding receivables. We are working on just over \$4 million on outstanding receivables due to the GNWT and just over \$6 million due to the Stanton hospital.

Mr. Hawkins: I just can't imagine what the interest would be on that, even at a modest rate. As generous as we are, has anyone worked out what a normal rate of return on an average interest rate would be on that? What would be considered a fair and reasonable interest rate if we applied it on that money outstanding? Is there any sense of that, or was there any work done to assess that?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the fact is that we have decided, at least at this stage, not to tack on an interest charge to the department or to the billing we've had for Nunavut. We have not put the energy into coming up with what it would have been that we might have collected, seeing that we have decided not to tack on an interest charge.

Mr. Hawkins: I guess, for my clarity, what would be considered a normal and fair interest rate charge on something like this? Furthermore, do we owe money to the Nunavut government in any way?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Our patients who come from the Northwest Territories go through our facilities in the Northwest Territories. If we can't provide that level of service, then they go through to Alberta.

We remain current with our billing. There may be a lag time from time to time, but we realize, for the

more serious nature of health care issues, we are staying current with the Capital Health Authority.

As Members are aware, from time to time we come back to this Assembly requesting supplementary appropriations — for example, in areas of physician services outside the NWT. There is a number of lists of areas that we have come back for in the past when the program has cost more than was originally budgeted for.

Mr. Hawkins: What would be considered a normal interest rate fee? Do we owe the Nunavut government any money?

Hon. Floyd Roland: No, we do not owe the Nunavut government any money. There are arrangements within the Financial Administration Act, depending on which department. If it's actually with Finance, we have some prescribed amounts we could use. With FMBS I'd have to go to Ms. LeClair for it.

Ms. LeClair: With respect to a reasonable interest rate, it would be prime plus 1 or 2 per cent. It varies, depending on what the outstanding receivable is.

Mr. Hawkins: What policy would be driving this, to allow this to continue? Also, what policy would finally have to come into play for us to implement some process for collection?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, the fact is that through the territorial health and social services act, we deliver health care services. There were prior arrangements with Nunavut — an arrangement made originally when Nunavut was created. That agreement has expired, and then it became a regular business relationship, month to month. So that's the process we would operate. We were operating within the Financial Administration Act and continue to do so.

Of course, we're getting directly involved in the collections side from FMBS and will be working with the Nunavut government to come up with some settlement, as well as to look to an agreement on future billings that would be accruing to Nunavut.

Mr. Hawkins: Is it foreseen in the near future that this will be addressed?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, a meeting is being set up, and we're hoping to have that meeting within a matter of weeks. Whether it's two or three weeks, we're working with the Nunavut government to iron that down.

Mr. Hawkins: Will that be Health Minister to Health Minister? Will that be Finance Minister to Finance Minister, Premier to Premier? What are the

expectations of this? Is this a meeting to introduce each other and sides or points of view, or is this a meeting to bring closure to this matter?

Hon. Floyd Roland: Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to be serious here, I guess, in responding appropriately to the Member.

The fact is, that as we've gone through this afternoon, a meeting is being held by the Secretary to the FMB with representatives in the Nunavut government. As well, we're hosting the Northern Premiers' meeting, with the three Territories coming up here soon. That will be another opportunity; I can have a side discussion with the Premier of Nunavut.

But the work has been ongoing; it's not an introductory one. It is, in fact, to talk about establishing a new payment regime. That work was undertaken. Part of the previous government was looking at trying to come up with a new payment schedule and process. That is still being worked on.

Mr. Hawkins: Mr. Chairman, by no means am I trying to frustrate the Premier on this. The fact is I want to get a sense that this is being dealt with. I can appreciate there's going to be a point where the two sides will want to discuss this. From his answer he's basically tried to tell me this is a "talk turkey" situation to deal with this. I'm pleased to hear they're going to be meeting. I just want to make sure this is going to be an opportunity to deal with this problem. We don't have to look any further than the NIHB example for how long it takes for these things, in proportion, to get out of hand. All things are relative in the sense of comparison to operation.

That's why I asked that question early on: why do we continue to provide services outside of what would be described as life and limb? I wouldn't want to think of any person in this country — citizen, non-citizen, residents of the NWT or not — to be denied any health care service, especially if it were life or limb, over something as silly as administrative policy. The issue really is that I just want to make sure we're capturing the gravity of this issue. I'm just trying to understand why it's taken so long.

Our Premier — or I should say, our Finance Minister at this second — knows very well about our financial situation. I described it early on as being a bread-and-butter situation. I can't imagine being owed a lot of money like this without there being any interest charges in any way.

In the sense of the frustration.... I can appreciate the courtesy we would have, through an agreement with another government, and that some of these things have to be worked out. But if we go back as

far as nine years, that creates a sense of frustration.

People want to know why this is as it is. I think people out there — as in constituents or residents or whatever way you want to describe it — want to get a sense of understanding, exactly and thoroughly, why we wouldn't charge. I'll tell you, if you owed money to the BDIC, they'd be kicking your door down if you owed money to them for a couple of years. If it was just a small amount or something, they'd be trying to take your business away, or they'd be putting liens against your house, your home, your business or whatever the scenario is. And that sends frustration.

Oddly enough, it always seems to be a situation in which the smaller you are, the harder they lean on you. It always seems to be the reverse, Mr. Chairman: if you're a large business or it's a large dollar value, of course, everyone takes as much time as possible to work these things out.

I'm certainly respectful and willing to see the diplomatic approach on this. I don't have an issue with this. We deal with Nunavut, obviously, through our health system. It's showed up here in these examples. We use them in our agreements, through our jails and through Justice agreements. We probably partner with them on a number of issues: probably through tourism, and the list will go on and on. I certainly wouldn't want to see us pee in our cornflakes over something that could be worked out through some agreement.

Mr. Chairman, I get the sense from people that they're frustrated about this scenario. We have millions of dollars outstanding, and then we always have to sort of deal with the dollar value. It's a sense of frustration, that's all, and I just wanted to get those details on it. I know the Finance Minister's working on it, but like I say, I wanted to get a sense of it.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Was there a question there, Mr. Hawkins? I don't believe there was.

Recognizing that our Speaker did not enable us with the capability to work after 6 p.m. today, I think I'll assume there's no question there. Thank you.

So we're on page 6, Health and Social Services, Operations Expenditure, not previously authorized Health Services Programs: \$17.32 million.

Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, Health and Social Services, not previously authorized: \$17.32 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Total Health and Social Services: \$17.32 million.

Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, Total Health and Social Services, not previously authorized: \$17.32 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Next, committee, turning to page 3, Schedule of the Bill, Part 1, Vote 1, Operations Expenditures, Total Supplementary Appropriation for Operations Expenditures: \$28.205 million.

Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, Total Supplementary Appropriation for Operations Expenditures, not previously authorized: \$28.205 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Total Supplementary Appropriation: \$28.205 million.

Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, Total Supplementary Appropriation, not previously authorized: \$28.205 million, approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you very much. We're going to now turn to the clause-by-clause on page 1 of Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, starting with clause 1.

Clauses 1 through 7 approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): To the Preamble.

Preamble approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. committee, do we agree that the bill as a whole is concluded and ready for third reading?

Bill 9 as a whole approved.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you.

Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008, approved for third reading.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you very much. Thanks to the Minister and witnesses. You may excuse the witnesses, Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms.

Thank you very much, committee.

COMMITTEE REPORT 4-16(2)
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PRIORITIES
AND PLANNING REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2008–2009 DRAFT MAIN ESTIMATES

COMMITTEE REPORT 5-16(2)
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF
THE 2008–2009 DRAFT MAIN ESTIMATES

COMMITTEE REPORT 6-16(2)
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
PROGRAMS
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2008–2009
DRAFT MAIN ESTIMATES

COMMITTEE REPORT 7-16(2)
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
REPORT
ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2008–2009
DRAFT MAIN ESTIMATES

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Recognizing the clock, does the committee agree that consideration of committee reports 4, 5, 6 and 7 is concluded?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): Thank you. Committee reports 4, 5, 6 and 7 are concluded. What is the wish of the committee?

Mrs. Groenewegen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

Motion carried.

Chairman (Mr. Bromley): I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

The House resumed.

Mr. Speaker: May I have the report of the Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Bromley.

Mr. Bromley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 37-16(2), Main Estimates 2008–2009, Volumes 1 and 2; Bill 11, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act; Bill 9, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 4, 2007–2008; Committee Reports 4, 5, 6 and 7; and would like to report that Committee Reports 4, 5, 6 and 7 are concluded and that Bills 11 and 9 are ready for third reading.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, Mr. Clerk, Orders of the Day.

Orders of the Day

Clerk of the House (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning at the rise of the House today.

Orders of the Day for Tuesday, June 17, 2008, 1:30 p.m.:

- 1) Prayer
 - 2) Ministers' Statements
 - 3) Members' Statements
 - 4) Returns to Oral Questions
 - 5) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
 - 6) Acknowledgements
 - 7) Oral Questions
 - 8) Written Questions
 - 9) Returns to Written Questions
 - 10) Replies to Opening Address
 - 11) Petitions
 - 12) Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 - 13) Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 - 14) Tabling of Documents
 - 15) Notices of Motion
 - 16) Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
 - 17) Motions
 - 18) First Reading of Bills
 - 19) Second Reading of Bills
- Bill 13: An Act to Amend the Legal Profession Act
- Bill 14: An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
- Bill 15: An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
- Bill 16: Write-off of Debts Act, 2008–2009

- Bill 17: Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2008–2009
- 20) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
- Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Maintenance Orders Enforcement Act
- Bill 6: An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act
- Bill 8: Appropriation Act, 2008–2009
- Bill 12: An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act
- CR 2-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the Report of the Auditor General on the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Public Housing and Homeownership Programs
- CR 3-16(2): Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2006–2007 Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner

TD 37-16(2): Main Estimates 2008–2009, Volumes 1 and 2

MS 62-16(2): Government of Canada Residential Schools Apology

- 21) Report of Committee of the Whole
- 22) Third Reading of Bills
- Bill 9: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No.4, 2007–2008
- Bill 11: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act
- 23) Orders of the Day

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, June 17, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

