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The Honourable David Krutko, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, March 19, 2004****Members Present**

Mr. Allen, Honourable Brendan Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Honourable Charles Dent, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Hawkins, Honourable David Krutko, Ms. Lee, Honourable Michael McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Honourable Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Pokiak, Mr. Ramsay, Honourable Floyd Roland, Mr. Villeneuve, Mr. Yakeleya, Honourable Henry Zoe

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. David Krutko): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 7-15(3): 2004 Social Work Week**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is NWT Social Work Week. Today I rise to recognize the valuable contribution of social workers to children, families and communities in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the profession of social work is ultimately centred upon helping and protecting people. Social workers bring their own unique strengths, skills, education and life experience to their jobs. You can find our social workers in hospitals, with the homeless, in treatment centres, women's shelters, elders' facilities, and in the family and children's services system. Their focus is always on ensuring that our most vulnerable neighbours have safe, respectful and nurturing environments.

Communities work in partnership with social workers to address issues that affect the people who live there. Those issues may include domestic violence, elder abuse, disabilities and addictions. Social workers are part of a health and social services team that can offer well-rounded solutions to these problems. They build on family and community strengths and provide supports when needed.

Mr. Speaker, the department and authorities have taken steps to promote the profession of social work within our integrated system.

- Funding is provided for workers to access professional development.
- We have added 20 social work positions to our system over the past three years.
- We have new standards of practice and guidelines of best practices.
- We support the development of a territorial foster parent association.
- We have developed resource booklets promoting the profession to both high school students and adults.
- We have developed an interactive program that is available on CD and on our Web site to help people learn more about social work.

- We attend career fairs to promote social work to high school students. Earlier this week we were in Inuvik, and next week we will attend a career fair in Yellowknife.
- Social workers helped us to develop a tool kit to promote their profession to people in the communities. The tool kit includes many of the resources I have already mentioned, along with tips to help people talk about their job.
- We support non-government organizations to provide services and to advocate for community members.

Mr. Speaker, this year's theme for Social Work Week is social work for social justice. Join me in recognizing social workers through the NWT who bring positive social change to NWT families and communities every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Minister's Statement 8-15(3): Celebration Of Francophonie Day

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. Tomorrow, Saturday, March 20th, will culminate a week of international celebration as Francophones and Francophiles throughout the Northwest Territories join with people in India, Senegal, and Egypt, among others, to honour their culture and heritage through Francophonie Day.

(Translation) This day was created in 1998 as a way for the ensemble of people who speak the French and Creole languages to celebrate their common bond. Honoured over five continents and uniting over 170 million speakers, French speakers join together with the United Nations to reaffirm their common commitment to peace, democracy and bridging cultural diversity. (Translation ends)

As Minister responsible for official languages, I am pleased to highlight that here in the Northwest Territories, we, too, are a part of the celebrations.

In Fort Smith, a storyteller will be attending with students and others to enjoy the tradition of oral history, drum making and puppetry. As well, students of the Francophone Association's after-school program will be opening an exhibit at the Northern Lights Museum entitled, "The Magic of the North," a photography exhibit featuring a student's view of why Fort Smith is important to them.

(Translation) At L'Ecole boreale in Hay River, a reading challenge has been set where students are challenged to reach 25,000 minutes during the month of March. As well,

on Saturday evening, families from Francophone countries will be joining at the curling rink for a fete involving food and dancing from the 10 countries represented in the Hay River area. (Translation ends)

In Yellowknife, we will once again be treated to the annual Cabane a sucre or Sugar Shack at both the Snow King's Castle and during Caribou Carnival.

(Translation) As well, individual celebrations will be held in immersion programs throughout the North and with families and friends. (Translation ends)

Mr. Speaker, please join me as throughout the North, Canada and the world, people celebrate the beauty of the French language. Merci.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Zoe.

Minister's Statement 9-15(3): 2004 Arctic Winter Games

HON. HENRY ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to update Members on the successes of our Northwest Territories Team at the 2004 Arctic Winter Games, recently hosted by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Alberta.

The Arctic Winter Games were created in 1970 to promote athletic competition, cultural exhibition and social interchange. I believe that the nearly 1,600 athletes and cultural performers representing 10 contingents from seven different countries at this year's games would agree that these values are as evident today as they were in the past.

The opportunity for young people to attend and participate in the Arctic Winter Games is there only because of the commitment from a number of people who work tirelessly to make it happen. I would like to take a moment to recognize these people.

First and foremost, I want to recognize the athletes and cultural performers themselves. We cannot have a Team NWT without you, so please know that we are proud of each and every one of you for your enthusiasm, your dedication and your sportsmanship.

I would like to extend my congratulations to each of our 105 ulu medal winners. I hope that each of you continues to excel and to always represent the Northwest Territories with your best effort.

To the volunteers and officials from the Sport North Federation and the territorial sport organizations, congratulations on once again preparing our team. A special note of recognition is due for Mr. Bill Othmer from the Sport North Federation who served as our chef de mission for Team NWT. Congratulations to Mr. Othmer and his mission staff.

I would also like to make special mention to all the parents who support their children in their athletic or cultural pursuits. Their dedication of time and money to the development of all our youth is so very deeply appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, while at the Arctic Winter Games, it was my pleasure to launch the recently completed Inuit-style wrestling manual during the wrestling competitions. I was also pleased that the Secretary of State for Physical Activity and Amateur Sport, the Honourable Stan Keyes, was able to join me for this event. This new resource is an important document that supports the teaching and learning of traditional Inuit wrestling, and the manual is dedicated to the late Rick Tremblay, who, for many years, was a leader in amateur wrestling in the North. I am pleased at this time to acknowledge Rick Tremblay's widow, Nancy Trotter, who was unable to be present in Fort McMurray for the launch, but has joined us here today in the visitors' gallery. Ms. Trotter, please accept our sincere thanks to Rick for all he did for youth in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that so many Members from this House were able to attend the Arctic Winter Games to show their support for Team NWT and for the games in general.

This gave a clear indication to the athletes and cultural performers from the Northwest Territories that we are proud of their strong effort and enthusiastic participation.

Mr. Speaker, we can be proud of our sport and recreation system and these most recent Arctic Winter Games are a great example of the good that can come from it. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister Roland.

Minister's Statement 10-15(3): Premier Absent From The House

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As announced yesterday, the Honourable Joe Handley will be absent from the House today to attend the federal/provincial/territorial Intergovernmental Affairs meeting in Montreal, Quebec. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Great Slave, Mr. Bill Braden.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On Tribute To Rick Tremblay

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Speaker. During the Arctic Winter Games in Fort McMurray two weeks ago, I was proud to accept the invitation of the Honourable Henry Zoe to help represent the NWT and this Assembly. The three days that I spent there were actually the sixth chance that I've had to be at an Arctic Winter Games, Mr. Speaker; three times as a reporter; twice as a volunteer; and this time as a representative of this government. That goes back to the very first time the games were staged here in Yellowknife 34 years ago.

I was impressed, Mr. Speaker, not only with the calibre of our cultural performers and the skill and play of our athletes, but also with their sense of fair play and sportsmanship. Overall, they showed the NWT as a cool and a class act that sets a great standard for all athletes.

One of the most memorable events was not a competitive one. As Mr. Zoe mentioned in his statement, the NWT paid tribute to one of our great volunteers, the late Rick Tremblay, in dedicating a new technical manual on the traditional sport of Inuit wrestling. The dedication ceremony was made on the mats in the wrestling arena, as athletes from much of the circumpolar world applauded Rick's contribution to wrestling and the NWT's contribution in the form of a manual. A former Member of this Assembly, Titus Allooloo, was also there as a former games athlete, coach and, this year, as an advisor to the sport of Inuit wrestling.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't possible for Rick's family to attend the ceremony in Fort McMurray, but I am pleased to see his widow, Nancy Trotter, here today. Joining her is Abe Theil, the president of Sport North, and Mr. Paul Christopher who is the president of the NWT Wrestling Association.

Rick's passing in the summer of 2001, Mr. Speaker, was a deep shock and a great loss. He was a tireless volunteer. His big, positive outlook on life was infectious, and it's what made him such a valued and now greatly-missed volunteer.

The dedication of this manual to Rick is a small but fitting tribute to a great guy, and I join Mr. Zoe, Mr. Speaker, in hoping that through the dedication of this manual, the hundreds of sport volunteers across the NWT take notice and accept our thanks for their enormous contribution not only to the Arctic Winter Games, but to sport every day across the North. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement On Appointment Of Resident Territorial Court Justice

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seeing as today is Friday, I would like to close out the week with a good-news story. What I am referring to, Mr. Speaker, is the recent announcement by the Minister of Justice that Ms. Bernadette Schmaltz has been appointed as a judge to the territorial court and she will be residing in Hay River.

---Applause

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. DELOREY: This is terrific news, Mr. Speaker, as this means that there will be very little disruption to the continuity of judicial services provided to the residents of the South Slave.

Mr. Speaker, I, along with my colleague from Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen, lobbied very hard to have this position remain in Hay River, and we are extremely pleased that this has come to fruition. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of myself and all of Hay River to thank the Honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Mr. Charles Dent, and all Cabinet Members for allowing this appointment to become a reality.

I have heard from a number of Hay River residents who know Ms. Schmaltz personally. Hay River is a wonderful

place to live and I know she will be a great asset to our community.

Mr. Speaker, the swearing-in ceremony took place on March 8th and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her on her appointment as judge to the Territorial Court.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Schmaltz will not be taking up residency in Hay River until approximately one year from now, but we all look forward to giving her a very warm welcome and making her feel at home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Recognition Of The Addictions Counselling Profession

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, March 14th to 20th is Social Work Week in the NWT and I would like to ask you to join me in recognizing the important work done throughout the year by social workers across the Northwest Territories, as we take time to voice our appreciation for the job that social workers do.

I would also like to recognize other important segments of the social work network that are often overlooked and those are the addictions counsellors and addictions workers. It is not only those with a mental health or social work degree background who do social work. Addictions counsellors and addictions workers are a vital component of the health and social services delivery system. Addictions counsellors are frontline workers whose services make a difference in the lives of individuals and families struggling with addictions throughout the NWT. Yet, Mr. Speaker, addiction counselling has never officially been recognized as a profession in the NWT. It is time for that to be changed, Mr. Speaker. It is time for policymakers to take a more inclusionary position and recognize the reality of who is doing addiction counselling in the NWT and how.

Recognition of the addiction counselling profession will allow for greater accountability for those who provide the services to addiction and mental health clients. This directly translates into better services to clients and better protection to those who work in this field. It's something we can all support.

The Canadian Addiction Counsellor Certification Board has been legally certifying and monitoring addiction counsellors in Canada for over 15 years. Their standards are recognized nationally and internationally. There is a north of 60 regional chapter in my constituency. In September last year, the Department of Health and Social Services publicly stated that they accept the certification and training of addictions counsellors done by the Canadian Addiction Counsellor Certification Board, however they have yet to recognize this profession.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, MLA for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey, and I have spoken numerous times in this House on this subject. We have spoken directly to the Minister and we have spoken directly to the department. Mr. Speaker, it is time to take the next step. At the appropriate time, I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services on this subject. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Member's Statement On Tribute To Rick Tremblay

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I didn't have a Member's statement, but I will tell you that when the Honourable Henry Zoe brought up this dedication to Rick Tremblay, it moved me to stand and say a few words.

Rick Tremblay was a lot of things to many of us. I met him in Fort Simpson when I was a young man. Seeing the dedication of this Inuit-style wrestling manual going in his name is very moving, I am sure, to his family. It surely brings warmth to my spirit and I can only imagine what it means to his family.

Rick, to many of us in Fort Simpson, was a lot of things. He was coach. He taught me wrestling as well as many other things. He always had time for all of us and took the time. He was a teacher as well. I can still remember him bringing his glass eyes to class and always making us laugh with this big belly smile and big beard. He was a mentor because he was somebody we looked up to. He was a class above everyone else.

He was also a friend. His passing in 2001 really hurt a lot of us. Like I say, it doesn't compare, I am sure, to the emotions that that brought to his family. So, Mr. Speaker, in closing I just want to say this book is just one element of a fitting legacy many of us will remember of a man who touched all of us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Member's Statement On Poem Of Politics In The Northwest Territories

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since this is a Friday session, I want to put a little poetry into my Member's statement today, a poem written about my wife and I as we travelled into rural Canada to promote and educate people about the Northwest Territories. A local poet by the name of Ken Blacklock wrote this poem on March 7, 2004. I haven't gotten up to recite a poem since my university days at the University of Colorado in 1972 or 1973, so I ask you to indulge me as I may sound awfully rusty. Here goes my concerted effort, Mr. Speaker.

"Though politicians ain't always my friends,
Today I will try to make amends.
I welcome to Alberta and Blue Ridge,
An MLA who is down from the northern fridge.

Roger Allen is the Member of the Northwest
Territories Assemblies
Living in Yellowknife, the Northwest Territories.
With his wife Dodie, a teacher on spring break,
Wants to visit Fort Floyd Sydney, so a holiday
they take.

They have no political parties, just sometimes
after meeting
They sit and talk together, no sides in the seating.

And after they decide the roadwork they will do,
The NWT no longer means "no way through."

So today we give a welcome to Roger and his wife,
A politician that I haven't given any strife.
An Inuit, Gwich'in, Irishman, a territorial blend,
A Canadian gentleman I'd be proud to call my friend."

Mr. Speaker, many of the people I meet are fascinated by our governing system, so I take much pride in promoting our beautiful territory throughout my sojourns. That is how I will share this poem with you, my friends. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On Caribou Carnival Princess And Queen Contestants

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, March 21st, will be the official kick-off of spring, although it doesn't feel like it outside at the moment. Spring in Yellowknife means Caribou Carnival, Mr. Speaker. This is an occasion where all residents, visitors, families, young and old, partake in numerous events that are taking place. This will begin next Friday, Mr. Speaker. Some of the events that we have gotten used to enjoying at this carnival are dog mushing, or a tea boiling contest, or vying to be the owner of the ugliest truck in town. I was going for that until recently when I sold my ugly truck.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, this being Friday, I thought I would add some humour here. One of the most visible and important parts of this event is the contest to choose the Caribou Carnival queen, princess and, this year, prince. The winner is chosen by the number of tickets sold, but in the process, these contestants become great ambassadors for the events and get people really excited and get the anticipation of the event built. It was in the spirit of joining this excitement, that the Yellowknife MLAs of this Assembly invited all the contestants to join us in the gallery today and to share lunch with us later on. I believe that most of them were able to join us and I will be recognizing them at the appropriate time later on.

I would just like to thank the contestants, all of them, for putting their names forward in this venture and making an important contribution to this very important event in our city.

I should also thank all the sponsors without whom we couldn't hold these events. If anyone has had a chance to look at the tickets being sold by these contestants, there are some spectacular prizes that are serving as great incentives for everyone to sell as many tickets as possible.

I think that is a very important aspect of it. So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to give a plug for our Caribou Carnival which starts next Friday and to invite the Members to come and say hi to their contestants when they get an opportunity throughout the early afternoon today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Member's Statement On 2004 Social Work Week

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (English not provided)

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the social workers who have been working in my riding of Nahendeh. I know that they're working very hard. Just on behalf of myself and the people I represent, I would just like to say thank you very much for the work that they're doing. Mahsi cho.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Member's Statement On The Importance Of Family Support Systems

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was thinking last night and this morning what to say in making a Member's statement. Last night, my little boy and my wife came from Tulita, a 17-hour drive, and I was thinking about my appreciation for the role of our families in the life of an MLA. When I left here last night, I met them on the road going home and my little boy was happy to see me. He looked at me and said, "Daddy's ears are cold." He had a little red toque on and he said, "Here, Dad, use these." It's things like that that make it worthwhile, and I want to express appreciation to the families.

I really thought about it last night, how they really make a difference and the sacrifice they make for us to be here and to be away from our families and communities. I was trying to think about what kind of life we're going to leave for little guys like my little boy. We have some very important decisions to make, and owning up to those decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions is one tool that I would like to leave to my son and all other children. It's really important that we do this.

I thought about it last night and though I could stand up and make other statements that are very important for various reasons to our people, it's really important now not to forget our family and to honour them. They're really, really precious. I just have a lot of fun with my little boy, and I think of the other children and I think of the other MLAs' children and grandchildren, and it's really important that at the end of the day it's our children who are going to carry on our legacy. Our legacy sometimes is very tough; sometimes it's very hard and sometimes we just want to let people know that we're doing our darnedest and our best here in the Legislative Assembly. I want to say I appreciate the people who make our jobs a lot easier, who make us look good in the public, and it's the people who surround us. I want to let the public know, in the Northwest Territories, that family is very important in this job here. So, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Lee.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues. As I indicated earlier, we have in our presence the contestants for the Caribou Carnival queen, the princess and prince, and I would just like to call their names and if they are there if they could stand up and bow. Mildred Wilke, Jodi Wilson, Elisabeth Fossum, Chelsey Normandin; they are the contestants for queen. For princesses: Alaina Reyes; Blessing Tsar; Danica Wouters; Ramona Normandin; Karlee Turner; and, Stacey Grandjambe. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome to the House. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to recognize four constituents that I know in the Assembly today; of course, Ms. Nancy Trotter; Paul Christopher of the NWT Wrestling Federation; my constituency assistant, Mr. John Argue; and, our royalty in waiting, Mr. Speaker, Mildred Wilke. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. For those people who haven't been recognized, I would like to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly to watch the proceedings today. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 37-15(3): Recognition Of Addiction Counsellor Profession

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in September of last year, the Department of Health and Social Services publicly stated that they accept and support the certification and training of addictions counsellors done by the Canadian Addiction Counsellors Certification Board. This board has been legally certifying, training and monitoring addiction-specific counsellors throughout Canada for over 15 years. Mr. Speaker, my question today for the Minister of Health and Social Services is will the Minister commit to the next step by moving to officially recognize the addiction counsellor profession? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 37-15(3): Recognition Of Addiction Counsellor Profession

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, we've made some commitments and committed some funds and have taken the direction with addictions where we've now transformed addictions counsellor positions into community wellness workers, where they have, hopefully, the ability to deal with issues over and above just strictly addictions. I recognize the clear and important role that that particular part of their job description covers, and we are working as a government to come up with a training plan and a fixed curriculum that will, in fact, allow them to be properly trained to meet the job description requirements. That is our commitment as a government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 37-15(3): Recognition Of Addiction Counsellor Profession

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if at the present time there are any standardized credentials required of people working in the addictions field in the NWT. Is there a minimum requirement, or is it just something that's all over the map and not stated as requirements when positions like these are filled? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

Further Return To Question 37-15(3): Recognition Of Addiction Counsellor Profession

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the type of training that has been used in the past and is still being used today is the Nechi training which has, I believe, eight components. We continue to access that training where those workers have been hired and are engaged in that activity. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 37-15(3): Recognition Of Addiction Counsellor Profession

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, when there are already terms of reference and standards that have already been set nationally and internationally, why would the NWT want to reinvent the process at considerable time and expense when in fact they could adopt something that is already readily recognized? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

Further Return To Question 37-15(3): Recognition Of Addiction Counsellor Profession

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't consider the Nechi training reinventing the wheel. It brings an important perspective and a type of training to bear in this area that is important. In fact, I have taken a couple of modules myself back when I was involved in the field. Our Member is correct, we are not interested in reinventing the wheel. We have had contact with the people referenced by my colleague, and we're going to continue to stay in contact with them as we try to develop the best training plan possible for community wellness workers. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 37-15(3): Recognition Of Addiction Counsellor Profession

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then my last question to the Minister would be when would he anticipate that these standards and recognition and certification would be put in place, and when would the addictions counselling profession be included in the NWT Medical Professions Act? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, two questions.

Further Return To Question 37-15(3): Recognition Of Addiction Counsellor Profession

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will commit to having a package that I can take to the Social Programs committee and to the Members prior to our next gathering of session.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Allen.

Question 38-15(3): Fuel Assistance For Visitors To The North

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, and it's in context of my many travels into rural parts of Western Canada and speaking with many of the individuals who would like to come north of 60 to visit our beautiful country. One suggestion they asked me to convey to this Assembly is if the department would consider introducing some form of a gas coupon that they can have once they cross the port of entry at the 60th parallel to see if it would help reduce the cost of their visit to the Territories. I would like to ask the Minister if he's willing to consider such a policy change in that regard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 38-15(3): Fuel Assistance For Visitors To The North

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a very interesting proposal. While I won't commit to making a policy change at this point or implementing such a scheme, it is something that I would like to take a further look at. I had discussions this morning with the Yukon MP, Larry Bagnell. We had discussions about the need to work collaboratively as three territories to brand Canada's North, or brand the Canadian Arctic. I think we can get more bang for our buck if we work in conjunction. I had certainly indicated to him that I will be reaching out to the Ministers of Tourism in Yukon and Nunavut, to have discussions about this. The high cost of accessing our areas is certainly something that hurts us in that regard, and so is a lack of infrastructure. I think we have to do a lot to develop products.

I know it's certainly expensive to travel in this part of the world. Anything we can do that would help offset that I think is welcome. So I would like to sit down with the Member and discuss the proposal further. I think there are probably a lot of good ideas from people in the field. I rely on the NWT Arctic Tourism Association to come up with suggestions, as well, but I would really be interested in hearing from the regular Members with any proposals that they have. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 39-15(3): Promoting Travel And Tourism In The North

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just in follow up to that, my question is also to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. As Mr. Allen has stated, many of us, and I'm sure many people in the public service as well, travel

extensively throughout Canada. We hand out business cards on a regular basis. There was an idea that had come forward some time back about utilizing the business cards that we hand out as an opportunity to promote travel and tourism in the Northwest Territories. I would like to know what the Minister could do to support that idea. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 39-15(3): Promoting Travel And Tourism In The North

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a very inexpensive and great way to promote our territory. I believe the Development Corporation currently does it, and I would certainly be willing to talk to the departmental officials and to the Premier about seeing if we couldn't do this with a government-wide approach. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 39-15(3): Promoting Travel And Tourism In The North

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had observed on some NWT employee's business cards a word that says tourism...Or, it's two words. It says tourism information and a 1-800 number. It's just in regular print. Would the Minister commit to working with his department to develop something that looks a little more interesting, that might be a little more eye catching than just a regular print with a telephone number beside it? Perhaps a different font with some aurora passing through it, or something that we would be happy to put on our business cards. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 39-15(3): Promoting Travel And Tourism In The North

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you. For Members of the Assembly, that's a decision the Board of Management would have to make, but I think it's a good idea. I think that reference to a Web site is probably more helpful than a 1-800 number. I see no reason why we wouldn't look at something like this. It's a very inexpensive way to promote the Territories. It would have to go to the Board of Management. Where it relates to RWED, I'll certainly have discussions about that with my staff. But I think it's something the Member should bring to the attention of the board. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mrs. Groenewegen, supplementary.

Supplementary To Question 39-15(3): Promoting Travel And Tourism In The North

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to work with my colleagues on the Governance and Economic Development committee, under which tourism falls, to bring that to the Board of Management. Would the Minister undertake to have a prototype designed of something that would be standardized, so that we don't have a lot of different logos and symbols and words out there? Would he commit to have that design undertaken, then allow us to bring that back to our Board of Management which would at least

get it on the business cards of the Members in this House, and perhaps others as well? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 39-15(3): Promoting Travel And Tourism In The North

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Certainly, we can do that. I will do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 40-15(3): Changes To The Territorial Parks Regulations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the honourable Minister of RWED. My question is with regard to a matter earlier brought up in the House regarding a 14-day maximum stay in our territorial parks. It has been brought to my attention that this policy has been updated, and I'm enquiring to the honourable Member if he would make that policy available for all Members of AOC when the update is completed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 40-15(3): Changes To The Territorial Parks Regulations

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Certainly, I will do that. I have had my staff approach the AOC committee staff to make sure that we put the offer out there for a briefing on this policy. I know that we're very jammed up here trying to get a budget through by the 31st, and it's likely something that will happen after session, but I would like to come before committee and talk about it. I'm not sure if it was the GED committee or the AOC committee; I'll certainly check. Obviously we can make that available to all regular Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 40-15(3): Changes To The Territorial Parks Regulations

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the honourable Minister would speak just in general at this time about some of the anticipated changes -- maybe not specifics if we're not in a position to do that -- if the honourable Minister could speak to the types of changes we should be expecting. I note that the committee that this may go to would probably be GED, and I would appreciate if it goes to all Members by a copy of the letter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 40-15(3): Changes To The Territorial Parks Regulations

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; the offer has been made to GED. I don't know how the protocol will work in this Assembly, but certainly in the past committees were able to invite other regular Members who had an interest in participating to participate in those meetings. If that's not the case, then I will certainly make the offer to AOC.

I would say that the nature of this policy change is related to the 14-day stay at territorial campgrounds. I know that it has been a difficulty, especially here locally and in Hay River, that the local residents can only stay in any territorial campground for 14 days. It's a problem, especially with the proximity of the campground here at Fred Henne Park to the city. It's very convenient for local residents. We want to make sure that camp spots are available for tourists, but we have to also be able to accommodate the local population who obviously want to enjoy our beautiful campgrounds, as well. So the policy change surrounds that 14-day stay, and we're looking at relaxing that 14-day maximum in the shoulder seasons. I don't have those exact dates before me, but we're talking about spring and fall. In the peak times, I think we'll still have to maintain the 14-day standard, but I think we can relax that when there's less demand on the park. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 41-15(3): Promotional Slogan For The NWT

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this being Friday, I would also like to touch on a lighter topic, but an important point and it has been raised by two other Members already. It is with regard to the messages and slogans, sort of the branding of the Territories. I do believe the previous questions focussed on this idea as a tourism strategy. But someone has brought to my attention -- I believe she's in the gallery -- the fact that the NWT does not have an NWT-wide label or a brand name or a slogan or something that we use repeatedly that is recognizable around the world. I can think of departments having that. For example, the Department of Transportation has a sign that says "On the Move." I think that's a good name that recognizes the department.

My question is to the Minister of RWED. In his deliberations and considerations of the points that were raised earlier, would the Minister consider adding into that a slogan for the NWT? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of RWED, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 41-15(3): Promotional Slogan For The NWT

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I will certainly bring this point and this discussion to the Premier's attention. I think it's important if we're going to have a corporate message for the Government of the Northwest Territories, that obviously it's his department that needs to take the lead. But as the Territories are concerned, territorial-wide and as it relates to tourism, I think we do need to do and make more of an effort to brand the Northwest Territories around the world. It's a competitive market for tourism expenditures and there are many countries and many jurisdictions in the world for tourists to visit. We'd like to make sure that they come here. I think it does make sense to have a consistent message when the various pieces of this government and other agencies outside the government are out and are speaking about the Northwest Territories. A clear, concise and consistent message coming forward on behalf of the Northwest Territories would certainly be helpful. I'd like to speak to my departmental officials in tourism about that, but, most importantly, the NWT Arctic Tourism folks who I think

have done a lot of good work in this regard, and see where we are at this point. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 41-15(3): Promotional Slogan For The NWT

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following on that, would the Minister consider conducting a contest among the residents of the Territories? Not a huge money-spending venture, but a contest on a Web site or polling where people could click on with different ideas of what the slogans are. Maybe we could end up with the top three and then we could have a final match. Would the Minister consider something like that? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 41-15(3): Promotional Slogan For The NWT

HON. BRENDAN BELL: It is a very interesting idea. I suppose I would ask the Member if she is proposing that we revisit the "Within Reach but Beyond Belief" message or slogan that we have had on behalf of the Arctic in the past. Is that the suggestion, that we need to sort of retool that and come up with another message? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 41-15(3): Promotional Slogan For The NWT

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear that I am going beyond the message for tourism. I think that message for the tourism industry is a good one and it has been used for a long time. I am suggesting something different, a little slogan for the whole Territories, NWT government or the NWT as a whole. In British Columbia, for example, they use the slogan "Beautiful British Columbia," I don't know if this is for tourism. I think PEI has a short message that everybody understands, which I can't remember at the moment; sorry. So I am looking for something beyond tourism ideas. Something that is for the NWT, something like "On the Move" for transportation, that works for the department, but something short and precise. I don't know; I am not going to suggest that now, but something short for the NWT. Would he consider that? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 41-15(3): Promotional Slogan For The NWT

HON. BRENDAN BELL: I think it is probably best at this point, before I try to propose something and embarrass myself thoroughly, that I take this to the Premier and we have some discussion about this as a government. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Question 42-15(3): Social Impacts Of Pipeline Development

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank God it is Friday.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, it was interesting hearing from the Minister of Health and Social Services on the aspect of the Nechi training. I am also a product of the Nechi training that was held in the Northwest Territories. I would like to ask the question to the Minister, would he continue his support for the Nechi training, especially in the Sahtu region, in light of the potential impacts that may happen down the Mackenzie Valley? My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Would he continue on with the Nechi training in the North? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Return To Question 42-15(3): Social Impacts Of Pipeline Development

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, currently I understand there are five staff that are engaged in taking Nechi training. As I committed to the Member for Hay River South, we will be coming forward with a package which we will share with the Social Programs committee to get their feedback and advice so that we can come up with the best plan possible for community wellness workers so that we have some formal training that clearly encompasses the addictions component, as well as other areas of their job description. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 42-15(3): Social Impacts Of Pipeline Development

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. The Sahtu region got together on March 2nd, 3rd and 4th. One of the themes that came out of that leaders meeting for our future government in Norman Wells was the social impact of potential resources that may happen down the Mackenzie Valley. I would like to ask the Minister if he would work with the other Ministers in terms of preparing for the potential development in the Mackenzie Valley, especially the Sahtu region where they voiced a lot of concern in regard to preparing for some potential development in the region. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Miltenberger.

Further Return To Question 42-15(3): Social Impacts Of Pipeline Development

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are currently working groups that are at work due to the issue of the social impact of major resource development, as well as the government through the social agenda policy conference that was held. Our response to that conference was we committed \$1 million to do some pilot projects in the impacted areas to try to help the communities get ready for the impact of major resource development. We have just concluded the first year of that process. We are evaluating what has been done to date. We were somewhat late getting

started, but we are committing to that process as well, and will be coming back to Cabinet with the results of the first year. So, yes, Mr. Speaker, we are committed to working with the affected regions and the communities as a government as we try to deal with and anticipate the impact of major resource development. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, replies to budget address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Braden.

ITEM 14: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 1-15(3): Alternatives North: Stop The NWT Clawback Of The National Child Tax Benefit Supplement

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, I referred to a study on the national child benefit supplement, and I would like to table the document this morning offered by Alternatives North called "Stop the NWT Clawback of the National Child Tax Benefit Supplement." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 16: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 4: Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2003-2004

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 22, 2004, I will move that Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2003-2004, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Mr. Roland.

ITEM 18: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 2: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 2 has had first reading. Item 18, first reading of bills. Minister Roland.

Bill 3: An Act To Amend The Income Tax Act, No. 2

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave, that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 3 has had first reading. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005; Committee Report 1-15(3): Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates; and, Committee Report 2-15(3): Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole to order. Yesterday we left off working on Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005, under the Department of Finance. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would strongly suggest that we conclude or continue to review the Department of Finance, and if we conclude in time, that we move on to the report on the Financial Management Board Secretariat. With that, Madam Chair, that is what I would suggest. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Would the Minister like to bring his witnesses in?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Madam Chair, I would like to have the witnesses come in. It might be a few minutes before they can make it down here.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, well, maybe we will just have a very brief break while we are giving the Minister a chance to get set up. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order and ask the Minister if he would like to bring officials in.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses in.

Mr. Minister, could you please introduce your witnesses, for the record, please?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right is the deputy minister of the Department of Finance, Margaret Melhorn; and, to my left is Mr. Mel Enge, director of finance and administration.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. On my questions, yesterday we left off on page 3-20 as you indicated, Madam Chair. In response to my last question before the time ran out, Mr. Roland's officials had indicated under Liquor Licensing Board revenue, licensing fees and fines were the break...If they can give me an indication of how that breaks out. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. My understanding is they are getting information on the other income portion, the \$180,000 for 2004-05 and what that was made up of. I believe we did provide some information on the Liquor Licensing Board revenue of \$632,000. So can we have some clarification on which area?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Basically I am trying to get an idea of what the breakdown is of that \$632,000. Is that 90 percent fines or 90 percent licence fees? I just want to get an idea of what that composition is. I suspect it's just two line items as you had mentioned yesterday. If you could give us a further breakdown on that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The breakdown of that, I don't have the specific numbers, but the majority of that are the fees that are charged to the organizations. The fines make up a small portion of that \$632,000. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. That's more than satisfactory on that. Unless, of course, someone else has concern, I'm completely fine with that.

At this moment, would the Minister be able to answer further questions as I enquired about on other income with regard to the end result of the refunded bottles? Or should I at this point bow to the Chair and someone to take the mike if he's not prepared to answer those? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have more information on bottle deposits in the NWT, and we can provide that hard copy to Members or I can read it off.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. What is the wish of the Member?

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. For the benefit of maybe all Members, I would be more than happy if he provided a hard copy while we have a discussion at this moment. If I or any other Member at the time is citing any concerns, we can perhaps ask to go back to page 3-20. So just to move forward, I would be happy to accept a hard copy at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I'm not exactly sure how readily available copies of that would be. If they can be distributed...Mr. Hawkins, we're almost at the end of this particular department, we only have a couple more pages and then the department summary. So I'm afraid that if we conclude this, I don't know if there will be an opportunity to go back to this department, unless you want to defer it. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Then at this time, maybe if the Minister will walk us through it just quickly. Specifically, I'm more so interested in what happens, how the agreement works out with regard to the refunding process, who retains ownership of the bottles once they have been refunded, and is that built into the contract fee with the vendor who does the return of the bottle process. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will go through what we are now handing out to Members. As well, I would just like to inform Members that as the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development moves forward on its recycling initiative, this portion of it will change because it will be incorporated into the program that is now going to be administered through Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

So the information we have now is we currently have bottle return depots in Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, Inuvik and Hay River. In Norman Wells, a local volunteer group collects containers and then ships them out to Hay River once a year. The containers that carry an NWT deposit are accepted and refunded by the bottle depot. In turn, we reimburse the bottle depots upon receipt of proof of refund to the customer. The containers are then destroyed at the depot; cans are shredded and bottles are crushed. Some depot operators then ship the shredded cans to a recycling plant in the South, while glass is disposed of as there is no economically-viable means of recycling at this time. The depots are also paid a handling fee per unit to cover their operating costs, and that's four cents per bottle or can. The Liquor Commission provides shredding equipment at a nominal charge of \$1 per year. Molson and Labatts bottles are not included in the NWT deposit refund system as they are dealt with directly by the brewery and with the depot operator. These deposits vary between communities and are available directly from the depot operator. Molson and Labatts bottles are returned to the breweries.

The deposit fees are as follows: spirits and wine bottles, 25 cents each; cans, cider and cooler bottles, 10 cents each; and the depot handling fees are four cents per bottle or can. There were 6.2 million containers sold during 2002-2003, of which 3.9 million were returned. This accounts for approximately 63 percent of all containers sold for the year. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I may, at the discretion of the committee, expand a little further, my question now goes into who retains ownership of the returned and sometimes destroyed containers, be it can or bottle.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Once the bottles are returned to the depots, they are theirs to dispose of. As stated, the bottles are crushed and in different locations, different communities...I'll use an example I am familiar with. In Inuvik at times, instead of using crushed rock, they would use the crushed bottles in sanding areas. As stated, the depots have shredders that are supplied by the Liquor Commission. They shred them and send them to the southern facilities for recycling. Again, for Molson and Labatts bottles the depot is the one that deals with them, sends them south and gets any further refund from them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I didn't hear the last couple words of the Minister there, even though I have the earpiece. Maybe he can answer it as I ask this. Does the Department of Finance recognize in any way that value of the returned bottles to the depots, whether they're crushed, shredded or other means? Do they recognize that in the contract, whereas the depot may be setting themselves for a refund? Therefore, they would be receiving, quite potentially as I see it, four cents for each bottle or can, plus the value of cashing them in at a southern location through that recycling process. I tread on thin ice as I suggest the double dipping of this particular case, so maybe if the Minister could expand a little further. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The last part of the earlier response was that the depots take care of the Molson and Labatts bottles through their operations and send them south for refund from those outfits. One of the factors involved in giving the handling fee to the depots as well as providing the refund to them is to pay the people that bring back the bottles and cans for returns, that is when they ship their containers south to recycling centres, they have to pay for the handling fees themselves. So the handling fees and freight are taken out of the earnings that they would receive from that. That is one of the reasons we don't count and collect the money from them. We just give them the handling fee and go forward from there.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. You squeaked in just before my time expired. Can I get the Minister to confirm that the incidental fee, be it large or small, is not accounted for by the Department of Finance, or I should say recognized in any way? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The initial dollars that go out for bottle recovery, I believe, are accounted for through the Liquor Commission. The Department of Finance does not account for the fees that are received by the depots through the other operations. They are paid for by the recycling companies in the south. We don't account for that in the Department of Finance numbers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Liquor Commission revolving fund.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Liquor Commission revolving fund, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Revenues, recoveries and transfer payments. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. On the revenue side of taxation, I would just like some clarification. Do the numbers posted here reflect the increases that would come, pending approval of the taxation measures that the Minister has proposed? Are those numbers reflected in the projection here? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, they are reflected in these numbers.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Mr. Braden. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question on a couple of items. On the first one under transfer payments, Canada health and social transfer, I noticed that the breakdown is different this year, and I'm interested in some explanation as to why that may be. Is it just a simple breakdown? In previous years, the transfer payments for health and social services were all combined. It appears to me, on this line here, for the upcoming year it has been broken down.

The second question I have on that item is could I get an explanation of the increase under this transfer from 2002-2003? Where it was in the amount of \$31 million, now we are seeing a combined transfer of \$23 million plus. So may I just get an explanation on that, please? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The change is a result of how the federal government treats that. Initially, it was combined under the Canada health and social transfer. They have now broken it down into the two pots there: the Canada social transfer and the reform fund. The actual breakdown and the lesser amount equates to the treatment that it receives under the formula and the taxation situation. For more detail, I will have Ms. Melhorn give that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Ms. Melhorn.

MS. MELHORN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to explain the way Canada health and social transfer works, there are two components to the transfer. A cash transfer, which is recorded here, and what's known as the tax point transfer, which is related to the value of a portion of personal income tax and corporate income tax that each province and territory receives. So the federal government has determined a total of CHST entitlement. It then subtracts the value of the tax point transfer and determines the cash transfer. So CHST changes as our personal and corporate income tax estimates change. It also depends on prior year adjustments to corporate income tax which is then reflected in a current year's CHST. It's a very complicated determination of the cash transfer amount. I guess that's the short answer to the question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Melhorn. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you. I think you managed here. In that case then, the announcements for additional funding that we're getting from the federal government -- there have been a couple of them in the last while -- where would that appear? Would that appear under the Department of Health, or would it appear on this page somewhere? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. That would appear in the reform fund portion, and it would be a portion of the Canada social transfer. So it's accounted for in this section of revenues.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Does that mean that on net we are getting less in this fiscal year than we did two years ago? Is that a correct interpretation? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. It would be more a reflection of prior year adjustments that would show up in your 2002-2003 actuals. Our concern is that we continue to be affected negatively. As stated, the estimates of this year coming from Canada are reflected on previous year's corporate tax numbers and personal income tax numbers. So that accounts for some of the changes in the numbers you see here.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question on the personal income tax item there. We are seeing an increase of \$7 million from the 2002-2003 fiscal year to the fiscal year of 2003-2004, prior to any increase in personal income tax that is being proposed in this year's budget. So I am interested in knowing what explains that \$7 million increase, considering that it was my understanding that we had in fact increased the personal tax exemption, which I understood would decrease the income from personal income tax. Or is that exemption taken out somewhere else and is this gross personal income tax revenue? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Using the comparison between the 2003-04 main estimates to the 2004-05 proposed main estimates, we have included the income of \$700,000 from the two highest tax brackets in additional revenue, but also a \$1.3 million reduction in the two lowest tax brackets that comes into effect January 1, 2005. So by adjusting the two lowest brackets and incorporating the two highest bracket increases, that nets out and it's slightly less than what we would have gotten if we did not make the adjustment for the low-income side. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't believe that explains what I'm trying to find out here. I guess there are two things happening here. One is that even with our proposed income tax increase for this upcoming fiscal year, we are projecting less income from personal income tax this upcoming year, according to this page. In the previous year, comparing the main estimates for 2003-2004 and the actuals, we are seeing an increase where a more logical answer to me would have been that you would have seen a decrease because of the introduction of an increase in exemption, which I understood would bring us less money. I'm trying to be rational and clear in my questioning, because I understand that whenever tax is involved it's pretty complicated. I wonder if the Minister understands my conundrum here. The numbers don't seem to jibe there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. One of the difficulties of this is that the estimates -- for example 2003-04 main estimates that were provided during the previous year of \$51 million and again if you look at 2004-05 proposed main estimates of \$57 million -- that is our department working with the federal department to come up with an estimate as to what we will be receiving. They collect our taxes for us and remit them back to us. So that's how we work with them.

What you find in the 2003-04 revised estimates of \$57 million, are prior year adjustments. The possibility is there with the 2004-05 numbers -- although we're proposing \$57 million because that's the numbers we are working with with the federal government -- that there will be some adjustments again coming forward and that will be

reflected in the next cycle. It makes it complicated in that way. Normally the comparison should be from mains to mains, to reflect adjustments that are made throughout the year as there are either more earnings or fewer earnings. In fact, this shows a prior year's adjustments being incorporated in the revised estimates; that shows a \$57 million figure. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee, your 10-minute time limit has expired. I'll put you back on the list. Next I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just looking at the budget address. Our projected revenue was stated at \$917 million. On page 3-22, it says total revenue is \$820 million. I wonder if you could give me an explanation of the difference.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The \$820 million shown here in total revenues is the total amount this department receives. There are a number of other smaller funding amounts that go directly to other departments. I should say it comes into consolidated revenue, but other departments account for it in their budgets. So this is what we account for. All the total money goes into a consolidated revenue fund, but other departments account for some of the pockets of funding they have where they have specific agreements with federal departments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much for that explanation. I take it it's other transfers or other grants that other departments receive that don't actually show up in the Department of Finance.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct. Every department, as we go through this exercise, will have a similar page of revenues, recoveries and transfer payments. For example, Transportation charges fees for licences and so on. They account for it in their section of the budget and if there are any specific agreements that are dealt with by department by department, that's where it would be accounted for. That's why we don't have the total amount here. At the end of it, it's all in the consolidated revenue fund and that's where we come up with the \$917 million of revenue. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Menicoche, please go ahead.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I just have one more question with regard to taxation revenue and property taxes. It looks like a \$3 million increase. I am just wondering what to base that on. In fact, it looks more like a \$6 million increase if you go from mains to mains.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The reason that jumps up is assessments are done and

incorporated, so there will be some increases just due to the normal assessments that are done. The reason there is such a large jump in this one is we have also done assessments on property taxes or properties to do with the large industry out there right now. That's why it's such a large jump. The vast majority of that is the exercise of now doing assessments for mines and other large developments and that's the income on the property tax side.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. Will this figure be used for the next four years annually, \$14 million taxation revenues and school revenues? I am just wondering if we will be using that figure for the next four years.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The number we are establishing right now is for current year and there could be slight changes as the taxation assessment role changes. So if there are new properties put on, for example, if more lot development takes place and houses are built in tax-based communities, that would show the growth in that area as well as any small changes in how the assessments are done in the value of properties, but it is forecast to go up by a small amount going forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am just trying to establish if that will be our revenue base in that line item in the next few years. It seems like that is how it's going to be. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Are there any other questions on revenues, recoveries or transfer payments? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a short question, which has been introduced by Mr. Menicoche on the property taxes and school levies. May I get the information as to what portion of the increase between 2003-04 mains to 2004-05 mains, which amounts to almost \$7 million, is coming from the diamond mines? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. We don't have the exact figure. We do have estimates and we are looking at the majority of the increase coming from the mines, the establishment of taxing the mines. We are projecting an increase of 30 percent largely due to the assessment of one of the mines and we already have an assessment of another mine. A large majority of that increase is mainly due to the mines.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister mentioned that 30 percent of the \$7 million increase is from the mines. Can I get information as to what

constitutes the other 70 percent and also could the Minister indicate as to whether or not the Snap Lake De Beers mine is included in that assessment? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, the only ones we include here are actual operating mines that we can establish a property tax on. Those that are in the works now have not been included. Just to be clear, the 30 percent increase, we would do a comparison of the 2004-05 proposed mains to the 2003-04 revised mains because this one is now being assessed and added to the assessment role, whereas we have had the prior mine already included in there. So the increase from the revised mains to the proposed mains, 30 percent of that is due to the addition of the one mine. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Revenues, recoveries and transfer payments, Department of Finance. Thank you.

Could I ask you now to flip back in your book to the beginning of the Finance department to department summary? Total operations and expense, \$7.354 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Does the committee agree that that concludes our consideration of the Department of Finance?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Roland, thank you and thank you, Ms. Melhorn and Mr. Enge, for your help in getting us through this one. Thank you.

Are we ready to now move on to the Financial Management Board Secretariat?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to ask the Minister if he has opening remarks. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: I am pleased to be here today to present the Financial Management Board Secretariat's 2004-2005 main estimates.

The 2004-04 main estimates propose total operation expenses of \$27.377 million. This provides for a total increase from the 2003-2004 fiscal year of \$518,000 and represents a 1.9 percent increase from the previous fiscal year.

The secretariat's main estimates include:

- a \$371,000 increase to salaries and benefits associated with collective agreement changes;
- a \$130,000 increase to establish an equal pay research officer position that will monitor and analyze data pertaining to the maintenance of equal pay for work of equal value in the GNWT. This position will coordinate responses to any complaints on behalf of the GNWT that might arise through different levels of government and review both existing and future pay and benefits to ensure appropriate compliance. This function has been established in response to the

passage of amendments to the Public Service Act to provide equal pay for work of equal value for the public service;

- a \$120,000 increase to record a grant-in-kind equal to the value of the interest foregone on a negotiated settlement of a debt due from a diamond manufacturing company that became insolvent;
- a \$1.127 million increase to the Power Subsidy Program.

These increases are partially offset by:

- a \$294,000 reduction due to the winding down of the equal pay settlement implementation activity; and,
- a \$926,000 reduction for the transfer to the NWT Housing Corporation of the O and M associated with housing units transferred to them on the termination of the staff housing program.

The secretariat's proposed capital acquisition plan for the 2004-05 fiscal year includes \$497,000 for information technology projects.

There is \$300,000 included to purchase new, upgraded servers that will allow existing department applications to be consolidated. When completed, this initiative will reduce the overall cost to government of information technology infrastructure in place while improving quality of service to all affected departments.

There is \$197,000 that has been allocated to complete software upgrades to the existing financial information system to keep it functional while a decision regarding its replacement is pending.

For the 2004-05 fiscal year, the FMB Secretariat's main estimates includes a total funded staffing complement of 130 positions; 103 in headquarters and 27 in the regions. This net decrease over the previous fiscal year of seven positions is largely comprised of a reduction of six positions at headquarters associated with the continuing revisions to the makeup and duties of the equal pay team.

That completes my opening remarks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Roland. Now I believe that Mr. Ramsay is going to provide the remarks on the committee's review of FMBS.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would now like to provide the committee's report on the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

The committee met with the chairman of the Financial Management Board on February 18, 2004, to review the draft 2004-2005 main estimates for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, FMBS.

FMBS is proposing a \$518,000 increase in operations expenses from the 2003-2004 main estimates. This is primarily due to forced growth in salaries and benefits and the power subsidy program, which is partially offset by expenditure reductions and the transfer of the staff housing program to the NWT Housing Corporation.

Technology Service Centre

The Technology Service Centre, TSC, was established in 2003 and provides centralized service desk, desktop, network, server and network authentication support services to departments. Before the TSC, each department had its own information technology, IT, staff providing these services.

The year 2004-2005 will be the first year the TSC is fully operational. Early indications are the centre has been successful in achieving more efficient and better-coordinated IT services across government.

Because it is early in the TSC's rollout, the committee reserves comment on the overall efficiency of the initiative. The committee notes that between FMBS and Public Works and Services, for 2004-2005, a total of \$11.7 million, and 47 person years are devoted to computer services for GNWT departments. This does not include outside boards or agencies, which control their own technology budgets.

The committee will look forward to more detailed assessments of the TSC's performance during the next business plan cycle.

The committee wishes to commend the government not only for its initiative in establishing the TSC, but also for accomplishing its implementation with minimal fanfare and disruption to services. Members believe the TSC could serve as an example for other service centres the government may consider establishing in the future.

Human Resources Service Centre

The committee believes there are opportunities for the government to build on its positive results with the TSC by looking at other potential service centres. In particular, Members believe there may be much to be gained in efficiencies, better coordination and more consistent application of policies by establishing a human resource service centre.

All departments currently have their own human resource staff, which is similar to the situation that existed with IT staff prior to the TSC. There are concerns about consistency between departments, particularly when it comes to the hiring process. As well, government-wide human resources responsibilities are split between the corporate human resources division in the Executive offices and the labour relations and compensation division in FMBS. Members believe it is time for the government to restructure the way human resource services are provided on a government-wide basis.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the government investigate the feasibility of establishing a human resource service centre.

If a decision is made to establish a human resource service centre, Members would hope to see the government take a well-planned, low-key approach to implementation similar to what was used for the TSC.

Power Subsidy

The power subsidy program assists residential and commercial customers in high cost communities by paying the difference between the Yellowknife power rate and the local rate, up to a maximum number of kilowatt hours.

For 2004-2005, the subsidy is expected to cost \$8.307 million, an increase of 16 percent or \$1.127 million from the 2003-2004 main estimates. The total increase since the 2001-2002 fiscal year, when the subsidy program cost \$5.419 million, is nearly \$3 million. This means the program is growing by an average of about \$1 million each year.

The committee finds this growth trend alarming and is concerned about the sustainability of the program. Approximately \$4 million of the subsidy is offset by the NWT Power Corporation's dividend to the GNWT. The balance of the subsidy is paid for from general revenues. Other programs and services will suffer if the subsidy is allowed to balloon.

The Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight recommends the government bring back to the committee, before the next draft business plan reviews, options for measures to stabilize power subsidy costs at current levels.

Loan Guarantees

The draft main estimates for FMBS include a grant of \$120,000 which reflects interest the GNWT has agreed to forego pursuant to a debt settlement. The debt arose from a loan guarantee the government provided on behalf of a diamond manufacturing company that was unsuccessful in its operations. Under the terms of a negotiated settlement, the parent company has agreed to repay the principal of the loan in exchange for the GNWT agreeing to forego the interest costs. The committee learned that the total interest costs the GNWT has agreed to forego amount to \$800,000 over 10 years.

The committee is very concerned that the GNWT appears to be inconsistent in its approach to collecting debts. In this case, Members wonder whether the GNWT could have taken a stronger position and insisted on repayment of the full debt, including the interest. The outcome of this case may be perceived as unfair by other debtors who have not enjoyed such leniency. It may also send a signal to the beneficiaries of the other approximately \$17 million in diamond loan guarantees that should they get into similar financial difficulties they will be able to negotiate equally favourable settlements.

Audit Bureau

The audit bureau is proposing an increase of \$35,000, or approximately 30 percent, in other expenses for 2004-2005 from the 2003-2004 main estimates. The Minister and his staff advised the committee the reason for the increase is that the audit bureau anticipates using some additional contract resources, in part because they are having difficulties recruiting to fill three vacancies.

This information led Members to question whether the entire function of the audit bureau could not be contracted out to an outside firm which may be able to provide the services more efficiently, and also at arm's length from the GNWT. The committee suggests the government give this serious consideration, and report its findings during the 2005-2008 draft business plan review.

Thank you, Madam Chair. That concludes the report.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Would the Minister like to bring in witnesses?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I request we take a short break as we get the witnesses prepared.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will take a brief break and reconvene.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Roland, for the record, could you please introduce your officials?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. To my immediate right is Mr. Lew Voytilla. He is the deputy minister for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. To my immediate left is Mr. Rob Taggart, director of policy and planning. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Are there any general comments on FMBS, Financial Management Board Secretariat? We are on page 2-39 under the Department of Executive in your books. Are there any general comments? Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a short comment. I do believe that the AOC committee report on the review of this budget was already read. One of the things that was mentioned there is the rationalization of a technology service centre, and I was one of the Members who felt that this was a positive step. The decision to amalgamate and centralize this function came about due to the nature of the work, where I am sure the rapidly changing technology made it necessary and made it sensible that there be some focused, central location where these services could be provided and there be some level of standardization in keeping up with the changing technology. I also noted in my discussions -- and I want to make it public and put it on record -- that the way in which this was done was very good in that there were not a whole lot of fancy studies done. It was pretty low key, but it was well organized. I believe there was a public session about the launching of this centralized service in the Legislative Assembly last fall or late last summer. Since then, I think people who are working in the government all over the place are becoming more aware of this and the phone number to call and the service requests to make. I am saying this because I do think that they should be used as an example of where a government service can be provided and changed to meet the needs of the times.

One of the things that the AOC is mentioning is the potential for amalgamating and centralizing a human resources service centre. I do believe it is the opinion of most Members that we are not looking for some big fancy studies to see if there could be a new department of personnel or a creation of a whole new arm of government, but that a human resource centre has much parallel to the TSC service in that it is something that every department in the government needs and it is something that could benefit from some sort of a standardization in its services.

The AOC report really makes recommendation to that, and I don't want to go into too much detail about this, but I would like an initial response from the Minister as to whether he is receptive to the idea of doing a very low key, but well planned centralizing of human resource services in the government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Member for those comments. As well, I am aware that committees in previous assemblies were raising issues around that, how we would set up our functions and how much it would cost if we continued to operate with each department doing their own thing. So it is good to know that we have the support to continue down this path.

In the area of the human resources services centre, in fact, there has been some work ongoing. We've begun that exercise to look at how we can better perform and be more efficient and effective with the services we do provide. Right now I am informed that we have already begun some of the work in the area of the financial services, with seven other departments working with one group. So we have begun that exercise and we'll continue to work down that path as we go forward. Knowing our fiscal situation, we are going to have to spend our money prudently and have to be effective with that. We are looking at those options of pooling some of our resources and creating these centres that would allow us to be more effective.

As well, one of the Members asked questions in the House about, for example, records of employment. It is pretty difficult when we have to go from different departments to the central agency and make sure that we are doing it all right. So we are going to have to look at all of these options to improve on our service delivery. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: That concludes my general comment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): General comments. I have next in line Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. With reference to the opening remarks from the Minister, he talks about the \$371,000 increase to salaries and benefits, yet towards the end of his opening remarks he talks about reduction of seven staff positions. I have trouble understanding the large reduction of seven staff and yet we can still have an increase to salaries and benefits. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a correction on the initial response I made. The seven departments we are working with, we have pooled the employee benefits administration sections together, just for correction for the record. The specific area of the employees and the reduction and the number of employees within the department, we have 130 positions and when we take into account the increase as a result of the UNW increases, this is the third year of the three years that the increase has gone up. That is where you see the growth in that area of expenditures, it is because of the increase of the contract that we are fulfilling our third year of. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you. I would just like to say that in my mind, Mr. Chair, it just doesn't seem right that that reduction of seven staff members would still lead to an increase of our compensation and benefits. For the question involved here, maybe the Minister can further clarify what he meant that even though we have reduced staff we are still paying more in compensation and benefits.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The actual reduction of the six positions, a number of them were cost shared with Nunavut. So they wouldn't be fully burdened costs on our part. So the reduction of those isn't the total amount. When you take into comparison the average increase as a result of the collective agreement changes, the net difference is still an increase for the number of employees we have within the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: That is fine. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): General comments. Next I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments are similar to the ones Ms. Lee had. We spoke about this when we went through this a few weeks back, but I will bring it up again in this setting. Can we ask the Minister to go department by department and provide this committee with some information on how many employees the government has in terms of HR function in each department, and what it costs this government and each department to deliver that function? I would like to get a handle on that in terms of what the numbers are and what it is costing the way we are operating today. I do agree that I think we have to get centralized on the way the government delivers the human resource function, and I would like to see some numbers provided by the Minister to help get us down that road. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we don't have that information readily available. We will get it together as we are going through the exercise now of looking at how we deliver HR resources throughout the departments and the communities. So we are beginning that process and we will pull that together and provide it to Members, but we don't have that department by department at this time right at this setting. I would encourage the Member to ask each department for their HR people in there, but we can and we will pull some of that together and provide it to Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks, Mr. Minister, for the response. I guess we could do that,

we could start asking each department what the HR component is in their department. So I will ask you, Mr. Minister, for the Department of Executive, maybe we could get some figures in terms of what the HR component is in his department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, again, I will commit that we will get the numbers together from all of the departments. We will pool it, we will pull it together and provide that to Members on the HR side. Specifically for our department, for FMBS, we have one human resource person and then we receive services through our pooling in the Executive corporate services division. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to the Minister for answering that question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): General comments. Next I have in line Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for my clarity please, if the Minister would, is it the intention of his department to proceed with the human resources style public commission office? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, all of those options are being examined as to how we can work and be more efficient in the delivery of human resource functions. So all of those are being looked at. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What type of time frame or timelines can this government expect to see by the amalgamation of this information and possibly proceeding in that direction? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the exercise we are going through now, we are trying to meet the next business planning process. So we are hoping to have some initial numbers or information for June and then finalizing things in September as we begin the business plan process. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Minister. Does your department recognize the report done by Grant Thornton, produced I believe in December of 2000? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Department of Executive and FMBS did commission that report, so that report was done for our benefit. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Minister. Is your department looking at the recommendations and possibly implementing the recommendations by that and, if I may further, does your department recognize the previous motion made by Mr. Dent, seconded by Mr. Roland? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Apparently there was a previous decision by the Assembly. Mr. Minister, are you willing to respond to the Member's comment?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will respond to the question that in the report he has referred to that all of the recommendations in there would be part and parcel of our review and what areas we can go forward with. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and again, thank you, Mr. Minister. Since I have come onboard four months ago, I have been a strong advocate for the GNWT to proceed in the public services model to open up the accountability process in a sense of non-partisan. Therefore, we can get true representation and a clear representation that we are implementing our public service policies in a fair manner. It has also been pointed out that maybe we are not digging deep into the recognition of the affirmative action policy and it not being represented or accurately being responded to as the desire, or I should say the true representation of the North. My next question is that noting that there have been some policy concerns and possibly some concerns raised, what type of consultation will the department be going into and what type of research will they be expanding into before they bring it to the business plans? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think most importantly that we should state that we are going to be using the work that has been done in the past as a starting point and moving forward with that. We don't see a need to get into a lot more review in a sense of beginning something new and trying to get more information, we feel we have a lot of information. Then, of course, we would be working with the Members of this Assembly, with AOC, as we go through the steps moving forward to ensure that we are on the right track and working along with them to develop a program that would be beneficial for government and our staff. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just my last comment, maybe if I could get a response and I'll leave this dead horse alone and quit beating it. I'll just proceed

with a question. Is it anticipated that the FMBS, as in the Minister, will be consulting the national public service for any guidance or overview on possible examples of how we can implement this process? I know I'm a big advocate of this Public Service Commission. I've seen many other Members of AOC seem very interested in this and I would like to see that we get a nice, strong model as it proceeds forward with a draft. Does the Minister anticipate any consultation with the federal public service at all? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, one of our practices is to work with other jurisdictions and look at best practices that are out there. Again, if we can adopt something that is working well in other jurisdictions and make it fit better in the Northwest Territories, then we will work with those models that are out there. Our intention is to work with the Members of this Assembly, come up with a model that will be beneficial to our staff and to how we carry on the business of hiring and dealing with our staff. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Next in line is Mr. Roger Allen

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My comments are specifically related to the \$1.127 million increase to the power subsidy program. It concerns me greatly, Mr. Chairman, that the territorial power support program has a significant increase on an annual basis. It comes back to the very point I want to make, and unfortunately there's nowhere in the budget process that we can address this to the NWT Power Corporation. I think it requires us to revisit some of the many contributing factors as this power subsidy program increases at an alarming rate. One of the issues that was raised to me in the last several weeks was the fact that the low end of 700 kilowatt hours for residential use is not effective in the Northwest Territories during the cold winter months. This is proven in Inuvik where some of the power bills have increased over 100 percent to some of the consumers. I think one of the areas we want to highlight is not so much in the overall parts of the increase, but as a matter of principle of how we should look at more sustainable environmentally-friendly power sources. One of the questions raised to me by one of the local contract groups in Inuvik was if they had the ability to influence a policy change, where they would be able to sell back private power generation into the main grid to see if they could help alleviate some of those cost factors.

So I will conclude that statement by asking, through yourself, Mr. Chair, to the Minister, if there was further consideration given to the proposed initiative. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the power subsidy program has increased dramatically and, as we have highlighted, has grown over the years. A large part of that is the actual rates themselves have jumped significantly in a number of communities. For example, if you look at 1998-1999, the community of Lutsel'e used to pay 39.3995 cents per kilowatt hour. It is now at 73 cents per kilowatt hour. We have examples of that. The community of Rae Lakes in

1998-99 was 44 cents and is now up to over \$1 a kilowatt hour. So a lot of the drive in that is the rate changes that have happened over the years.

The other area that the government is looking at -- as was evidenced in previous assemblies with reports coming forward on how we should look at delivering our power program -- is renewable energy through the hydro facilities that are being discussed now with a number of land claim groups in the territory. The other side of it is, as well, the specifics of looking at the initiatives under the Power Corporation. I can't give the response. The Minister responsible for the Power Corporation would have to do that in those particular areas.

I guess for the average consumption, there has been an exercise done over the last number of years to see what the average kilowatt hour use is. We have that breakdown by community. For the average, a large number of customers out there manage to, on a yearly basis, stay under that 700 kilowatt area. Of course, that's an average and we know that there are high cost units out there that impact the residents.

So on the Power Corporation side there has been work done through the Executive and there have been some reports done and we continue to have to look at that. As stated earlier, this continues to grow. We're adding just over \$1 million to this area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With all due respect, I understand there are continual increases in costs to provide sustainable power. I guess the emphasis would be in terms of the fiscal strategy, in trying to meet some of the increased costs that are sometimes in the control of the environment. I would like to ask if the power support program would support alternative power sources such as voltaic or solar panelling, solar energy, as a way of mitigating some of the individual's costs, especially in the remote communities where there should be less demand on diesel generation, for instance. That would be my question to the Minister, through the Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there have been exercises done by the government in the past, normally through Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development looking at other sources, whether it's wind energy or solar panels, as well as through the Power Corporation itself being that those are a number of other areas that deal outside of what we deal with just paying for the subsidy program. I will be taking those comments and delivering them to the other Ministers, and I'm looking forward to what we can come together with. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Allen.

MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask a question to the Minister and his officials. Would someone who has self-generation be eligible for a subsidy out of this power subsidy program? That will be my final question to the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Allen. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way the power support program is structured today, I don't think that would be able to apply. But we would look at seeing how that could be incorporated into the power support program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Next in line, I have Mr. Bill Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of areas of detailed enquiry, but I will save them until we get to the appropriate part in the budget, Mr. Chairman. I did want to ask though of a reference the Minister made in his opening comments to continuing to invest in some software upgrades to our existing financial information system to keep it functional while a decision regarding its replacement is pending. We're going to spend almost \$200,000 on these interim software upgrades, Mr. Chairman.

It's something that I know came before committee, I think in at least the last two years of the previous Assembly, that our financial information system was, like all technology, seeing its days come to an end. We have a huge reliance on this, it's a big part of our infrastructure and a serious decision, also a very expensive one. My question, Mr. Chairman, is at least to my recollection because this issue has been out there for I recall about two years now, we're still looking at options or still looking at making a decision regarding the replacement. What is taking so long? When and how are we going to get around to looking after this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Member is right; there has been ongoing work in this area. The business case review has been completed and we are looking in the area of up to \$15 million to replace that system. The next phase would be to go out and start trying to find a system that can replace the existing system, but it comes back down to the question if we don't have the dollars to do it, then there's no use going to that next stage. That's why you see us right now trying to make due and carry it a little bit longer. That decision is going to have to be made at some point and then we're going to have to go forward, but figures go between \$11 million and \$15 million for replacing the system and that was as a result of the business case review.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Okay. So if we had the money, we would do it right away. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If we had the money, it would be on our capital acquisition plan for this year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. That helps answer a question there, that we have made at least a technical decision. Okay, everything is going up in cost. As we continue to delay or defer this, the sense that I have is that this is not really an option for us. We're going to have to bite the bullet on this. For every year that we put this off, Mr. Chairman, how much more is it costing us? What's the inflation rate on this stuff? Are we unnecessarily deferring or delaying this necessary decision? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Trying to pinpoint what it would cost ongoing, besides the fact that we're putting more money into the existing system now, we know there's a direct cost there. Delaying the decision to replace the FIS system is difficult to nail down, because as technology changes, maybe we can come up with a better system that may be a little less or it could get more expensive. It's difficult to measure that portion. What we can measure are the direct costs that we keep adding in trying to prop up the system we have now.

Recognizing that, it is a critical situation and at some time we're going to have to bite that bullet or we're going to find ourselves in a whole lot of trouble in trying to track things by paper and pen again if the system were to ever crash. We're doing what we can and recognizing our capital acquisition plan and the dollars available that are very limited in trying to meet the critical core needs of residents out there. That's why this hasn't made the cut to date. As I stated, that review has just been completed and we're going to have to decide going forward how we can address that situation. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a few short comments. Some of these comments were brought up in our committee report, but I just wanted to ask a couple of questions anyway. I wanted to ask on the \$120,000 increase in grant-in-kind equal to the value of interest of non-negotiated settlement and that is due to diamond manufacturing companies. This is an issue that has come up and there has been some concern raised about how a company could negotiate a settlement for this. I know from hearing about this that the government is probably caught between a rock and hard place, as far as getting some kind of settlement to at least get back the principal on some of these loans. I'm just wondering if the Minister could tell me how the government is doing in collecting on the principal since this negotiated settlement was arrived at to defer the interest on it. How are we doing at collecting the principal?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since the agreement has been signed, the principal payments have been made. We have not had any problems in that area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that there are a number of other loan guarantees out there from the government with respect to the diamond manufacturing industry. Are any of the other loan guarantees secured better than what this one was, or could we be facing the same type of deal here where we have to negotiate a settlement and have to be writing off even more money in interest payments? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We feel that the other areas are secured. We continue to monitor the operations, ensuring that our guarantees...We're hoping that they are not going to be exercised. There have been strong provisions put in place to protect our position. Most guarantees provided that working capital draws must be margined against inventory and accounts receivable. So we've done a fair bit of work. Parent companies and owners must cross-guarantee the GNWT. It is a complicated process and we've had complaints on the other side that it's a very cumbersome, complicated process, but that's for a reason: to try to protect our side of the books.

The loan guarantees are secured by things. There's an assignment of accounts receivable, assignments of inventory, fixed and floating debentures against all assets of the company, and where there's a parent corporation which is providing a cross-guarantee a similar security is provided by that parent company. So there are a number of those things involved. Although in any guarantee situation, there are events, as what has occurred in this last one, that a company may fail and we are then required to go into it and try to collect on those things. In this case, the decision was made that we felt the best decision possible would be in getting an agreement to have the full principal amount paid, forego the interest, and still have the operation going and employment happening out there. So there were a number of factors that came into the decision. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, could the Minister tell me...I think I heard him say that he feels all the other loan guarantees are pretty secure. Is the Minister fairly confident that all the other loans are on good standing and there is no danger of them having to be called on for these loan guarantees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The last check we've done, we feel we're still secure. One of the reasons that we end up holding these guarantees is because it is considered a new industry in the Northwest Territories and the banks themselves are nervous to go in and loan without the backup of our government when these companies go forward. So we've done what we feel we can with due diligence and ensuring that we're protected, but there is risk attached to that and we see the result of one of those occurrences where we've had to make an agreement to receive the principal back but forego the interest. The option is there if we wanted to

absolutely go after the assets or the receivables or the inventory. That option is there. That's part of the guarantee in this case. The government had decided that this course was the best one to go on. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There were a couple of other areas I was going to ask questions on, but it's been brought up and it's addressed in our committee report as well, especially in information technology and projects. We always see increases in there. On the \$294,000 reduction due to winding down of equal pay settlements, if it's winding down are we done with equal pay settlements or is that still an ongoing issue?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right now, we are continuing in the winding-down portion of the category we are working on. There are individuals who worked as casuals for the government and we are still trying to track down some of those individuals who haven't been found that were past employees of the government. We are hoping to have that concluded by the end of this upcoming fiscal year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one final comment on the reduction of \$926,000 for the transfer to the NWT Housing Corporation. Is there an offsetting amount? Is there anything that shows up in the Housing Corporation's budget that ties into this figure? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As indicated, that is a transfer to the Housing Corporation. So that amount will show up in the Housing Corporation envelope as they take on the last part of that program that used to exist. So you will see that exact amount show up in the Housing Corporation budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. General comments. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to speak to the way the trend is going in the Sahtu region. In the Minister's opening remarks, we see the funding of staffing of 103 in headquarters, presumably Yellowknife, and 27 in the regions. I would like to ask the Minister about the reallocations. The Sahtu is in the Inuvik region but slowly, with the creation of the Sahtu health board and some other things coming in, we are becoming a region ourselves. There are many government departments in the Sahtu. I think it would be very effective if the presence of the Financial Management Board was in the Sahtu with all the different departments in our region. Maybe the Minister can reallocate a position to the Sahtu under the FMBS. Mr. Chairman, I want to ask that question to the Minister for him to consider this in the future, to reallocate a position from FMBS to the Sahtu.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, we monitor all the regions for the amount of work required and the commitment required to maintain the level of service that's provided. Once again, as other Members have stated, part of what we need to do as a government is to make sure we operate effectively and efficiently through the delivery of programs and being that we deal internally with other departments, it's very much a centralized function around payroll and the financial end of things. So there is not a lot of opportunity. Right now out of the Sahtu, much of their services from all the departments are still handled through the FMBS office in Inuvik, but we are, annually, looking at the requirements placed on the staff. We look at when there might be a need to re-jig the lines or move some positions around. That would be considered. It's an ongoing process and right now that's not scheduled in this budget cycle.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the re-jigging the Minister has to do on an annual basis. Looking at the situation in the Sahtu, I think that the Sahtu is large enough and needs to be seriously considered as almost a stand-alone region. We've always been under the arm of the Inuvik region and the Inuvik region is a big region. It's almost 14 communities and sometimes we don't feel in the Sahtu that we receive the quality of service that we deserve. That's why we ask in the Sahtu that we have a stand-alone region. The creation of the Sahtu health board is one step to that process.

With the priority and the level of the Financial Management Board, this government needs to consider having an office in the Sahtu to work with us. That's a comment to the Minister and his staff in light of what may happen in the next few years or further down the road, we would like to have a region and like to not be governed or taken care of in the Inuvik region which is in Inuvik. I think that's something I am going to keep questioning this government on and this Minister and ask if he would give that some consideration down the road. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, as I stated earlier, we continue to monitor the workload and requirements in each of the regions. When that is increased to a sufficient amount, we would look at transfer of positions to ensure that we continue to meet that demand placed on the Financial Management Board Secretariat. As well, in this area, we should make the point that as the Sahtu is developing, a lot of that is a result of the self-government discussions that are ongoing right now in the Beaufort-Delta. The government has been proactive in the sense of preparing the Sahtu after self-government discussions are completed and the fact that they do move ahead in the Delta region.

One of the things as well is we stated that the federal government needs to be included in this thing for capacity building, but you can say in a roundabout way we are taking on that burden right now by establishing the health board and by moving more departments and setting them

up. As the workload increases, we are monitoring that. When that workload becomes a high enough amount, we will look at establishing a position or two in that region. Again, it's trying to be effective and efficient. In delivering what dollars we have available, we have to be very careful to ensure we meet those priorities that we set as a government. As well, we need to continue to work with the federal government to have them come up with some of those capacity dollars that we can prepare these regions for further development. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Encouraging words from the Minister. That's the point that I also wanted to talk about, is preparing the Sahtu region in terms of becoming a sustainable region. I know the federal government is a key component to helping us out here. If there's any mechanism or way that we can work closely with this department and the Sahtu people and put pressure on the federal government in terms of owning up to their obligations in terms of the land claims and self-government agreements and the ability to have the Sahtu region become a stand-alone region, I know it's going to come in time, but it's encouraging to hear from the Minister. I just wanted to make those comments, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Would you like to respond, Mr. Minister?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just like to thank the Member for bringing his concerns to us and I look forward to working with him and providing a level of service that's adequate to the residents in his jurisdiction, as well as being effective as a government on how we spend those dollars on behalf of the people. We'll continue to monitor and work with the federal government, as well as with our own partners here in the Northwest Territories. If we can work together, I'm sure we can build a solid case going forward to try and have the idea of capacity on those issues dealt with by the federal government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Further general comments? Detail. Turn to page 2-37. Page 2-37, program summary, we'll defer that for now. Go to page 2-39, activity summary, directorate, operations expense, \$4.999 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In keeping with my notice that I gave yesterday, I would like to ask for the breakdown on the other expenses of \$1.142 million. Also, maybe I should just add here that there were a couple of breakdowns for other expenses that I asked for under Finance. I appreciate that that department has been dealt with, but given that we have the same Minister here, I just want to get a commitment from him again that he will provide me with those breakdowns that weren't provided yet. Could I get a breakdown on this particular number, please? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we will have that provided to the Member from the other department. In this section of directorate, I believe the Member is referring to the \$1.142 million and breaks down

in this way: travel and transportation, \$173,000; materials and supplies, \$54,000; purchased services, \$89,000; contract services, \$133,000; fees and payments, \$4,000; other expenses, \$689,000.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. So we have other expenses under other expenses. I just want to make a point here, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the Minister as Minister of Finance could comment on whether or not there is any better way to be more transparent in the way we debate and pass budgets, Mr. Chairman. I do believe that the exercise we're engaged in here is very important. This is the money that we're approving for the government to spend on behalf of the people and the least we could do or ought to be able to know is what it is that we're allocating the budget for. I understand that you can only put so much on this booklet called main estimates and there is an agreement as to how we are going to categorize them and the four main areas that we have are compensation and benefits, grants and contributions, other expenses and amortization. I know that in many cases the grants and contributions section is very well laid out. I mean, something as small as \$10,000 in grants are laid out. But for some reason there's a practice, and it seems to be accepted, that other expenses items will go unnoticed or at least it continues to be lumped up. FMBS is one of the smaller departments in this area, but as we move on we're going to see divisions in some departments under other expenses that amount to millions of dollars and I think it's incumbent on all of us to know what it is, how those dollars are allocated. I would further submit that it's the Minister's obligation to show us. Having said all that, can I now ask for the Minister to give a breakdown of what the details are under other expenses in the amount \$689,000? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had to ask what the other expenses were, as well. They are for the TSC and the systems and communications chargeback. So these are chargeback amounts for systems and communications, as well as the TSC services for the whole department.

As well, taking the Member's comments and concerns of how we can better coordinate the delivery of the budget process being more informed, in that I'd be happy to sit down with Members and see how we can improve on the delivery of this information. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that, the amount for the chargeback to TSC and systems and communications, am I to understand that TSC...I mean, it's a little confusing here because TSC is within the mandate of this FMBS, but is that the money allocated for this section is charged for the services they use from TSC even though they are TSC? Oh, no, this is the money that directorate would spend to get the services from TSC. Then I would have to ask why it is that this directorate needs to spend that much money on TSC. What is the major work that they need from TSC? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This amount shown under directorate accounts for the other sections within FMBS and it breaks down to \$266,000 for the system and communications chargeback and then the TSC chargeback, and every department has to pay into this. So although it's a central agency function, every department pays its portion of receiving the service and our amount works out, for 2004-2005, to \$420,000. That breaks down to how much equipment we use or have in use and service provided, as well. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: I have no further questions on that item. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree wholeheartedly with Ms. Lee and her line of questioning on this. Having been my first time through this budget process, we didn't have the benefit of going through the business planning cycle before we went through the draft mains; but, as a new Member, it's very confusing. I found a lot of unanswered questions. The term "other expenses" is fairly open to interpretation.

Two of the things I'd like to see come out of this exercise and maybe budgets in the future, I'd like to see -- and I spoke of this in the House yesterday -- the travel budget broken out by department so when there's a government-wide 25 percent reduction in travel we can actually see that that 25 percent reduction has been met. When travel is not budgeted, I have some difficulty with that.

I also have difficulty with trying to put a number on contracted services. I know that each department does have a number of contracted services. Members were provided with a blue book that accounts for a tremendous amount of government spending on contracted services. I'd like to see some more detail, I guess is what I'd really like to see. That's a question I'd have for the Minister. What is the process that we can see some of these changes take effect for next year so that when we're going through this process we can see what some of these other expenses are? The way it's laid out right now it's very confusing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as we go through this exercise and go through what would be the normal process, departments begin their budget process in June preparing for the business plan presentation to committees in September. At that time there will be much more detail involved. There will be a lot of information provided that normally doesn't show up in the main estimates document. We can definitely include more information in the business plan process. It is a lot of information. There would be a lot more paper and to what detail do we want to get down to. I'm committed, as we go through the next cycle, especially the business plan cycle, I'm sure the Member will see much more detail as we go through that process. Then from those business plans, the first year of those business plans are drafted

into the draft main estimates and we end up at this process. The Members will have much more information available to them during that business plan cycle. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess another question I'd have is how are travel budgets arrived at in your department and in other departments? In the formula that I found consistent through the various departments was you take the number of employees and multiply it by \$10,000 and then you arrive at a travel budget. Is that the case? Maybe the Minister can let me know how it is they arrive at a budget because I don't think there is a budget. That's what I'm getting at, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Chairman, I did sign off letters yesterday evening in response to the Member's questions in the House about the travel budget and what it amounted to. Within the FMBS it's not a percentage per employee. The different sections within FMBS go through a process of planning what trips they would be required to be on and billed on that basis. There is a process used for coming up with estimates and requirements the department would have for travel. Again, that information should be in the hands of Members, if not today then very soon. I did sign off the letters showing the 25 percent reduction that resulted. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Mr. Minister, I am in receipt of that letter and the accompanying information that was with it. The question that I have though, in the information that you provided it just goes based on actual expenditures and not an actual budgeted amount. I know travel a lot of times is a difficult thing to gauge. Your needs might change over the course of the year and people might need to travel when they weren't supposed to. I'm just wondering, what I was looking for was budgeted amounts, not actual expenditures. Working off of budgeted amounts it's a lot easier to see the 25 percent reduction. I'll ask another question after the Minister answers that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when we sent the direction out to the departments to come up with a 25 percent reduction in travel, we used actual numbers that they had spent for travel. We wanted to make sure we got an actual amount, not a planned amount. We wanted to use actual numbers that were spent on travel, figuring that's the most accurate way to proceed. That's why it's done in that way. We do have information, for example, within our envelope here we've looked at travel for the whole department and we're looking at the total of about \$452,000 of travel and that includes travel for self-government/devolution purposes, for delivery of training, job evaluation, human resource systems, payroll, arbitration appeals, benefits file review,

system consultations, Nunavut records, mediators. There are a lot of them that are included in this area. Again, requirements that because FMBS is involved in the human resources, at least in the Public Service Act side, required travel is established and booked in there. But for the exercise of giving Members information on the 25 percent reduction, we went with actual numbers so that we knew that there was a solid amount that could be saved based on what departments had spent in prior years. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for that explanation, Mr. Minister. The next question I have is in terms of vacant positions, and I'll ask you about your department. When a position is vacant for four, six, eight months, whatever the case may be, that money being used, Mr. Chairman, to fund other functions or other activities inside the department such as travel or other contracted services or other expenses as they're called, I'm just wondering, through you, Mr. Chairman, in FMBS when there's vacant positions do they use the funded positions for other activities inside that department? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's going to be a need for government to have some flexibility to move some of the dollars around. But there are also requirements to report where you move the dollars around if they get to a certain amount of volume. We do, for example in FMBS, book approximately eight percent vacancy rate and that can be used, for example, for student hires, for summer employment and casual positions. There is some leeway as to moving that money around, trying to keep it in the same area.

With the amount of delivery of programs and services we have as a government, there's going to be some flexibility of having to move those dollars around. I know I used to question the integrity of the system, but we could give you the actual budget sheets the departments work off of to establish the amount of travel their section's going to require, what it's for. I would be starting in June going through that whole exercise. I don't think, as Members of the Assembly, we want to get down to that detail of accounting for every dollar. We trust that the information being provided to us is good information. If it isn't, we better fix it and account for it in that way.

Through the business plan cycle there will be a lot more detail provided and we'd work to give that information to Members. Again, as I stated earlier to a previous Member's questions, if committee Members have suggestions on ways we can deliver this information we'd be glad to sit down and work with you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for that explanation, Mr. Minister. I do have some difficulty though, especially given the fact that some of our larger government departments would have vacancy rates upwards of 10 percent. That being the case, we're talking about some pretty significant dollars that are associated

with those vacant positions. I do agree with you that, yes, departments and managers need to be able to have some flexibility and have to have some room to manoeuvre inside their departments, but if the money that is earmarked for positions isn't spent on the positions I have some difficulty with that, as do some of the other Members on this side of the House. I'm not sure how we tackle it. I know it's probably not a new thing that I'm bringing up here today, but it's something that I feel very strongly about. I think budgets are set for people to follow and I know it happens. I don't know how we can stop it from happening or try to discourage that type of creative accounting inside departments. I think it's something that we should keep an eye on. I know the Minister is aware of that and maybe we can work collectively here over the next couple of weeks to try to find a way that we can try to tackle that. In a bigger department it certainly is an issue, a bigger issue for me depending on the size of the department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I stated what FMBS does and how it budgets and provides that eight percent margin. Not all departments have that. Some departments don't budget any vacancy amount, but I understand where the Member is coming from. Again, we are approving a budget and on those lines that they would be accounted for. So we're going to do our part to ensure that what we identify for expenditures, those dollars are spent in those areas. If there's a requirement to move them, we report back to the House. We even, for example, use interdepartmental transfers. So within a department you're moving money from one program area to another. We have to bring that report back to the House and that's how we show if there have to be any shifts. If we're not doing that then we're in trouble. We have to account for where that money is spent and if it's not spent in that area we have to report why. Any amount over \$250,000 shifted from one program to another comes through another report in the House. We have a number of reporting mechanisms to ensure that, as a government, once we've passed this budget we account for where that money is spent. But, yes, there is some room in there and I've often, as a regular Member, called that into question myself about how we do that. I'm open and willing to work with committee to see what we can do to try and improve on how we do things and ensure that we're operating as a transparent and effective government. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Ramsay, your time has run out. I will go to Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 2-39 of the main estimates in the budget summary, I want to ask the Minister and his staff, Mr. Chairman, about the 2002-2003 actuals. It seems like under the line of grants and contributions that we're in a wave. It starts in 2002-2003 at \$936,000, then in 2003-2004 main estimates go up to \$1.2 million, then the revised estimates for 2003-2004 go to \$3.3 million and then this year, 2004-2005, we're back into \$1.2 million. It seems like we're riding a wave here and I want to ask the Minister and his staff, Mr. Chairman, why is that wave there? Can you explain that to me?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the initial amount of 2002-2003 actuals of \$936,000 is the amount we book for superannuation for, I believe, the Power Corporation and Workers' Compensation Board. The changing amount in the main estimates is the estimated amount of what would be required of us in the same area. The 2003-2004 revised estimates is a change in the grant-in-kind for staff housing; a one-time grant to staff housing. Again, that's because we no longer have that program. I know Mr. Voytilla here was getting antsy because of the fear that program might come back to life. We do not have that program any more and that's why that transfer, we have to account for that grant-in-kind value to the Housing Corporation. That's why that has jumped up significantly. But it's a one-time grant-in-kind. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I take the opinion that I hope we can bring it back to life again. That's another forum we can talk about. I guess what I'm alluding to, Mr. Chairman, is that what happens with this budget today in the process that we're going through over the next couple of weeks is unusual. However, as Members we took it on as our own, as Mr. Ramsay alluded, that we went right into the budget without the business plans. That's our responsibility and we did that. We're learning here, Mr. Chairman.

I found that after a while it was strange not having a business plan and going right into the main estimates, but that's okay. It's a learning experience. However, what we do here today and the next couple of weeks is going to be very important because it's going to have an effect on the people back in our communities. With the wave, I guess, in terms of things that are happening in terms of the grants and contributions, planning for the communities for the next five or 10 years, we're the leaders in this field here. We are the leaders and it has come down to the community. We are expecting also to tighten their belts and watch their spending and some things that are unforeseen in the region or the communities. I hope the way we do business doesn't penalize the communities in how they have extra expenditures. I think we all have to do this together.

I think the communities need to be supported in their spending and some of the unforeseen costs they may have to swallow in the future. I guess I'm saying that through this exercise and the Financial Management Board Secretariat that they provide some strong leadership and flexibility to our regions and our communities in terms of their expenditures and their accounting of programs. Just a comment there, Mr. Chairman. I'm not too sure if the Minister wants to answer. That's as far as I want to go today.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. If you would like to comment, Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just briefly, again how we work with our departments and deliver the programs and services to the communities is critical. I think you'll see a better example when you go through Municipal and Community Affairs because they deal in municipal services and they can show fluctuations and changes for costs that weren't planned for, but had to come up with the money to help address those concerns

in the communities. Health and Social Services is the same thing. One of the other tools that's out there is the supplementary appropriation where there has to be additions to it to try and deal with those increased costs. That is an exercise that Members will be going through here during this session, as well. So there are avenues that we did build in to try to deal with some of those unforeseen costs in the communities. But it is very difficult, as stated, when we are right now in a cycle and situation where we are going to do with less money and trying to find the revenue to maintain the existing level of programs and services that are expected by our residents. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question would be a point on some clarification. I just want to ask the Minister if the costs of assets and services is because of the large reduction in the assets and services from 2002-03 to 2004-05. Is that just due to the department releasing all of these staff housing units to the NWT Housing Corporation, and that we would see this increase in the costs of assets and service in the Housing Corporation budget summary? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member has it right. The reduction in the cost of assets and service is a result of the transfer to the Housing Corporation, and that corresponding amount will appear in the Housing Corporation section. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the Minister. Just for my own information on this transfer of the housing units to the NWT Housing Corporation, can the Minister provide the Members of the House with some information as to how many housing units we are actually referring to when we are looking at \$2.6 million in assets?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe there are about 25 units that were transferred over, and they range from a number of communities: Fort Liard; Fort Resolution; Good Hope; Paulatuk; Deline; Tuktoyaktuk; and, Fort McPherson.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you very much for that information. Another quick question that a couple of the other Members were referring to insofar as other expenses go in the breakdown of other expenses; in particular, travel. I know that the government travel budget is still significantly high, according to a lot of Members, but a lot of the travel for a lot of the department members and their employees is directly related to their actual responsibilities in their positions, and increasing their performance, and carrying out a better service for the public. On the flipside of the coin, I also realize that there

is extensive travel for a lot of GNWT employees to attend functions or workshops, which the cost benefit of attending these workshops and conferences every year just starts getting smaller and smaller insofar as getting a real benefit for the amount of money that the government puts into it every year. I am just wondering if that type of travel where the employees and other government members are going to certain conferences and stuff where they are going just for the sake of going because they went last year and the year before and the year before, and really not receiving the real benefit as if they went to this conference for the first time as opposed to going for the tenth time. Has the government ever looked at reductions in that area of travel in the overall financial framework? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Minister.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am hoping that through the exercise we have identified with departments on a 25 percent reduction that they would take those types of trips and be the first ones to drop off. It is something that we will continue to monitor as a government. For example, in the area within our department, the number of trips for duty travel conferences is about 41, and that works out to about \$300 per employee that does that. So definitely not everybody goes on these things. Some of them are requirements when it comes to keeping certain classifications up to date, but hopefully through that 25 percent reduction, and as we have been told by Members to look at tightening that up even more, departments are doing their due diligence and seeing what areas are required. I agree that we see a lot of people travelling to different conferences even though they are held in the Territories, that is an area we are going to have to look at going forward as well. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to thank the Minister for his answers, and I have no further questions on 2-39. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My line of questioning was in the same area as Mr. Villeneuve's. I have gotten my questions answered so I will pass it along. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Delorey. We are still on page 2-39. The dollar figure for 2-39 is \$4.999 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Going to page 2-41.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The total amount is \$1.238 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-41, directorate, grants and contributions, the total contribution is \$1.238 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total grants and contributions, \$1.238 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-43, labour relations and compensation services, operations expense, total operations expense is \$7.576 million. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I get a breakdown on the other expenses for \$2.1 million? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The breakdown for the operations expense, travel and transportation is \$163,000; materials and supplies is \$150,000; purchased services is \$174,000; contract services is \$762,000; fees and payments are \$199,000; other expenses are \$439,000 and again, that breaks down to the chargeback for the human resources system. Then computer hardware and software for \$263,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Lee asked my questions, so I will forego my question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Ramsay.

Committee Motion 1-15(3): To Investigate The Feasibility Of A Human Resources Service Centre, Carried

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the government investigate the feasibility of establishing a human resource service centre.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): There's a motion on the floor to report progress. It's not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? It's a challenge here. There's a tie. My vote is to vote against the motion, so we proceed.

---Defeated

On page 2-43, labour relations, compensation services, operations expense, total operations expense, \$7.576 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2-45, government accounting, operations expense, total operations expense, \$11.898 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): There's a motion on the floor to report progress. It's not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress. At this time, I would like to thank the Minister, Lew Voytilla and Robert Taggart for appearing today. Thank you very much.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to call the House to order. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole.

ITEM 21: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005 and Committee Report 1-15(3) and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there a seconder for the motion? Mr. Ramsay. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 23: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Accountability and Oversight committee at 9:00 a.m. and at 10:30 a.m. Monday morning, as well as a meeting of the Governance and Economic Development committee at noon.

Orders of the day for Monday, March 22nd:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions

7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3
2003-2004
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
 - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 2
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 1, Appropriation Act, 2004-2005
 - Committee Report 1-15(3), Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates
 - Committee Report 2-15(3), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Draft 2004-2005 Main Estimates
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Monday, March 22, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

