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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, March 9, 2005****Members Present**

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

ITEM 1: PRAYER

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Before we go to orders of the day, Monday, March 14th, is Commonwealth Day. The second Monday in March is observed annually by all member nations of the Commonwealth to promote understanding about global issues, international cooperation and the work done by modern Commonwealth.

The theme of Commonwealth Day 2005 will be Education - Creating Opportunity, Realizing Potential. The theme reflects the Commonwealth's commitment to education by promoting efforts to achieve universal primary education, eliminate gender disparities, improving quality in education, using distance learning to overcome barriers, supporting education in difficult circumstances and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS in education.

Commonwealth Day is celebrated in many different ways. Many cities, for example, hold multi-faith observances. Parliaments and legislatures also mark the day with speeches and events. On Monday, the Royal Union Flag, also known as the Union Jack, will be flown along with the Canadian Flag on all Government of Canada buildings and establishments across Canada to mark Canada's membership in the Commonwealth Nations. We will also be flying the Union Jack here at the Legislative Assembly, along with the Northwest Territories Flag and the Canadian Flag.

Thank you, all Members, for joining me as we mark this very important day.

--Applause

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that on May 2 to 6, 2005, we will be hosting our sixth annual Youth Parliament. It is an opportunity for grades 9 and 10 students in the Northwest Territories to assume the role of MLAs and Members of the Legislative Assembly here in Yellowknife. The Legislative Assembly hosts this event each year and we encourage all Members to participate and help make this experience a memorable and rewarding one for all our young participants. Thank you, Members.

---Applause

Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS**Minister's Statement 108-15(3): MACA/RCMP Co-location Initiative**

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report on an initiative being undertaken by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. MACA and "G" division of the RCMP have been

exploring options to more fully integrate each organization's emergency management functions and enhance the effective overall response to emergencies.

Plans have been made for the operation of a common, integrated emergency operations centre, located in the "G" division headquarters to respond to security threats or natural disasters.

These discussions started after the Government of Canada's new national security policy was approved in April 2004. This policy is a national framework and action plan to ensure the Government of Canada is prepared for and can respond to current and future threats.

Although national security focuses on threats that have the potential to undermine the security of the state, it is also closely linked to personal security. The SARS outbreak showed how threats to individuals can impact all of society, so national security must be considered in this broader context.

Any natural disaster can affect the normal functioning of society. Whether the threat is a security issue, a fuel spill, flood, forest fire or power outage, a coordinated response by all parties to deal with the consequences of the threat will be required.

MACA is the government's lead department on emergency measures and the RCMP is the primary enforcement agency in the Northwest Territories with national security responsibilities. At the same time, both agencies are involved in emergency planning and response at the territorial level and with individual communities.

For this reason, bringing together each organization's senior emergency management function will lead to a more effective overall response to the consequences of a security threat or to security issues related to an emergency response operation.

I am also pleased that the federal Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada has committed to establishing a presence in the North with a regional position in Yellowknife. This position will serve the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut as part of the national integrated system.

Co-location with provincial/territorial emergency operation centres is one of the key measures identified for the federal government in the national security policy. Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada has announced its intention to establish this regional office serving NWT, Yukon and Nunavut in the new MACA/RCMP integrated Emergency Operations Centre.

Plans are underway to set up this integrated office. I am pleased that the RCMP and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada have taken such a cooperative stance in working with the department to advance our common agenda, which is to enhance emergency preparedness arrangements in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement On New Courthouse In Yellowknife

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Over the course of the last few days, we have discussed a proposal -- and I say proposal -- to build a courthouse, a brand spanking new courthouse for Yellowknife in the future. Mr. Speaker, we also spoke of other projects in the Northwest Territories to be constructed in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I am receiving feedback to the logic or the reason why we have put a brand new courthouse as a priority in our spending of public funds, especially with the type of figure of \$41 million. Mr. Speaker, with \$41 million, we could put some serious dollars into the Community Justice Program many times over. We could establish well-operated, well-funded, well-trained community justice legal workers, now known as community justice coordinators.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most important distinctive characteristics of our society is its laws; our laws that govern our way of behaviour and the existence of laws to live by. Mr. Speaker, Canada is a multinational, multicultural nation, therefore there are different views on the nature of the laws outside the dominant culture, especially aboriginal traditions, and that is my point, Mr. Speaker; the \$41 million that we are not putting in resources into our system when we often speak of only a few cents here and there.

Mr. Speaker, this government has brought forward the request to begin the courthouse concept and has received some support. However, Mr. Speaker, with all the cuts that were tabled and the increased needs in our communities, this request does not make sense and has turned a lot of people off in our small communities to the priorities and the way this government prioritized its spending.

Mr. Speaker, in today's age of 2005, in the small community of Colville Lake where there are about 135 people who live above the Arctic Circle, there is no running water in the public school, there is no running water in the public community office or washrooms. There are only two dentists that visit the community each year. Dentists and doctors are lucky to get into the community three or four times per year; while medical specialists, well your guess is as good as mine, whenever they can make it in. Mr. Speaker, the cost of living in Colville Lake is out of this world. That is the way we take care of the people in Colville Lake. They feel like they are out of this world, on another planet. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, for \$41 million we can surely build a decent outhouse for Colville Lake. At least they can enjoy one function in comfort and know that in this government we care. Mahsi.

---Laughter

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Member's Statement On 50th Annual Caribou Carnival

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later this month, March 25th to 27th, Yellowknife will be celebrating its 50th annual Caribou Carnival. Mr. Speaker, every year since 1955, Yellowknife residents have celebrated the coming of spring with this annual carnival. Incidentally, the Caribou Carnival is as old as the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, which we are celebrating. I wonder if there are any connections.

Caribou Carnival, Mr. Speaker, began in the 1950s as a competitive event. Hunters and trappers from far and wide emerged from the bush to compete for the title of Bush King. The title went to the man who proved he had the most skills needed to survive the harsh northern winters. Women were not left out, Mr. Speaker. Speed and dexterity and muskrat skinning and tea boiling were the qualities of a queen.

Caribou Carnival has gone through huge transitions since those early days. Yellowknife has grown from a small mining town to a thriving metropolitan city. Fortunately for us soft city types, today the crown goes to whoever can sell the most raffle tickets.

But, Mr. Speaker, the early days have not been forgotten. The snow stage still features competitions in wood chopping, tea boiling, fire starting, log carrying, log splitting and nail hammering, and the scariest and most heart stopping one for me, the snowmobile race. Mr. Speaker, for those who are all beauty and no brawn, there is always the ugly dog and truck contest in which to shine.

I am always happy to see lots of our neighbours from surrounding communities that descend on our capital city, Mr. Speaker. This year's schedule of events promises something for all ages and all interests. There are the Caribou Capers talent show, the fiddle dance and, of course, the Canadian Championship Dog Derby. The cultural tent will showcase games from across the NWT: Dene hand games, Inuit games, blanket toss and finger pull. I would like to report to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Yellowknife MLAs will be out there once again in full force to brave the cold and to dish out delicious and toasty hotdogs to our beloved constituents, while they are watching the fireworks, free of charge. I would like to encourage everyone to come out and help us celebrate this big event for the 50th year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank in advance all the organizers and volunteers, especially Carol Van Tighem and her team who have been working tirelessly to make this event happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Member's Statement On Housing Issues In Nahendeh

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. In my statement last week, Mr. Speaker, I noted that 25 percent of households in my constituency have a core need for housing. This means that 200 out of 754 households in Nahendeh are either overcrowded, unsafe, too expensive, or all the above.

As I said last week, if the Housing Corporation would just build a four-plex in Jean Marie River, it would take care of

90 percent of their housing issues; 90 percent, Mr. Speaker. So I support the Housing Corporation's strategy to build multiple family dwellings like four-plexes.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Four-plexes are more economical to heat, they have shared water and sewage lines, and greater savings can be found by having tenants make use of shared facilities like laundry rooms. Four-plexes are also a good way to offer independence to elders or people with disabilities, Mr. Speaker.

The apartments are smaller, easier to maintain and there is no shovelling or need for expensive maintenance by the residents. They also make great starter homes for young families, who sometimes need to learn about the responsibility of taking care of their own place, paying their own bills and owning their own home.

Mr. Speaker, the government needs to do something, and they need to do something now about the housing crisis in Nahendeh. I receive e-mails and phone calls from constituents on a daily basis who live under terrible circumstances. These people can't wait a few more years for a house or an apartment. We need solutions now. The government says that they have made provisions for suitable, adequate and affordable housing a cornerstone of their strategic plan, Mr. Speaker. I would like to encourage this government to be more innovative and find quick, creative solutions to our housing problems. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement On Oil And Gas Development Positions

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I will be speaking once again on my concern with this government's lack of dedicated oil and gas staff in the regions, with the major oil and gas reserves and exploration activity. On Monday, in response to a question by my colleague Mr. Ramsay, the Minister of RWED said that he agreed that there are probably over 20 positions government-wide dedicated to the oil and gas industry. I am looking forward to seeing the actual numbers from the Minister some time soon.

Where are these 20 or more positions, Mr. Speaker? Certainly not in the Beaufort-Delta which has 85 percent of the gas reserves, not to mention the oil reserves. According to the National Energy Board, we have six trillion cubic feet of proven gas reserves and another 55 trillion cubic feet of potential reserves. We have a whole two GNWT positions dedicated to oil and gas.

The positions are not in the Sahtu, which has 85 percent of the oil reserves, substantial gas reserves and already has a pipeline going south. That is worth two positions. Not in Nahendeh either, which has a large share of the gas reserves and sits right in the middle of the proposed pipeline route. I believe they have two positions, only one of which is filled.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about six positions out of at least 20 government-wide and three regions that probably have 99.9 percent of the reserves. Why, Mr. Speaker, does this government have only six positions in the areas most affected by oil and gas development?

The Minister of RWED has stated that he is not entertaining the thought of moving any oil and gas positions to the Beaufort-Delta. I hope he has not completely shut the door on the idea. I understand the decisions being made to have the Mackenzie Valley pipeline office in Hay River, but there are other positions out there. He still hasn't convinced me that the petroleum-related positions from the minerals oil and gas division shouldn't be moved to Inuvik. We would be happy to take the director too, if that is a concern? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Member's Statement On Beverage Container Recovery Program

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak to my continued support for the efforts of this government to develop an effective recovery program for beverage containers.

Mr. Speaker, we must maintain progress on this initiative to bring a program of recovery of beverage containers and other recyclable materials to communities across the NWT. As Members, we understand that transportation and capacity limitation across the NWT present unique challenges to the development of a territorial-wide recovery program.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the government to get recovery facilities up and running as soon as possible, where possible, and to continue to work on how best to implement the program territory-wide in the near future. The smaller communities must be involved and we need to encourage their interest in participating and help them find the most efficient and effective ways to participate. We, as MLAs, have a role to play, as well, in spreading the message in our communities to ensure all communities buy into this important initiative.

Mr. Speaker, it is the responsible thing to ensure that commercial and public stakeholders are properly consulted in the development of our recovery program. The Waste Reduction and Recovery Advisory Committee have brought meaningful representation from across the NWT and across the various business sectors. Some implementation delays have been encountered, but this is to ensure that affected stakeholders' concerns or ideas are properly considered in the implementation planning process.

Mr. Speaker, waste recovery and recycling is important to our residents and our environment and we must keep moving forward, but at a pace that ensures that we do it right. As we bring all communities on line, we will ensure that the implementation of our program represents our conservation ethics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Member's Statement On Consolidation Of GNWT Human Resource Functions

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to use my Member's statement today to raise some level of attention towards the human resources consolidation process this government is currently

undertaking; more specifically, to task the Minister responsible for the FMBS to take a thorough more in-depth analysis of what the proposed changes will mean to northerners, especially northern aboriginals with an education.

Mr. Speaker, the consolidation of the human resources function of this government is a step in the right direction. But if there are numerous concerns and questions arising with respect to who is developing this new human resource model and what degree of aboriginal input has been considered into the development of this new model, then I feel that this government is again going to roll out something that will not be favourably received by northerners in general. Therefore, I would like the Minister responsible for the FMBS to seriously consider the claims of educated aboriginals and indigenous northerners who are at the root of all these proposed changes, that the new human resource amalgamation policies are already being rewritten to better reflect a personal preference as opposed to preferences of northerners in general.

Also, serious consideration is the least the Minister could do to be mindful of what all educated aboriginal and indigenous northerners want and what we deem not only as fair and equitable, but also supportive and in line with what this government's goal of achieving a truly representative public service is.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see a more vigilant approach to the human resource amalgamation plan, which considers all concerns and questions raised by employees, potential employees and interested parties, some who have already been directly or indirectly affected, and not just leave the task of finding a suitable human resource model up to a small group of government hire-ups, who often refuse to act on the constructive criticisms received from public service employees. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Member's Statement On Need For Residential Treatment Centres

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The subject of my Member's statement today is addictions. I have come at this addictions issue from a variety of different angles and today I have another one. The North Slave Correctional Centre is located in the riding of Kam Lake. Being that Kam Lake is the riding I represent, I get to speak with many persons who are incarcerated at North Slave Correctional Centre. Just last spring, I was presented with a petition from the inmates in regard to the health services that were being provided at the centre. The Department of Justice made the necessary changes to the delivery of health services, and today I believe this came about because the inmates at the North Slave Correctional Centre spoke up about the situation.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will table a petition that has been signed by 98 inmates from North Slave Correctional Centre. The petition calls for the government to address the need for treatment centres being reopened here in the Northwest Territories. I would like to thank all the inmates that signed the petition, and especially the ones that I have spoken to personally.

I believe that no one really wants to be in jail and certainly there are many obvious reasons why people end up in jail, but a common denominator is often addictions to alcohol and drugs. The more that this government can put into

being proactive in fighting addictions, the better off we will be and the less we will have to spend being reactive.

I have heard the Minister of Health and Social Services speak of the need to be working with community groups to look at getting some type of residential treatment centres reopened. These centres do not have to be government issue, multi-million dollar cost overrun facilities. They only have to become a reality. I believe it should be a collaborative effort between government and the interested community groups and I look forward to watching closely to how this government will accomplish the goal of getting residential treatment centres reopened for addicts.

We will have to pay attention to what our residents need to help them combat their addictions. If we don't, then we should start planning another jail because, Mr. Speaker, we will need it. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement On Child Poverty

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is blessed with the highest increase in gross domestic product in Canada. Our per capita income is the envy of Canada. But, Mr. Speaker, the distribution of this wealth is so widespread that from the top to the bottom they are a universe apart.

Mr. Speaker, 15 percent of tax filers in the year 2002 reported incomes of under \$25,000. Now government has a duty to respond and redistribute that wealth and help to put it into the hands and pockets of the people who need it most. Indeed we do, we have done so, Mr. Speaker. In the last four years this government has put one-hundred-million new dollars into social safety programs and living subsidies.

---Applause

That is a tremendous record. But, Mr. Speaker, I have to take a look and ask is it doing any good? I will use child poverty as one measuring stick of this. Mr. Speaker, between 1998 and 2002, according to the Bureau of Statistics' numbers, we have only managed to hold the line. We have not made a difference, despite that huge investment and the immense wealth, the astounding wealth that we have. We have not made a difference in the levels of child poverty. For kids under 17, Mr. Speaker, we still have about 3,000 children, or a quarter of the total number of children under 17, considered in low income situations. That means they are probably not adequately housed, fed or educated.

Mr. Speaker, we are undergoing a review of all of this government's social services and cost of living subsidies. There are something like 17 of them spread across just about every one of our departments. This is an area that must receive the absolute highest priority. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Pokiak.

Member's Statement On Transportation Services For Elders And Frontline Workers

MR. POKIAK: (English not provided)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a need for transportation services for elders and frontline workers throughout my constituency. During my campaign and subsequent visits to Paulatuk, Holman, Sachs Harbour and Tuktoyaktuk, many elders voiced their frustrations about the lack of transportation; for example, to help them to get to medical appointments and to attend local functions. Needing to get to the health centre, elders are often expected either to take a taxi or find other alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, the Hamlet of Holman does operate an elder handy-bus, but it is at this point where they are having trouble maintaining it well enough to keep it running. Paulatuk has identified a need for some sort of transportation for their elders so they are able to attend and participate in community events.

Not only elders are left behind to find their own rides, Mr. Speaker, but it is also the case for some of our frontline workers. Tuktoyaktuk does have a van that the nurses and community health workers use mainly for home visits to elderly people. In Sachs Harbour, the community health worker informed the Minister of Health and Social Services that she uses her own snowmobile and ATV four-wheeler to visit elders and patients. She also uses her own money to pay for the gas and repairs.

This government should be ashamed that it is not giving our frontline workers the basic tools to do their job and look after our people and expect them to do this out of their own pockets. Mr. Speaker, I am sure there are solutions out there that would not be very costly. For example, in a small community like Sachs Harbour or Paulatuk, one government vehicle may be able to serve more than one purpose. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that Health and Social Services work with other government departments to come up with a way to provide appropriate vehicles and transportation to elders and frontline workers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

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

Member's Statement On Support For Truancy Reduction Measures

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am going to again talk about support for truancy in our schools. Yesterday I spoke about the lack of tools available to our schools in dealing with that truancy issue. Minister Dent then proceeded to list off all the various methods used by different schools and education authorities to deal with truancy.

What was made clear by his response is that there is no clear territorial legislative, regulatory or policy base in dealing with truancy other than the fine that we never use. Every educational jurisdiction is free to deal with this issue of truancy how they see fit. The Minister was quite emphatic that the fault for a lot of the skipping students lies with the parents. I truly can't dispute that some of the responsibility does lie there. But what I will dispute, Mr. Speaker, is that the lack of parental responsibility somehow absolves his department from having any issue in dealing with this at all. So, Mr. Speaker, I totally do not accept Minister Dent absolving himself of that responsibility.

I have spoken to educators who follow up on student absences. In some cases they tell me once the parents

realize the schools are phoning, they just stop answering the phone. So, Mr. Speaker, educators also tell me that health and social service authorities refuse to get involved with truancy cases because they say or they believe that they are being downloaded that responsibility. They don't want it at all.

Mr. Speaker, if I may mention, CTV News did a report on truancy titled, "One in Four Canadian Students Misses Classes Regularly." During the report, Doug Willms, who wrote it, stated, and I quote, "I think truancy really represents a boredom factor, an apathy factor, and we really need to pay attention to that." He further goes on to say, "We ought to take these results very serious. They are associated with a number of social issues." The article goes on to talk about the rates in Canada where a lot of students miss one in six days or more a year. It ranks the NWT second to Newfoundland at 59 percent of the worst rates in absentee.

Mr. Speaker, finally on this issue of the article by Mr. Willms, he also says, "Canada, on a global level, is tied with Iceland and recognizes one of the worst countries in the developing world for truancy." So, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services doesn't care. The tone of the response, as I understood the Minister to say yesterday, didn't sound like he cared either. Someone needs to care. Mr. Speaker, at this time, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my Member's statement?

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may conclude your statement, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Especially, thank you, Mr. Dent.

---Laughter

Mr. Speaker, I really want to see the department show initiative and take care and demonstrate that they care. We need to start thinking broadly, not blaming families on this issue for their kids not attending classes. We need to start thinking out of the box. Yes, parents do play a role in this issue, but the department needs to play a leading role in new initiatives to support our DEAs on this problem. Approaches we could consider are things like community liaison social workers in each district education authority. We could put one in every authority. In most cases, these truantries deal with social envelope obstacles which a social worker could help the schools.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, block funding is very prescriptive, and it doesn't allow a lot of movements for these school boards to deal with these issues of truantries, so we need intervention at the highest level, such as the ministry. As I said yesterday, and I am going to close with it again, truancy is a symptom, and it could be blamed on a thousand reasons. We need to owe it to ourselves and to these students to take an interest and to find out why they do not attend school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, a few minutes ago...oh, yes. I believe we still have some people in the gallery today. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent, a tireless volunteer and a candidate for royalty in the upcoming Caribou Carnival, Ms. Mildred Wilke. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the pleasure to introduce the quest for the crown candidates on behalf of my colleagues. The candidates running for Caribou Carnival queen this year; that is, again, Ms. Mildred Wilke, Kelley Merilees-Keppel, Itoah Scott, Lila Fraser-Erasmus, Katie Bourgeois, Mary-Ellen McGonigle-Roberts. Now, for the princess list: Twyla Bruler-Vachon, Stacey Grandjambe and Jesslyn Strand. Just about as I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I will remind all people to buy their Caribou Carnival tickets to support these candidates. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a friend that I made over the last two days, a retired teacher who is visiting from Vancouver, British Columbia. She is here with family who is attending the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories. Her name is Mrs. Bev Wong. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize a constituent, Carol Van Tighem, a tireless volunteer and the fire and vigour behind this year's Caribou Carnival. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anybody in the gallery, welcome to the Legislative Assembly. It is always nice to see visitors in the gallery. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 572-15(3): Cleanup Of Contaminated Sites

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last fall in the House, I made a statement about the contaminated soil mound in Tulita. I asked the Minister some questions. My question is to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development in regard to his commitment to meet with the federal Minister of Natural Resources Canada about the federal government's unacceptable delay in the cleaning up of contaminated sites in the Northwest Territories. Will the Minister please advise this House as to the result of that meeting? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 572-15(3): Cleanup Of Contaminated Sites

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had discussions over the past months with both Minister Efford, the Natural Resources Canada Minister and Minister Dion, the Minister for the Environment, related to contaminated sites and their cleanup. Most recently, the Member is aware, I have reiterated these concerns in writing to Natural Resources Canada Minister Efford. He has agreed to start a process and ensure that the agency responsible for nuclear waste meets with the community of Tulita to begin a process and discuss options for the permanent removal of these contaminated soils from the community. So I look forward to that process. I think there are a number of options before us. It is important to work through some constructive process that the community is in support of. We will continue to push Natural Resources Canada and the nuclear agency to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 572-15(3): Cleanup Of Contaminated Sites

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister provide to the House here in terms of a strategy and a date when this agreement of seeing actual movements of these mounds of contaminated sites along the Mackenzie Valley will be moved out to some location outside of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 572-15(3): Cleanup Of Contaminated Sites

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't give you the exact process that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is proposing to use at this point. They have indicated to me that a precursor to the development of a long-term waste management strategy for the soils is to sit down and define the waste volumes and ownership and some other issues around the site. The Minister has assured me that it is his goal to clean that up and make sure that the low level radioactive contaminated sites are dealt with. I want to, again, assure Members and the public that the Natural Resources Canada Minister has indicated to us that the research tells us that the community is not in any danger from these sites, but still recognizes a long-term strategy was never put in place and that needs to take place. The soils need to be removed from the community. I will continue to ensure the Natural Resources Canada Minister recognizes that this is a priority for our territory. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 572-15(3): Cleanup Of Contaminated Sites

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Minister may have a difficult time in terms of commitment on behalf of the federal government. I am looking forward to a commitment from the Minister in terms of meeting with the people in Tulita and Sahtu regarding these contaminated sites in that region and also right down to the border here in the Northwest Territories.

In Ottawa, our federal government can say that these sites are not dangerous, but out of sight, out of mind. It makes it easier for them to say that. They have to live in the communities, so I would like to ask the Minister again, can he look at some commitments and dates in terms of meeting with the people who are affected by these contaminated sites? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 572-15(3): Cleanup Of Contaminated Sites

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In response to my correspondence, the Natural Resources Canada Minister did indicate that he appreciated the invitation to meet and come to the Northwest Territories to meet with the people in the Sahtu to discuss this issue. I am going to have a chance, I believe, prior to that -- hopefully, in April -- as we set out meetings in Ottawa and look to arrange meetings. I am certainly going to attempt to arrange meetings with the Natural Resources Canada Minister and the Environment Minister. This is at the top of the list for discussions, so I will be able to engage him and remind him that he has this outstanding and longstanding commitment to come north and discuss the strategy for this low level waste management plan going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 572-15(3): Cleanup Of Contaminated Sites

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, what is he doing to ensure that there is clear legislation and responsibility for these organizations to be fully responsible for their own site cleanup that they leave behind once a project is complete in the Northwest Territories. Is there any type of legislation coming forward? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 572-15(3): Cleanup Of Contaminated Sites

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a very good question. I think our strategy and approach has been, through the devolution negotiations, to make sure that the federal government owns up to their responsibility for the cleanup of past contaminated sites. I think we have identified something in the neighbourhood of 700 sites in the Northwest Territories that are not our responsibility. They are a federal responsibility to clean up. They have identified monies recently -- \$3.5 billion -- to start to move forward on some of this cleanup. We want to make sure that there aren't sites out there that we don't know about. I think, in future, the difference is going to be that we will have control over lands and resources. This government and aboriginal governments can make sure that when development takes place, these contingencies are put into place prior to the development going ahead so that we ensure that the cleanup does, in fact, happen. In regard to the pre-existing legacy of contaminated sites, we will continue to force the federal government to recognize their responsibility and make the commitment to clean them up through the devolution negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Question 573-15(3): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

MR. VILLENEUVE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with the development of the affirmative action policy in the early 1990s, there was an Affirmative Action Advisory Committee developed and tasked with the responsibility to provide direction and recommendations to the various departments for the implementation of the affirmative action policy. I have a question to the Minister responsible for the FMBS, Mr. Speaker. It is obvious that the committee is off to a slow start, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask the Minister if he would entertain the idea of reinstating and revamping the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. The honourable Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat, Mr. Roland.

Return To Question 573-15(3): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a response to another question earlier this week regarding that committee, it has been quite some time since that committee has been in operation. We have started down a course for the Human Resource Service Centre modules that is going on. Approximately 140 employees have been affected by this change. We have been working with them through this. We want to get through that stage first. As I have committed to Members in this House, I will be coming forward with a plan in the fall around the affirmative action side and, at that point, will be willing to look at the idea of continuing on with that and getting something going. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 573-15(3): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the human resource amalgamation and consolidation of human resource functions throughout the government, I don't think there is a better time than now to reinstate or revamp the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee to provide some input into this whole amalgamation and consolidation of human resources. I will ask the Minister again, will he entertain the idea of revamping the advisory committee so that they can have some direct input into the human resource amalgamation model? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 573-15(3): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not willing to stop the process where we are now. We have started on this course. We've reviewed the information that has been provided. We have looked at the plans and we are proceeding down that road. We have, as I stated, 140 affected employees. Of that, 50 of them are aboriginal people who have had input into the work that is going on. Through this change, there are going to be some people who are not happy with the results of the changes and how things are proceeding. But at this point, I have no plans of stopping the process to get a committee going to review where we are today. We have done that work. We are moving forward. As I have committed to, we will be presenting some information to Members this fall with regard to some of the

other policies that affect our human resources. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 573-15(3): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I wasn't requesting putting a hold on any process with this human resource development. I know that there has been some aboriginal input by employees and non-government employees. If that input is not really being seriously considered, Mr. Speaker, then I don't see any value in having people to provide input if it is not going to be seriously considered. I just want to maybe ask the Minister when this human resource amalgamation and consolidation planning committee was formed, and who comprises this committee, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 573-15(3): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of human resources in the government has been one that can be said to have been plaguing us for quite some time, since the changes that we had back in the mid-1990s when the Department of Personnel was done away with and each department then started doing their own human resource functions.

There have been some concerns about fairness to employees, following the policies within government, and Members of assemblies have raised the issue. A number of reports were done. As a government, we have looked at that. We have decided to move on that. I have looked at the plans. I have been informed of the process. I have brought that to my colleagues within FMB and decisions were made to move on that. We have started down that process and feel that, overall, it is a healthy and positive process and will end up being more positive for those that we serve, both within our own service and those that are applying for government jobs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Villeneuve.

Supplementary To Question 573-15(3): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just be simple here. Who is on this committee and who put this committee together? Was there any memo that went out to all government employees to see if they're interested in being on the committee? How has all this come about? That hasn't been answered yet, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. There are about three questions there. Mr. Roland, you can answer one or all three. Mr. Roland.

Further Return To Question 573-15(3): Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is no committee in place. What we did is once we came up with a plan and decided to put it in action, we started off with the corporate human resource service portion we had within Executive, moved it over to FMBS, and from there involved all of the staff who were involved with the delivery of corporate human resource services and started expanding out from there, putting a plan together and involving them. We met with just about

every individual that is involved with human resource services and got some input into how things would flow, as well as how we would proceed. Once that first phase was done, we looked at the second phase and that's where we are now; putting people into the matching positions and looking at filling those positions. Beyond that we'll be going into the actual office makeup and the changes that will need to happen in the regions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Question 574-15(3): Federal Board Appointment Process

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier today. There's been a recent article in the newspaper indicating that the federal government is close to appointing a new chair for the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. This was referenced as well in Mr. Zoe's comments yesterday in the House. My question for the Premier today is when the federal government sets out a policy with respect to federally appointed boards and makes rules around how they select board members and how they select chairs and capable and competent people's names go forward to the Minister and he doesn't choose one of those, what ability do we have as a government to play a part in that or to intercede in that? Because certainly the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, as was said by Mr. Zoe, the people who sit on that probably have a bigger influence on what's going to happen with this mega Mackenzie gas project than even we do as MLAs sitting here as a government. This is a hugely important position at this point in time. What opportunity do we have to participate in the process of the appointment of that chair? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Premier, Mr. Handley.

Return To Question 574-15(3): Federal Board Appointment Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board and the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board is to have a vehicle for northerners to have more input into decisions that are going to affect their lives and land. Both of these boards are under federal legislation. The appointment of the chair is a decision that rests with the Minister of DIAND. The appointment of the chair is -- and I don't believe it's laid out in the act -- but the convention is that he will appoint from a list that is provided by the committee of each of the boards themselves. So, Mr. Speaker, we expect that's what he'll do. Now, what authority or opportunity do we have for input? Mr. Speaker, the only opportunity we have is through persuasion, but we don't have any legal authority. Through persuasion and advice I suppose we do have some clout. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 574-15(3): Federal Board Appointment Process

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that I have no issue with the particular individual whose name has shown up on the short list. I'm sure they are a very intelligent

person. But the thing is we want people who have a vested interest in how this development is going to impact us for many generations to come here in the North. I think that's the idea of having a northerner. If the federal government and the federal Minister overrules us, I'm sorry, I take it as a slap in the face. What's the Premier prepared to do? Is he prepared to speak to the federal Minister to ensure that our voice is registered on this? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 574-15(3): Federal Board Appointment Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I was last in Ottawa I raised this issue with our MP and the Minister responsible for Northern Development and also with Minister Scott. Mr. Roland, the Finance Minister, and I raised this issue with him. He knows our views on it and, Mr. Speaker, I've written to him as well on it and intend to follow up with him next week when he is here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 574-15(3): Federal Board Appointment Process

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, does the Premier have any knowledge that the appointment of this chairman or chairperson is going to be imminent and perhaps actually take place prior to Mr. Scott's visit to the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Good question.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 574-15(3): Federal Board Appointment Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I'm hearing through the grapevine that the appointment is imminent. In fact, I'd heard that the security checks were already underway and so on. But I've had nothing from the Minister of DIAND's office formally to tell me that this is going to be happening soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Final supplementary, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Supplementary To Question 574-15(3): Federal Board Appointment Process

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the very important nature of this appointment to northerners, I would like to ask the Premier then, he has previously spoken to the Minister, he intends to speak to the Minister next week, will he take the opportunity to speak to the Minister today? Would he attempt to get his officials to get a hold of him by telephone and register the concerns raised on this matter in the House today? Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Handley.

Further Return To Question 574-15(3): Federal Board Appointment Process

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will ask my staff to try to find out today if they can get any information on it at all. They have been trying to follow this one almost daily, but we will make that effort again. If I can't, then I assure the Member and this House that I will speak to the Minister on this when he's here next week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

Question 575-15(3): School Attendance In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment stated that forcing them, meaning children, to be there when their parents don't support them being in school is a waste of time. I'm concerned that the Minister would consider developing programs and services to encourage children to do well in school is a waste of time. Does the Minister actually stand by that statement he made in this Assembly yesterday? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 575-15(3): School Attendance In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't say that it was a waste of time to develop programs to encourage children to be in school, nor did I say it was a waste of time to encourage families to make sure that their kids attended school. But there's a big difference between finding a family that isn't sending a kid to school because he hasn't got any shoes and finding a way to support getting some shoes on the feet of that kid so that he is comfortable coming to school.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 575-15(3): School Attendance In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to admit I was lost there because we're not talking about shoes; we're talking about making sure that kids go to school here. Maybe my question was too fast. Mr. Speaker, I got these comments from research, who read the blues which are the unedited Hansard. I put a lot of faith in their questions, or their development of some of these questions.

Mr. Speaker, will this Minister agree to look into the problem of dealing with absentees and trancies by putting a community liaison such as a social worker in each educational authority in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 575-15(3): School Attendance In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If an education authority wanted to put their money into providing that kind of service within their school area, they could. Mr. Speaker, I just want to be clear about my previous answer. Many of the kids who are not attending

school tend to come from poorer families and we need to address that issue before we start addressing finding those families and making them even poorer to put them back in school. The Member has been recommending that we use the law to try and enforce attendance at school by finding families if their kids don't attend. What I said yesterday was that that's the wrong approach. We have to be supportive of families and kids, and make sure the families are supporting their kids to be in school. But there is nothing in the Education Act that would stop a school district from putting their funding into providing a liaison person within their system. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 575-15(3): School Attendance In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Okay, Mr. Speaker. I can see we're playing an interesting game because yesterday the Minister was challenging me. Now I challenge him back by saying that these kids are poor. Now he's saying the poor kids are coming to school from the regions. Well, who knows where these facts are coming from? So I challenge him to prove that the poor kids can't go to school because they don't have shoes. We live in the North, everybody knows we have shoes and boots here; we're not talking about who knows where. Mr. Speaker, I didn't say yesterday to use the law. I asked about why we aren't using the law when we have truancies. Mr. Speaker, we have a law in the book that we don't even use, so let's just take it away. We're wasting paper space by having it. I'm talking about innovative approaches, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister consider innovative approaches by helping our DEAs with implementing a community liaison social worker in their schools? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 575-15(3): School Attendance In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If a DEA agrees that is the approach they want to take, they are welcome to take it and we will support them in doing it. We would be very happy to do that. There are an awful lot of innovative approaches being taken by DEAs across the Northwest Territories right now. In Lutselk'e they've been running an on-the-land program, which has been proven to dramatically increase the attendance rate for kids who are typically at risk for not attending. There are attendance programs that are run at schools all across the Northwest Territories. So this is an issue that I have discussed with the chairs of the boards and we work together, the department and the DECs with the district education authorities, to encourage programs to stimulate attendance in school. There's no question that attendance is a problem in the Northwest Territories, but it is one that we are working with DEAs and we are prepared to look at any solution that a DEA proposes. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

Supplementary To Question 575-15(3): School Attendance In The NWT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment just nailed it there by saying that there's no question that attendance is a problem in the Northwest Territories. He just nailed it exactly. Mr. Speaker, he said use their funding. Well,

funding is prescriptive. It takes all the wiggle room out of schools so they just can't do whatever they want to do. It's already implemented and tied to certain issues. So, Mr. Speaker, I really like this comment by saying that we will support them. Well, will we support them with direct funding to one social liaison worker for each district education authority? Will the Minister show some leadership and initiative and creativity to deal with some of these problems that are social envelope problems? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 575-15(3): School Attendance In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know where the Member gets the idea that the funding that we offer to school divisions now is prescriptive. There's about \$125 million that goes to schools. The only part of that that is prescriptive is the \$7 million that's stipulated to go into aboriginal languages and culture, and the \$16 million that has to go into special needs. Other than that, it's wide open. The schools can use the money as they see fit. We give them money that we say this portion is allocated for transportation, but we don't require them to spend it on transportation. They can put the money where it makes the most sense in their communities. That's the best way to deal with this issue, is to let the communities decide how to best handle it.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Ms. Lee.

Question 576-15(3): Updating Garnishee Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Justice and it's in regard to collection of judgment once someone wins a judgment from court. Mr. Speaker, the law we have with respect to collecting judgment in the North is very outdated, probably because it's not something that's on everybody's mind all the time. The laws we have are that if you win a judgment and you want to collect against somebody and you have to file what's called a garnishee, that only lasts only 10 days now. Which means everybody has to go to court and file it again, pay \$5, then there are all sorts of expenses involved with that. Alberta, Mr. Speaker, recently made the laws so that the garnishee lasts a whole year, so there's a lot less work on the courts and those who already have the judgments. I'd like to know from the Minister whether or not -- and I think the Minister might be working on this already -- the department might be interested in looking at updating this law. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 576-15(3): Updating Garnishee Legislation

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right. I've had some discussions with the deputy minister on this issue because it has been raised from the private sector over the past six months. We are, right now, in the process of trying to decide what level of consultation, and how much of the act we should take out for consultation or whether we should do a focused amendment or propose a focused amendment just for this one issue. Right now, that's the stage we're at, is trying to determine just how far to go with the proposed amendment. The answer to the Member's question is,

yes, we're looking at it. I would hope to be able to bring something forward to this House within this calendar year.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Ms. Lee.

Supplementary To Question 576-15(3): Updating Garnishee Legislation

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure if he brings that proposal to this side of the House we'll be happy to do the public hearing for him. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I have another question that he might be able to look into while he's considering the changes that I've mentioned already. That has to do with the limit on small claims court. Mr. Speaker, small claims are set up so that people can go and get their issues of dispute resolved without having to hire a lawyer and go to the bigger court. Right now you can only go there if your case is less than \$10,000. Many courts across the country have changed that. Alberta, for example, has changed the limit to \$50,000. I think we have a lot of room to manoeuvre between \$10,000 and \$50,000. I'm wondering if the Minister would consider looking at that, as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 576-15(3): Updating Garnishee Legislation

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I certainly will.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Question 577-15(3): Child Poverty In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Statistics over the last few years, Mr. Speaker, have shown virtually no change in our rates of children living in low income situations, so I would like to ask the Minister responsible for these programs in our government, Mr. Dent, a pretty straightforward question. Why does child poverty persist here in the NWT in the midst of so much activity and so much wealth? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 577-15(3): Child Poverty In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Speaker, I wish I had a clear, concise answer for that question. I don't. I can't say that child poverty exists because of one specific reason. There are a whole range of reasons that there is child poverty. We have, as a government, put a significant amount of money, as the Member noted in his statement, into programs over the last few years and I guess we must be just having trouble keeping up with the growth and the cost of living in an overheated economy. Because one would expect with the kind of investment that we've made with our small population, that more of a difference should have been seen. This government is struggling to find more money to put into social programs. One of the areas that we're hoping to be able to tap into is resource revenue sharing. If we're successful at seeing more money, then we're going to have those resources available to put into these important social programs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 577-15(3): Child Poverty In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, government has a primary and fundamental responsibility to help those who are least able to help themselves. Children are at the very top of that list, for me. I would like to know if in the universal review that our government is undertaking of some 17 different lifestyle and social service programs are we going to make sure that the welfare of children is at the very top of our consideration in this review? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 577-15(3): Child Poverty In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to assure the Member and this House that the government shares that concern. Children are the most important asset that we have and we need to make sure that we protect their potential to develop as they should. Yes, I can assure the Member that the process of reviewing our income security programs that is being led by my department will keep children in mind as one of the priorities as we're undertaking that review.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 577-15(3): Child Poverty In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, what does the Minister see as the biggest barriers that we face in terms of trying to turn this really shameful statistic around? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 577-15(3): Child Poverty In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it's really tough to find one area that is the most important. If people don't have economic opportunity, obviously their children are not going to enjoy the same sort of security that others would. You don't have economic opportunity if you don't have an education. You don't tend to be as healthy if you don't have an education. There are a whole range of issues that we need to deal with in our society and we need to make sure that we have healthy people making healthy choices in healthy communities if we want to make sure that we deal with this. So we have a real challenge. But I think that if the Member is aware of what the Legislative Assembly as a whole has set out as our goal and strategic plan, our overall vision, that's what we're going to try and work for. The redesign of the Income Security Program is but one small part of that overall approach. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Braden.

Supplementary To Question 577-15(3): Child Poverty In The NWT

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I would pose a question in a very objective way, I hope. That is to challenge the Minister to look within and to check our own attitudes and our own cultures and our own biases within ourselves as a Legislative Assembly, at the management levels and the senior policy-making levels of our departments. I believe that is probably where we need to start. I would leave one more question on the table as an illustration of that attitude, I guess, that we're bringing to the table, too. That

is, our consistent refusal, Mr. Speaker, to return the National Child Benefit to income support clients as a very real direct way that we can help those people lift themselves out of poverty. Why don't we change that? Why don't we start there? Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 577-15(3): Child Poverty In The NWT

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly can examine that as we go through the whole review of the income security policies that we have. The National Child Benefit was a benefit proposed by the federal government to assist working parents, to encourage people to take that step from income support into the world of work where that was possible. All jurisdictions across Canada agreed that nobody on income support would be worse off, and we have made sure that is in fact the case in the Northwest Territories. We have increased benefits to people who are on income support since the National Child Benefit was put into place. We are going to, as part of the whole process, examine our approach. Right now, the approach is consistent with how the program is rolled out in its first inception. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

Question 578-15(3): Factors Of Incarceration

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Justice and I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice, going back to the petition I talked about in my Member's statement, the fact that 98 inmates at North Slave Correctional Centre have signed a petition calling for an addiction treatment centre to be re-opened here in the Northwest Territories. I'm wondering what the Minister can tell me about how his department, the Department of Justice, works with Health and Social Services in trying to find out why inmates are in the correctional system and how we might be able to be proactive in trying not to have them come back. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Dent.

Return To Question 578-15(3): Factors Of Incarceration

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the changes in the correctional system that we're trying to implement as we've moved into the new facility is a new approach, more of a case management approach where we have workers who work with individuals who try and assess what their problems might be and what their specific needs might be. The department does purchase space and programming from the Salvation Army. It's an average of 10 beds a day to assist people making the transition from being in jail to being free again. The programming there is life skills and substance abuse programming to try and deal with people's problems.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 578-15(3): Factors Of Incarceration

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering, the Minister didn't mention whether or not there's any dialogue that happens between his department, the Department of Justice, and Health and Social Services, in terms of trying to find out why inmates are in jail and what we can do as a government to try to keep them out of there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 578-15(3): Factors Of Incarceration

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, we're trying to use more and more of a case management approach. It's taking some time to get that worked around, but, yes, the Department of Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment are brought into the counselling as necessary. If you have somebody who's dealing with an individual to try and find where their challenges are, then other resources can be brought to the table as necessary. As I said, we're in the early stages of this, but that's the goal with this programming is to try and improve the availability of counselling from all of our resources.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 578-15(3): Factors Of Incarceration

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister is mentioning the fact that there's counselling that's taking place now between staff and inmates and they're trying to find out problems and why the inmates are in prison, maybe the Minister could give us some type of idea of what the numbers are. North Slave Correctional Centre, for example, of inmates that are in there because of addictions problems. If this work is being done, the Minister should know that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 578-15(3): Factors Of Incarceration

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't say how many are in any facility because of addictions problems. I can say that the vast majority of inmates in the Northwest Territories were under the influence of alcohol when the crime was committed. So that alcohol is still the biggest problem that we face. That would tend to indicate that might be the area where addictions would be the biggest issue. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

Supplementary To Question 578-15(3): Factors Of Incarceration

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the fact that the inmates at North Slave Correctional Centre have come forward with a petition identifying the need for addiction treatment centres, I'm wondering if the Minister can give us some kind of indication today whether or not he'll look at a survey or a study of the inmate population here in the Northwest Territories that we can look at trying to find out why they're in prison, finding common themes and asking them what we might be able to do as a government to help keep them out of jail. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Dent.

Further Return To Question 578-15(3): Factors Of Incarceration

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Keeping people from coming back to jail is one of the major focuses of the corrections department. Yes, we will work with inmates. I think it's important to remember that right now Nats' Ejee K'eh is one of the resources that is also used, as is the Salvation Army. We do have residential programs available. We're going to have to take a look at a petition the Member says he's going to table. We'll have to have a look at that and try to figure out exactly what area the inmates feel that there is a shortage of space, because right now we're not filling up Nats' Ejee K'eh with inmates. I'm going to have to talk to the department to get a better handle on what it is that people are looking for.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. McLeod.

Question 579-15(3): Oil And Gas Positions For The Mackenzie Delta

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many times I've given good statements without asking any questions. I'm not going to let that happen today.

---Applause

I'd like to direct my questions to the Minister of RWED. Last week when I asked him a question he said he wasn't entertaining the thought of moving any positions up to Inuvik. I'd like to ask him if he has shut the door completely.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Bell.

Return To Question 579-15(3): Oil And Gas Positions For The Mackenzie Delta

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me first thank the Member for the statement that he made today in the House and past statements he's made on this issue. I think it highlights the need and allows us to discuss the need for additional resources in terms of oil and gas readiness up and down the valley. I certainly won't deny that there's an immediate and urgent need in the Mackenzie Delta. Obviously the place for that most specifically would be in Inuvik, where it would be best suited. I certainly have committed to come forward with a strategy for resourcing oil and gas development. I'm looking to go to Cabinet very soon with a conceptual approach and then, subsequent to that, coming forward to the committee members to have a broader discussion around how we tackle this problem. I'm certainly looking forward to that dialogue and thank the Member for the encouragement in this area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 579-15(3): Oil And Gas Positions For The Mackenzie Delta

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. I don't think it was additional resources we were looking for. We're just asking if the Minister would consider transferring some of the positions. That way we're not using any additional resources, we'll just use what we already have. Will he look at that?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 579-15(3): Oil And Gas Positions For The Mackenzie Delta

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've talked about the nature in past questioning of our minerals, oil and gas unit here at headquarters. The reality is that we have three dedicated positions to oil and gas. One is a term position that is being used to help us navigate our way through the NEB intervention and process that's underway and the other two are some that we have. One has been just recently filled, but the fact of the matter is we don't have enough resources, we are spread too thin, we do need some coordination resources here at headquarters, notwithstanding the fact that we obviously need support on the ground in Inuvik. So my approach is going to be to come forward with a strategy to add to our resources, not to further stave off already very limited manpower in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 579-15(3): Oil And Gas Positions For The Mackenzie Delta

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I said that I heard the number of 20 positions before and in my statement I kind of accounted for six of them. Where are the other 14? Are they here in Yellowknife?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 579-15(3): Oil And Gas Positions For The Mackenzie Delta

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd have to go back and look at my earlier response, but in terms of people that have some aspect of their job related to the Mackenzie Valley pipeline or the Mackenzie gas project, I would think there are at least 20 people. We know we have regional petroleum advisors, one in Inuvik. We have other positions in RWED related to environment or business development that support a pipeline and support resource development. We know we have positions in MACA that work to develop community capacity. They are also being dispatched to help our effort to work on this file. Education has resources, I believe. I know that Housing is working on this file. So you could look at many of the people we have employed in our government and find aspects of their job where there are duties that are currently related to meeting our development pressures. That would go much higher than 20; the dedicated resources I've spoken to in terms of pipeline. The obvious seven positions that we have yet to fill in Hay River would be another contingent of staff that we have. So they are spread out throughout government and I'm certainly prepared to get those specific numbers for the Member and we have started that task and will be providing that information shortly. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Final supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary To Question 579-15(3): Oil And Gas Positions For The Mackenzie Delta

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has said that he was looking at his options and he was going to be preparing a report. Would I be able to get a copy of this report? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Bell.

Further Return To Question 579-15(3): Oil And Gas Positions For The Mackenzie Delta

HON. BRENDAN BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've indicated, it's my intention to come to the Governance and Economic Development committee and, obviously, I think that committee will want to involve all Members in that and I can personally make sure that the Member has a copy of that work as we get there. As I've said, right now I'm hoping almost immediately to go to Cabinet with a conceptual approach and a strategy and as we firm this up in the coming weeks, I'll sit down with the Member personally and we'll certainly go to GED with this work. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Zoe.

Question 580-15(3): Land Leases On Tlicho Lands

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. I'd like to ask the Minister why are my constituents having difficulty obtaining land leases for Commissioner's land and Crown land in the Tlicho communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 580-15(3): Land Leases On Tlicho Lands

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that there was a problem in the Dogrib region regarding land leases. We are, however, having some discussions with the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council along with the Government of Canada and Municipal and Community Affairs and Aboriginal Affairs to discuss and lay out a plan for the transition of land, land administration and how to deal with the elections and a number of other issues. We have an effective date of August 4th to work toward. However, I was not aware that there was a problem. There was an issue that was brought forward from the Member. I believe that was an issue regarding federal land. If there is an issue regarding land and leases, I would certainly like to know about it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Zoe.

Supplementary To Question 580-15(3): Land Leases On Tlicho Lands

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If that's the case, as the Minister indicated that they are working on a transitional plan in regard to land issues, then my constituents shouldn't be having any problems obtaining Crown land leases in the Tlicho communities or even land reserved for Indians for housing, which is Crown land. So even the Indian Affairs department that deals with land leases should be continuing to use the same process as we have before. Is that the case that the Minister is indicating to me? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 580-15(3): Land Leases On Tlicho Lands

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: That's right, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there should be no glitch in the system. We are expecting a smooth transition. We would have to talk to the federal government though to see what their position is during this transition period. There may be some reluctance to transfer land over as we are now in

this situation where there is a land claim and a self-government settlement. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Zoe.

Supplementary To Question 580-15(3): Land Leases On Tlicho Lands

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if I could ask the Minister if he could kindly intervene with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in their lands section to make sure that my constituent's land lease can go through, although they may be in a transitional phase. The reason I am saying that, Mr. Speaker, is that we're in critical need of housing in our communities and there are a number of clients that require these leases not only for obtaining housing from the Housing Corporation, but there are some other clients that need their land leases to obtain funding from the banks to do additions to their houses, et cetera, for other programs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 580-15(3): Land Leases On Tlicho Lands

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank the Member for bringing this to our attention and we will commit to having a meeting with the federal government and all the players, all the stakeholders involved on this issue. We certainly don't want to see a blockage of properties moving forward. There is a need for housing development, as the Member has stated. So we will work towards ensuring that this is as smooth a transition as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Zoe.

Supplementary To Question 580-15(3): Land Leases On Tlicho Lands

MR. ZOE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I ask the Minister how soon can I have word back from his office pertaining to this issue? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 580-15(3): Land Leases On Tlicho Lands

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we can deal with the specific issue if there is a particular person that needs attention. If that name could be brought to our attention, we can probably deal with that fairly quickly. The larger, broader issue of transition and how we're going to see that process develop and unfold is something we're working on. We have some meetings planned for this month and there are a number of issues that we have to develop, but we will place priority on ensuring the land transition is done in a smooth and effective manner and people can still access properties. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Question 581-15(3): Squared Log Home Potential

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today my questions are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, with the issue of exploring the use of log homes or doing pilot projects for log homes. I know that historically, even recently, that the log homes have been very expensive and recently someone asked me about the squared log homes where they are squared

on three sides. They went up rather quickly, they seemed relatively cheap. Has the corporation done some research with the squared log home construction? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. Krutko.

Return To Question 581-15(3): Squared Log Home Potential

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have been doing pilot projects in different communities with log construction. We do have a program in regard to log homes. But because we've had problems in the past with structural problems with two-story units, we're now recommending that if anyone is going to get into log construction, that they keep it a single floor construction because there is shifting, which is causing problems. But we do have those types of programs. We've done pilot projects in the different communities on log construction. So we are open to looking at those types of proposals.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Your supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 581-15(3): Squared Log Home Potential

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Has the corporation done any research into the squared log homes? I go visit the small communities in my riding and many of the older homes, in excess of 50 years that are sitting there, are squared log homes. At one time it used to be standard to build squared log home buildings. So there must be some research by the Housing Corporation done in this area. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 581-15(3): Squared Log Home Potential

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I stated to the Member, we are open to pilot projects, if he can come up with the idea in regard to these square logs for home construction. We are hoping to use more of our northern products such as our trees for home construction. I think that we do have to work with communities and, as he stated, the homes have been built in the past and it is proven that you can construct homes with logs in the North. So it is something that we are definitely open to. So again, I'd just like to suggest to the Member if he could maybe come forward with some sort of a proposal for the community that he is talking about, we are open to look at that through a pilot project in regard to these log initiatives that we do have through the corporation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 581-15(3): Squared Log Home Potential

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the Minister is willing to continue to entertain proposals with regard to log home construction and I know in the past there were some cost barriers. Would all the proposals be open, or is there a restriction to the type of building they would like because it sounded like the Minister is opposed to maybe a two-story construction? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 581-15(3): Squared Log Home Potential

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, like I stated, we do have a log housing initiative that is a policy within the Housing Corporation. So under that program we see any log homes being constructed that sort of follow the criteria of that initiative, because we have had problems in the past with construction of two-story facilities because of the shifting of the ground and also the logs not settling right. Because of that through, this new initiative we have basically directed people that want to build log homes that there are certain criteria they should follow. So if the Member would like, I can give him a copy of the log housing initiative that we do have so he can see what's in the guidelines in that program. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

Supplementary To Question 581-15(3): Squared Log Home Potential

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I kind of like that the Minister is still willing to look at log home construction and that there's no known policy that they're not going to be looking at that. Just one more time for the record, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister can tell this Assembly that the corporation is still willing to engage and do pilot projects and build log homes in our communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Krutko.

Further Return To Question 581-15(3): Squared Log Home Potential

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again, for the record, we are supportive of log home construction in the North. We do have a log housing initiative policy program and we have those pilot projects in communities to do that. So we are open to pilot projects and also to ensure that we do have log home construction. Thank you.

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

Question 582-15(3): New Roads In The Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a song that goes something like this: you can't roller skate in a buffalo herd, you can't roller skate in a buffalo herd. However, I think the song could be more appropriate in the Sahtu. You can't roller skate in a goat herd, you can't roller skate in a goat herd and the emphasis I want to put on, Mr. Speaker, is roller skating. I want to ask the Minister of Transportation, in the Sahtu region, after the construction of all the bridges, when will they start on an all-weather road into the Sahtu from Wrigley up to Tuktoyaktuk? When will that be constructed? Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. McLeod.

Return To Question 582-15(3): New Roads In The Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you. I'd like to compliment the Member on his singing capabilities. Mr. Speaker, I guess the answer is very obvious. The construction of new roads still lies under the responsibility

of the federal government and we'll build these new roads as soon as we access the dollars from them and have that commitment. We have put together a number of proposals over the years to access some dollars. We plan to do that again and we continue to put investment in the Mackenzie Valley winter road. We have done a considerable amount of work in the last few years and we plan to do a lot more. We plan to do all the bridging by the year 2009, that's including the Bear River Bridge.

AN HON. MEMBER: Good government.

---Applause

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Moving that forward would increase the season by a number of weeks and we have to still remember that it's classified as a winter road. The trucks that operate on this winter road still use chains; they are obligated to use chains. So it's really going to need commitment from the federal government, and we commit to doing the lobbying on that front and, again, I guess the short answer would be to have the federal government commit to it and that's where we're at. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 582-15(3): New Roads In The Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say I'm appreciative and the people of the Sahtu appreciate the amount of dollars that have gone into the winter road. With the announcement that came out on the 18th of January of this year with the Minister and the federal Minister in terms of Corridors for Canada, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask the Minister that last time they took \$1 million out of our winter bridging project and I'm looking for some kind of commitment from this Minister that he won't cut back this program any further. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 582-15(3): New Roads In The Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the reason we took some money out of a number of different locations in the last fiscal year was to deal with our problem that we were experiencing on Highway No. 1. There was some urgency to deal with the foundation and some of the drainage that was happening in that area as a result of resource development. So we had to find the money somewhere and, in this case, there was some flexibility in the dollars allocated to that road, but we did what we had to. I can't commit that we won't do that again. If there's an emergency situation or there's some urgency to invest on a piece of transportation infrastructure, we'll have to be able to have that flexibility to reallocate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

Supplementary To Question 582-15(3): New Roads In The Sahtu

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when you drive the winter road in the Sahtu there are drainage problems, lots of potholes, there are lots of creeks overflowing and I guess the Minister just skipped out \$1 million into another region to fix their foundation. I'm asking again, in terms of the impact of the oil and gas activities on the region, if the Minister would commit to

ensuring that our winter bridge project gets done on time and the people in the Sahtu can enjoy safe winter driving for next year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. McLeod.

Further Return To Question 582-15(3): New Roads In The Sahtu

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think there's anybody more interested in seeing the winter bridging projects done on time and on budget than me. I certainly will do everything in my power and commit our department's efforts to ensure that happens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 81-15(3): Expanded Downpayment Assistance Program

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

1. Can the Minister please provide the numbers on uptake for the last three years in Yellowknife on the Expanded Downpayment Assistance Program?
2. Can the Minister please provide information on the amount each of the recipients received under EDAP?
3. Can the Minister please provide information on the reasons for any variations in the amounts received under EDAP?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Written Question 82-15(3): New Courthouse In Yellowknife

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice.

1. Given the lack of support for the construction of a \$42 million courthouse and concern that cost overruns, like those experienced with the construction of the North Slave Correctional Centre, could the Minister provide detail on how the \$42 million figure was arrived at?
2. The Minister has indicated that the Department of Justice has paid for and will have to pay for additional court space in the future. Can the Minister provide detail on the costs for additional court space for the last five years and the projected costs for the next two years?
3. Can the Minister provide information on the number of court cases held in Yellowknife, for the convenience of the judiciary or court party, which could or should have been held in the Inuvik or Hay River Courthouse facilities?
4. With the construction of the proposed new courthouse, can the Minister provide information on the projected increase in operations expenses for running the new facility and any costs for increased staffing?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Written Question 83-15(3): Management Assignment Program

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat.

1. Can the Minister provide this House with the total number of employees in the MAP program to date and which department have they applied from?
2. How many of the MAP participants are aboriginal indigenous northerners? How many are aboriginal indigenous women?
3. How many P1s applied for the program to date?
4. How many women applied for the program to date?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Written Question 84-15(3): Rental Costs

MR. YAKELEYA: My question is for the Minister of Justice.

Could the Minister advise me what, if any, options his department has looked at that might help keep apartment rental costs affordable for our residents during this resource development boom time?

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

Petition 4-15(3): Addictions Treatment Centres In The NWT

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of addiction treatment centres in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 98 signatures of inmates at the North Slave Correctional Centre. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that treatment centres be opened in the Northwest Territories to help support the rehabilitation of the growing number of addicts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 122-15(3): Public Utilities Board 2004 Annual Report

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled Public Utilities Board 2004 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Mr. Krutko.

Tabled Document 123-15(3): "Act Now" - Report Of The WCB Legislative Review Panel

HON. DAVID KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled Act Now - A Report of the Workers' Compensation Board Legislative Review Panel.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 32-15(3): Appointment To The Standing Committee On Accountability And Oversight

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, March 11, 2005, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Range Lake, that Mr. Robert McLeod, Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, be appointed to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time today, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with this motion today and to waive Rule 58 to allow this motion to proceed. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 14, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

Motion 33-15(3): Appointment To The Mackenzie Valley Land And Water Board

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, March 11, 2005, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for North Slave, that the Premier immediately communicate to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development the GNWT's and this Legislative Assembly's expectation that he will appoint one of the board members' nominees as chair of the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Villeneuve. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to deal with the motion I gave notice of earlier today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with the motion he gave notice of today and waive Rule 58. Are there any nays? There are no nays. You may deal with your motion, Mr. Villeneuve.

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also request unanimous consent to waive Rule 58 to allow Motion 32-15(3) to proceed today. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 58 to allow Motion 32-15(3) to proceed.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

MR. SPEAKER: I hear a nay. Item 16, motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item

19, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act; Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005; and, Committee Report 12-15(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2003 General Election. By the authority given to me as Speaker by, Motion 2-15(3), I hereby resolve the House into Committee of the Whole to sit beyond the hour of adjournment until such time as the committee is ready to report progress, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have a number of things on our agenda. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act; Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005...(inaudible)...Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Is the committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will proceed with that after we have a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole back to order. The first thing on our agenda is Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act. If the committee is agreed, then I will ask the Minister responsible for bringing this bill forward, Mr. Dent, if he would proceed with his opening remarks. Mr. Dent.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are here today to review Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act.

The bill we are reviewing today does not address marriage. The Supreme Court recently confirmed that it is the exclusive responsibility of the federal government to define marriage.

A few weeks ago, the federal Justice Minister introduced the Civil Marriage Act in the House of Commons. If passed, it will extend legal capacity for civil marriage to same-sex couples while respecting religious freedom. Until this legislation is passed or there is a court decision in the Northwest Territories, the current definition of marriage in the NWT remains as a union between a man and a woman.

This bill ensures that people living in different types of spousal relationships have the same rights, benefits, duties and obligations. People who live together as a family will have the same rights, whether they are legally married or not. This bill ensures that same-sex couples will be treated the same as heterosexual common-law couples who live together in similar circumstances.

All across Canada, there have been court challenges that have resulted in courts and legislatures confirming the rights and obligations of same-sex couples. In most parts of the country, their legal status is the same as heterosexual common-law couples. These changes will

ensure our legislation recognizes their rights and obligations.

This bill also amends a number of statutes to provide previously unrecognized rights and obligations to those in heterosexual common-law relationships. These will apply equally to those in same-sex relationships. In several of our statutes, references to "spouse" only include married spouses. This bill updates those references.

Finally, I would like to inform Committee of the Whole that at the appropriate time, I will bring forward amendments addressing concerns we received from Egale and making minor corrections to this bill. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Normally at this time we have the chair of the standing committee that reviewed the bill offer the committee's comments on the bill. At this time, I will ask Ms. Lee if she will read those comments for us. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The Standing Committee on Social Programs conducted its public review of Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, in Yellowknife on December 9, 2004, and February 16, 2005.

The committee would like to thank Egale Canada and Out North for their submissions and the Minister and his staff for presenting the bill. Bill 17 is intended primarily to remove discriminatory treatment of same-sex and heterosexual common-law couples from a number of NWT acts. The bill is similar to what has been done by other Canadian jurisdictions in response to a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada; particularly, the 1999 decision *M vs. H*. It does not address the definition of marriage, which is in the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada. The majority of NWT legislation recognizes couples who have lived together for two years or more as common-law couples. The committee noted that the Workers' Compensation Act does not recognize common-law couples unless they have lived together for three years.

This means, for example, that if a couple had been living together for 2.5 years and one of them was killed in a workplace accident, the surviving partner would not be entitled to any benefits. The committee would like to see the threshold in the Workers' Compensation Act changed to two years to be consistent with most other NWT legislation.

However, because the NWT and Nunavut share the Workers' Compensation Board, there is an agreement in place that legislation in both territories will be consistent. Therefore, it is not practical to make this change to the NWT Workers' Compensation Act without discussion with Nunavut and an agreement that they will do the same. The committee would like to encourage the government to initiate discussions with Nunavut as soon as possible to have this change made. Members do not agree that this amendment should wait for the comprehensive review of the Workers' Compensation Act, which could take several more years.

In their submissions to the committee, Egale Canada and Out North identified discriminatory provisions that were apparently overlooked in the drafting of the bill. One set of these provisions is in the Insurance Act, specifically in the schedule which refers to mandatory death benefits in motor vehicles insurance policies.

The existing wording clearly excludes same-sex couples from these benefits and is inconsistent with other amendments in Bill 17. Another set of provisions is in the

Vital Statistics Act and related forms. These provisions which affect the registration of the names of the children of unmarried women assume that children have a mother and father. The act therefore does not allow for the recognition of a same-sex partner of a biological parent immediately on the birth of child.

Same-sex couples currently must use the Adoption Act to have legal recognition of a non-biological parent. There are similar issues with birth registration forms. The current death certificate forms present difficulties in that they do not recognize any common-law relationships. During the public review on December 9, 2004, the Minister committed to return with amendments for the committee's consideration to address the issues raised by Egale Canada and Out North with the Insurance Act and the Vital Statistics Act. He also committed to consult with Health and Social Services on any necessary changes to the Vital Statistics Act forms, which can be amended by regulation without requiring the approval of the Legislative Assembly.

The standing committee decided not to proceed with moving any amendments during its clause-by-clause review of Bill 17 on February 16th in order to allow for discussion of any motions in Committee of the Whole during its review of the bill in its entirety, so that all Members can participate.

Following the committee's review, the motion was carried to report Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, to the Assembly as ready for Committee of the Whole. This concludes the committee's opening comments on Bill 17. Individual Members may have additional questions or comments as we proceed. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. If the Minister wishes to bring witnesses at this time, does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Mr. Dent, if you would like to bring witnesses.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Yes, Madam Chairperson, I would like to have witnesses.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if he would please escort Mr. Dent's witnesses to the witness table.

Mr. Dent, for the record, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With me, I have Ms. Lucy Austin, who is the executive director of the Legal Services Board; and Mr. Mark Aitken, the director of legislation division.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Dent. At this time then, we will ask if there are any general comments on Bill 17. General comments. Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will make my comments brief. I cannot support a bill like this. Anything that has to do with changing anything except between a man and woman, I can't agree with. I won't compromise my principles, I don't...I understand that this bill is probably going to need to pass, otherwise there will be challenges, but in all good conscience I can't support anything like this. If it means not being in here, in the House when they are voting, then I will leave. That is all

the general comments I have for now, Madam Chairperson. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. General comments, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With respect to the Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, I have always noted that it is a nice fancy title, but in essence it is the same thing as asking me to recognize and change the definition of how we treat the marriage of men and women and their benefits. With that alone, I have no problems saying that I am not going to support any of these changes or the bill at all at this point. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. General comments, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will support this motion. I am sorry, supporting this bill. It is an area that I was involved in, in the last Assembly, Madam Chairperson, when this Assembly amended our adoption laws to legalize the adoption rights and responsibilities of a couple if they are of the same sex and recognizing how we are to manage and set laws for adopting children.

At the time, it was made quite clear that if we were to take that step, as we did, there would be further consequential changes to many of our other laws, which also needed to reflect the new definitions. There are significant decisions in other courts of Canada, Madam Chairperson, which also compel the Northwest Territories to bring its own statutes in line with those new amendments in Canadian law.

Madam Chairperson, I don't have the Hansard before me, but I recall parts of that debate. I think a number of the reasons that compelled me to vote in favour of the adoption law a few years ago also compel me to vote in favour of these changes.

Madam Chairperson, there are a lot of things over time that change in a society and our levels of tolerance, of acceptance of natural justice of human rights are things that in the course of Canadian history we can all mark. I would look at such milestones as granting the right to vote to women in the 1920s as something that, at that time, was an enormous change in the value system of governing and giving people rights to have a say in what was going to happen.

But you know something? Women now have the right to vote. To even think of bringing that idea back, that women should not be allowed to vote, is absolutely unthinkable. Madam Chairperson, the same step was taken sometime in the 1950s regarding the right of aboriginal people to have a vote in Canada. What an astounding change of value and tolerance and acceptance in our land.

Again, to look at that it would be a heresy to think that we should not accept that now. As society and acceptance and tolerance in the values of society have changed, so now have we come to accept the choice of some people to not partner with people of the opposite sex and yet, in the community and in the obligations and responsibilities that they take on, that same-sex couples take on among themselves, for me, Madam Chairperson, it does not just say okay we are extending a right, as this bill says, a benefit or an obligation. It is a further recognition that these people do have responsibilities in society, to themselves and to their community.

This is a two-way street and I am entirely convinced that amending our laws to recognize what obligations and benefits should be afforded same-sex couples in many different areas is also reflective of society's expectation that they will also take these on as promises and obligations and responsibilities that they have amongst themselves and to themselves and to their peers and their neighbours and other Canadians.

Those are the values that I bring to the table on this issue, Madam Chairperson. I am going to be pleased and proud to say yes to this bill when the amendments and the clause by clause begin. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. Next on the list for general comments, I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will be very brief. First of all, I will be supporting this bill. I want to recognize that rights of individuals don't evolve with the times. I won't go on at length, but I really believe in that.

Although many of my colleagues here, I wish to stress, will not be supporting this bill, I do personally want to applaud that they are following their personal beliefs. I know that this is a decisive issue with a lot of people out there. Even with my constituency I have had calls on both sides of the equation. I want to emphasize that I do have personal respect for those who choose to vote against this; I recognize that that is their choice. They are following the beliefs and feelings of their constituencies, as well as their religious and personal beliefs. So I want to recognize that officially.

I will say just quickly before I close, I think this is a principle bill which really takes the debate out of it. We can either have the courts institute this by telling us to make these adjustments or we can make these adjustments on our own terms. That being said, we can write our own legislation, rather than the Supreme Court of the land telling us how to write it.

In closing, Madam Chairperson, I just want to emphasize that there truly are people on both sides of this equation and it is important to recognize and hear their voices as well, but, at this time, I will be voting in favour of this bill because I believe it is the correct thing to do. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next on the list for general comments I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just want to offer a few comments for the record. I understand and appreciate the complexities and the conflicting views on this and I realize this bill might touch on a subject that is of discussion wider than this Assembly. As the Minister stated in his opening remarks, I think it is important to note that this bill is not in any way defining or redefining marriage.

As the Minister indicated, we, as a territorial legislature, do not have the power to define or redefine marriage. That is the responsibility of the federal government. That is where the power lays and I realize that there are debates going on there.

This bill and what I understand it to be is really about contracts and benefits that arise out of a contractual, understanding relationship. It took many years for common law, for example, to accept and give obligations and benefits to common-law couples. That is a modern

form, that is a modernization and that is an understanding of the reality of the situation; that there are many couples, heterosexual couples, who choose not to marry formally in a church or in any other ceremony. The laws now have accepted that any couple who lives together as man and wife have the same benefits, so we got to the point where a husband, for example, or in a common-law relationship, cannot sell matrimonial property or the house they reside in without the consent of the wife. Those are the kinds of laws that weren't there before, that we have understood to be necessary to protect the rights and obligations of a couple who live in a married-like relationship.

I believe this bill is making the homosexual couples or same sex couples have the same rights that the heterosexual common-law couples have. It is really saying that same-sex couples, like every other couple, have rights and benefits and obligations and that they have basic rights that they should be entitled to.

I know that these are difficult issues for some, but I think in the midst of all the political back and forth we have in this House, I believe that one of the most important jobs that we have as a Legislature and a publicly-elected person is to protect the rights of minorities, who can't, by sheer number, always win the argument of society. Our job is to protect those who are vulnerable and who are not given the same equal treatment and equal rights under the law.

This is something that has already been decided by the Supreme Court of Canada; not on the definition of marriage, obviously, but on rights and obligations of same-sex couples. The court has already decided that same-sex couples who have lived together for many, many years...The court has decided that it is not fair that if one of that couple dies, all of their employer pensions and benefits that would have gone to a heterosexual couple just gets wiped away. That partner, in that type of relationship, has no rights whatsoever. The court has already decided that that is not the way to go in this country, and many provincial jurisdictions have already followed that. It is my understanding that it is either we have to update our laws to fall in line with that Supreme Court decision or, I am sure, that this issue will go before the courts in our jurisdiction if it does get litigated. The chances of winning that case are very low in light of the Supreme Court decision which is superior to the Territorial Court. We would have achieved the same result at the end of a lot of expenditure of money and resources.

This bill simply makes amendments to many of existing territorial legislation that does not fall in line with the federal law and basic rights that are stated in our Constitution and Charter which is the supreme law and one that we all need to benefit from. That is important to all of us. Sometimes it is difficult, but I believe that we cannot assert our own place under that umbrella of rights.

I think most Canadians, even if they often or sometimes complain about some aspects of our Charter of Rights or our constitutional rights and what kind of affect it has on society, take pride in the fact that we have these basic rights. We all have the same basic rights under the Charter and Constitution. It is like any other good thing. In order to make it work, we all have to take part in it. We all have to share it. We all have to be willing to give and take. As much as we want it for ourselves, we have to be able to give that to every other person in our society.

I also want to recognize that these same-sex couples that are subject of these legislative changes, live among us.

They are our friends. They are our sisters, brothers, cousins, neighbours. There is no community in the Northwest Territories where there are not same-sex couples. We have an obligation to them as much as any other citizen in the Territories. I have, I believe, the collective responsibility to look after their rights as well as everyone else's rights. I want to say that I respect the views of everyone in the House. I know this is a sensitive issue, but it is what we are elected here to do. I believe it is one of the privileges we have to take an action like the one we are taking here today. I would end my statement there. I will be voting in support of this bill. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. General comments. Next on the list, I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, would like to offer a few brief comments. I am in support of Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, that is before us today. I just wanted to start off by saying that I really do respect and appreciate the views that other Members have on this. Sometimes we are always not going to agree on things. We all have different religious and spiritual beliefs. Those are to be respected. It is a really touchy issue for many people. But for me, when I got elected in 1997, one of the first tests as a new city councillor was to add a proclamation for Gay Pride Day at City Hall. I thought about this for some time; how I was going to vote, whether I was going to vote in favour of Gay Pride Day being proclaimed in the City of Yellowknife. I searched inside and came to a realization that who am I to stand in the way of other people having the dignity and aspirations that they have. I didn't want to stand in people's way of being happy. This life that we have here; all of us are put on this earth. It is a tough enough life to live, as it is, for some people. I think it goes back to the basic human rights, like I said: respect, dignity and aspirations having to be adhered to and people allowed to live the lives that they want to live.

I am not trying to impose my views on anybody, but while I have the floor, I will mention this. I know people have strong beliefs on a man and woman, but if you look at everybody as a person; people are put on the earth with the ability to love and to be in relationships. Again, who am I to stand in the way of any person wanting to love another person, to be in a relationship with another person? I can't say unequivocally that I am a better father or provider than any other person is. Again, Madam Chair, it goes back to human rights and the dignity and aspirations of people.

I am going to support the bill that is before us. I do respect and appreciate other Members and their spiritual and religious beliefs. That is the way I view this. I am going to support it, and we will move forward from there. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. General comments. Mr. Pokiak.

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. To be brief, I thought about this long and hard. I think it is going to be on my conscience; but knowing my constituents back home, I know how they feel. I think what I am going to do is I am going to have to vote no against Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act.

I did get some feedback from my constituents, and that is how I am going to vote. I am going to vote against the bill. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Pokiak. Are there any further general comments on Bill 17? No further general comments. The committee is indicating that they would like to go clause by clause.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I am going to ask Mr. Ramsay if he would take the chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Good afternoon. Does the committee agree to go clause by clause?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Mr. Chair, I had a question on clause 1. I wanted some more clarification.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Does the committee agree to go back to clause 1?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Could I ask the Minister under this section the amendment that is being proposed here, for the Conflict of Interest Act I guess, the definition of spouse. It says under (7), under that section under (b), "a person who has been living together with the member in a conjugal relationship outside marriage for a period of less than two years." Does it mean they have to be together less than two years or more than two years before this amendment applies to them? Maybe I can ask the Law Clerk for either one of them, I guess.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What this amendment is intended to do is to address the concern that conflicts of interest may well arise where couples live together for less than two years. The fact that they lived together may give rise to the perception of a conflict of interest. This amendment applies both to heterosexual couples and same-sex couples because, right now, for instance, in the Conflict of Interest Act, if a heterosexual couple were to be living together for six months in a conjugal relationship, the same act wouldn't apply to them even though there may be the implication of a conflict of interest because they are living together.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: You have me really confused now. On the same-sex marriage and unmarried couple, if they are living together more than six months or less than six months or a day or two days, the Conflict of Interest Act would apply to them. If something happens, then they have to fall under that act to determine something. I guess it doesn't matter how long they live together then. Is that the point under the Conflict of Interest Act?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let's take an example. If a person is a member on a board, like

in our Conflict of Interest Act. For instance, if one the Members here...They have to declare the interest of their spouse. What this amendment does is make sure that that condition exists under the Conflict of Interest Act. So a member of a board would have to then be aware and public of the interests of their partner, whether they are same sex or heterosexual. Right now, that is not covered. Right now, the Conflict of Interest Act doesn't provide the same protection to the public that you find in some of our acts. That is the situation that arises, because if two people are living together, there is an expectation that a man and a wife have to meet a certain obligation to declare or to watch for conflicts of interest. Just because people aren't married, they shouldn't have to not worry about declaring that conflict of interest. This is to correct that problem in our laws. It applies equally to heterosexual as well as same sex because it is a problem in our laws with couples right now that aren't married.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: I have no further questions on clause 1.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. On clause 1, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: With respect to clause 1, I am having trouble seeing the change. What exactly is it that you are changing here, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Right now, under the Conflict of Interest Act, if two people are married and one person is a member of a board or a council, they have to follow the conflict of interest provision. I will just take an example that I am familiar with: the Legislative Assembly Executive Council Act. Under the conflict of interest provisions here, if a Member is married, they have to declare all of the interests of their spouse. They have to make sure that there isn't a conflict of interest. However, if the couple is not married, it wouldn't necessarily apply to them. So we are fixing a problem in the law that would apply both to heterosexual and same-sex couples.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am having trouble seeing where the change is. Are you replacing a subsection or deleting?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are changing the definition of spouse so that it no longer means people who are married, so common-law couples will be included now as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Okay, in clause 1, this is the exact wording of the change. Is that what they are doing here, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBER: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

AN HON. MEMBERS: Nay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to shortly propose a motion that will add a new clause to the bill. This will provide for amendments to the Insurance Act. These amendments will add a definition of spouse that includes heterosexual common-law and same-sex partners. This definition will govern the various references to the term spouse in the main provisions of the Insurance Act and in its schedule which provides for mandatory accident benefits for motor vehicle insurance policies. The motion also adjusts references in the schedule that excludes same-sex spouses in one instance and excludes both same-sex spouses and heterosexual common-law spouses in the second instance.

Committee Motion 34-15(3) To Amend Clause 5 Of Bill 17: Modernization Of Benefits And Obligations Act, Carried

With that explanation, Mr. Chair, I move that the following be added after clause 5 of Bill 17:

Insurance Act

- 5.1 (1) The Insurance Act is amended by this section.
- (2) The following definition is added in alphabetical order in subsection 1(1).
- Spouse has the meaning assigned to that term by section 1 of the Family Law Act.
- (3) The schedule is amended by:
- a) deleting sub-item (2), comprised of the definition "spouse" in item B of subsection 2 - death benefits and loss of income payments; and
- b) striking out "are husband and wife" in subparagraph 1(b)(i) and subsection 3 - definitions, exclusions and special provisions of this section and by substituting "are spouses".

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for the benefit of the record, could I just get the Minister to state what this motion is to do? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is to deal with one of the concerns that was raised by Egale Canada and Out North.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: That is fine, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. Next I recognize Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: What exactly was the concern by Egale?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Regarding mandatory death benefits, the existing wording excludes same-sex couples from those benefits.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know if it is appropriate to put it under clause 5. Is that a totally different subject matter altogether?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ramsay): Thank you. I was just told that he is adding another clause under clause 5, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Thank you. Clause 5 has been amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I am in support of Bill 17, but I wanted to ask what seems to me to be an obvious question. Maybe it was asked during the lead up to the bill coming to the House today, but I'm not on the Social Programs committee, so I didn't get a chance to ask this previously. Why are we proceeding with the Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act prior to the Civil Marriage Act being passed in the House of Commons?

---Applause

I just wondered, that's just an obvious question. I support Bill 17, don't get me wrong, but I'm asking that obvious question. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're proceeding with it now because it is not in any way tied to the definition of civil marriage. As I said in my opening comments, this has nothing to do with recognizing civil marriage and, in fact, half of the amendments in this act also extend benefits and obligations to common-law couples. We're not talking common-law heterosexual couples, so this bill isn't dealing exclusively with same-sex benefits. But as Members are aware, there have been a number of court cases throughout the years that have found that laws have to respect the living situations of same-sex couples.

Therefore, the obligations and benefits that they are entitled to under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms are the same as benefits that are enjoyed by heterosexual couples. The laws in Canada have been found in various jurisdictions to be discriminatory when same-sex couples are not treated the same under the law. So all across Canada, jurisdictions have been modernizing their legislation to meet that test.

As was pointed out earlier, if we didn't do this there's a likelihood that, even if it wasn't the right thing to do, which it is, we would face court challenges which we would lose and be forced to change the legislation. I'd be hard pressed to explain to the people of the North why we'd be spending money that we know we're just throwing away to try and defend discriminatory laws. We have a far better purpose on which to spend our money. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted that clarified by the Minister because it would seem, even though it doesn't deal with marriages per se, but just from a sheer optics point of view or a natural process point of view you would think that we would get some certainty on the definition of marriage and then proceed from there. But again, I do support Bill 17, but I just wondered on the process a little bit. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had a good part of this debate in the 14th Assembly and the process was started there with the changing of some laws in recognition of court decisions. What we're doing now is continuing on with that process. It was a commitment that was made in the Assembly at that time that we would continue to do it. So it's necessary that we change our laws. They are discriminatory right now. We should proceed with them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Ramsay. Thank you. Clause 5, as amended. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. Well, the Minister keeps talking about not changing the definition, but that's what he's doing. That's what every page on here is doing is changing the definition of co-habiting and spouse. I don't know where he gets off saying he's not changing any definition at all. That's the fundamental reason why I'm opposing any of these changes at all. He is changing the definition and the people I represent are opposed to that. Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, we are in many of these clauses saying that spouse includes people who are not married but co-habit. I don't expect the Member would think that we would continue to prohibit that definition from being changed. That's one of the things that we are recognizing. There is no discussion of marriage in this act. As I said in my opening comments, until the definition is changed by the federal government or a court decision is made in our jurisdiction, then the definition of marriage remains the same. But a spouse doesn't have to be somebody who is legally married to another person. Yes, we are changing the definition of

spouse in here to include that so that the people who are not legally married are considered spouses.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. Well, I don't know. You can colour it different ways there, Mr. Minister, but it still means the same thing. You're still changing the definition of co-habitation to what it was and I'm fundamentally opposed to that because people are concerned back home that we're opening up the flood gates. What's going to be okay next? A man living with two women? Or a woman living with two men? It just opens up the flood gates and that's a real fear that I'm here to tell you today. When is it going to stop? Is it going to be okay then for somebody below legal age to be in a co-habitation? I'm not going to have any part of allowing any of the liberalization of any act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. More of a comment, Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the amendments are very clear and they don't get into the issues that the Member is speaking about. I think what we are doing is we are correcting a situation that has been clearly seen by the courts to be discriminatory in Canada under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As a government we have a responsibility to respect the laws of Canada and make sure that our laws are respectful and meet the test of the Charter.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Menicoche. Clause 5, as amended. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Thank you. Just to follow up on what my colleague is saying; first of all, I guess I want to make a comment. I don't know why this particular legislation, Bill 17, is a high priority for this government.

---Applause

Number one. There are other priorities, like the Wildlife Act, that have been sitting on our books for the last how many years...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

MR. ZOE: ...and now this thing comes up and the government puts this as high priority. We know what's happening in Ottawa. Why couldn't they wait until that issue was dealt with? Specifically to this clause, Mr. Chairman, they're mixing apples and oranges here.

---Laughter

You know? Not oranges to oranges, but apples to oranges. On one hand what they're doing, it's not a laughing matter. What they're doing is for the unmarried common-law couples for the benefits, as the Minister indicated, in some of our laws that we have in place the benefits for common-law couples they don't receive now because of the way our law is. I agree with the Minister that those types of amendments have to come forward so that the unmarried common-law couples can receive those types of things and make all those necessary changes as these ones. But on the other hand, for same-sex couples they're giving them the same thing. By doing that, you're basically agreeing with same-sex marriage. It ties together.

---Applause

So why didn't the government, to play it on the safe side, particularly for the majority of the people in the Territories, separate those two issues and bring in a bill pertaining to

unmarried common-law spouses so they fit into this bill. Maybe at a later date, after what happens in Ottawa, bring in another amendment for the same-sex marriage to make the same amendments. Why couldn't they do that rather than lumping it all together? That's my question to the Minister on spouses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. On clause 5, as amended. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whether the federal government actually changes the definition of marriage or not we should still proceed with this legislation. Even if the definition of marriage isn't changed, we should proceed with this. The Member just agreed that heterosexual common-law couples shouldn't be discriminated against simply because they're not legally married. That is supported by the courts. Well, the courts have supported the exact same thing with same-sex couples. You can't discriminate against them simply because they're not legally married. You can't say they're not a couple. So whether the definition of marriage is changed or not, it has nothing to do with whether or not couples have rights. The courts have found that heterosexual couples, whether they're married or not, have rights, as do same-sex couples.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Zoe. Clause 5, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 7. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 35-15(3) To Amend Clause 7 Of Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits And Obligations Act, Carried

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I move that subclause 7(3) of Bill 17 be amended by striking out "section 7 of Bill," in proposed subsection 1(3) of the Intestate Succession Act and by substituting "section 7 of Bill 17,".

Mr. Chairman, this motion amends sub-clause 7(3) to correct an internal reference back to Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, in a new transitional provision being added to the Intestate Succession Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

Clause 7, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 8. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 36-15(3) To Amend Clause 8 Of Bill 17, Modernization Of Benefits And Obligations Act, Carried

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I move that the following be added after clause 8 of Bill 17:

Wildlife Act

8.1. Paragraph 30(3)(a) of the Wildlife Act is amended by deleting "wife or widow" and by substituting "spouse or surviving spouse".

Mr. Chairman, this motion adds a new clause to the bill which will provide an amendment to the Wildlife Act which presently permits the wife or widow of a general hunting licence holder to hunt in a wildlife preserve in certain circumstances. The reference to wife or widow excludes men, women who live in heterosexual common-law relationships and same-sex spouses of either sex. As amended, paragraph 30(3)(a) will include the spouse and surviving spouse of the holder of a general hunting licence.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

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

---Carried

Clause 8, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 9. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 37-15(3) To Amend Clause 9 Of Bill 17, Modernization Of Benefits And Obligations Act, Carried

HON. CHARLES DENT: Mr. Chairman, I move that clause 9 of Bill 17 be amended by striking out "section 6 of Bill," in proposed subsection 10(5) of the Wills Act and by substituting "section 6 of Bill 17,".

Mr. Chairman, this motion amends clause 9 to correct an internal reference back to Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, in a transitional provision being added to the Wills Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just an observation. Again, I'm not on the Social Programs committee, but why are we bringing forward so many different amendments on the floor of the House and why isn't it a much cleaner piece of legislation? Thank you.

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

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As outlined in the opening comments by the chair of the standing committee, there were a number of issues that were raised in the review with the standing committee and a commitment was made to come back with amendments during the standing committee process. But when we appeared before the standing committee with the amendments, the suggestion by the standing committee was that we deal with them in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What was the reason again? Was it strictly the Social Programs committee that wanted it to come forward this way to Committee of the Whole?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Committee members, could we just speak to clause 9, as

amended? Mr. Dent, would you like to respond to Mr. Ramsay's comment?

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can only go by the chair's opening comments to the bill today in which it was noted that the committee decided not to proceed with moving any amendments during its clause-by-clause review in order to allow for discussion of any motions in Committee of the Whole during its review of the bill in its entirety so that all Members could participate.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion. Clause 9, as amended.

Point Of Order

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Point of order there, Mr. Chairman. We're dealing with an entirely new bill here. That's not the one we began with, so I don't know what's going on.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. Can you tell us what your point of order is, Mr. Menicoché, on Bill 17? Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Well, if the chair will permit me a break, I'll dig up the exact clause, but what's going on is that this is not the same bill we started off with. Nor is it the same bill Social Programs reviewed.

Chairperson's Ruling

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, to Mr. Menicoché's point of order then, his point of order is that the bill has been changed in substance to the extent that it's no longer the same bill that was brought forward and, in fact, these are amendments to the bill which can be voted on as we proceed through the bill. This is a normal course of business. So, Mr. Menicoché, I'm sorry; you don't have a point of order. To the motion on clause 9. Mr. Menicoché.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: What exactly is this amendment changing?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. Mr. Dent.

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. What this is changing is, if you look at the first section in quotation marks where it says "section 6 of Bill," there's no number there and now it says "Bill 17." At the time this was initially presented to committee we didn't know what number it would be. So it would be a normal course of business to make this change as part of the committee review had they considered our bills. But this is to put the bill number in.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion. Anything further, Mr. Menicoché?

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 9, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Clause 10. Mr. Dent.

Committee Motion 38-15(3) To Amend Clause 10 Of Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits And Obligations Act, Carried

HON. CHARLES DENT: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that clause 10 of Bill 17 be amended by striking out "section 6 of Bill," in proposed section 1.1 of the Workers' Compensation Act and by substituting "section 6 of Bill 17,".

Madam Chair, this motion amends clause 10 to correct the internal reference back to Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, in a new application provision being added to the Workers' Compensation Act.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dent. We'll give the Pages a chance to distribute the motion and Members a chance to read it and think about it. The motion is in order. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Clause 10, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Bill as a whole, as amended. Mr. Zoe.

Committee Motion 39-15(3) To Amend Bill 17 To Come Into Force On The Day The Civil Marriage Act (Canada) Comes Into Force, Withdrawn

MR. ZOE: Madam Chair, I move that Bill 17 be amended by -- how am I going to put this now -- by inserting:

11. This act comes into force on the day the Civil Marriage Act (Canada) comes into force.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, Mr. Zoe, I think we'll need to take a break in order to have that motion printed up and brought back into the House and translated and then we'll be back. We'll have a break until then. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. Before the break, Mr. Zoe had moved that the following be added after section 10 of Bill 17: Commencement, clause 11. This Act come into force on the day the Civil Marriage Act (Canada) comes into force." Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Madam Chair, I would like to withdraw that motion and I would like to move another one.

---Withdrawn

Committee Motion 40-15(3) To Amend Bill 17 To Come Into Force On The Earlier Of The Prorogation Of The First Session Of The 38th Parliament And The Coming Into Force Of The Civil Marriage Act (Canada), Defeated

MR. ZOE: I move that the following be added after section 10 of Bill 17:

Commencement

11. This Act comes into force on the earlier of:

a) the day the First Session of the 38th Parliament of Canada is prorogued; and

b) the day the Civil Marriage Act (Canada) comes into force.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Just for clarity for the Members, it gives us an opportunity to...The way it reads now, it will come into force as soon as we give it assent in this House. So what this amendment does is to delay it to a day certain. Day certain meaning either the first session of the 38th Parliament when they prorogue, or when the Civil Marriage Act comes into force. So whatever happens with the Civil Marriage Act, if it dies or gets passed, our legislation will continue to come into force at either of those two times. This is what the motion is saying. It will give more comfort to most of us on this side of the House who feel strongly about the type of things we talked about today. This is a compromise with the government. I hope this amendment will be carried. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'll be voting in favour of this motion and I just wanted to say, as well, if my honourable colleagues are feeling a little bit on edge like I am, there's probably a reason for it, Madam Chair. For myself I'm taking exception to what's going on here tonight. I believe that I interjected a point of order earlier and I still do maintain that, Madam Chair. However, what has happened is that our legislative process here was hijacked. We made significant changes to the content of this bill and there are enough changes to do that, Madam Chair. There are five amendments to a bill with 10. I believe that the public has a fundamental right to have input into what we, as legislators, are doing. Every one of us, as Members, talk about this on a daily basis. The fundamental right of our public to have a say and to have input. Now I am stating for the record what we have done tonight, by introducing so many amendments, has circumvented the process of our institution we so proudly represent, Madam Chair. I demand that we allow our committee system to provide due process and due diligence by re-examining this bill once more. I feel very strongly about it. We have a public process. We went out there and we didn't show them the bill that we're passing here tonight and there's something fundamentally wrong if we're going to do that as legislators. That's why I feel so strongly about it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. I have Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will not be supporting this motion for three reasons. One is that, as I stated, this bill has nothing to do with the Civil Marriage Act in Ottawa. This is creating equal status between unmarried couples and other unmarried couples. It has nothing to do with marriage.

AN HON. MEMBER: To the motion.

MS. LEE: Excuse me, I get to speak, I believe. Anyway, they are not related. So in my view, they are not related. I am not saying that other people have no right to their views.

The second thing is I think to say that if the parliamentary session prorogues, I'm not sure if we had and precedence in setting our rules that way. We don't know when that is, and when is the last time we really tied our legislation with what was happening there anyway. So I think we can do

our own work. I don't think this is related and for that reason I'm not going to support this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Lee. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. My time was to be used up to seek further clarification to 11 clause (a) or 11 subsection (a), which is I'm just trying to understand that, because if the present Parliament prorogues today, although they may not be able to answer this question due to process, but I'm a little concerned because if the present Parliament prorogues tomorrow, were dissolved tomorrow and would that not do the same as what we are going now to allow if it is to come into force. So I'm sorry, I have to say I can't ask questions to the movers. Madam Chair, who can we ask these questions to or can I request a recess to get clarification of what this actually means?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Hawkins, could you please just repeat your last question? I'm sorry, I was having a sidebar. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I respect my colleagues who are putting forward this and I want to emphasize at least enough so they know that I'd like to understand what this means. So I'm trying to figure out exactly what 11(a) really means. Parliament dissolves tomorrow, be it whatever reason, does that mean that this comes into force or does that mean that this issue is completely off the table? How do we get answers to these types of questions, because I can't ask the mover? So do we ask the Law Clerk to clarify that, or do we ask the Minister back into the chair? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'll ask Mr. Boyd, who is the Law Clerk here for us today, if he would please speak to that question. Thank you. Mr. Boyd.

LAW CLERK (Mr. Boyd): Thank you, Madam Chair. With respect to the Member's questions concerning clause (a) of the amendment, the effect if the bill was passed today in the House and if Parliament was to prorogue, if Parliament was to end, essentially the bill would come into force.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. If I could further seek clarification on this motion; then, in other words, if Parliament, for some reason, manages to stay alive maybe another four years, therefore, that would limit the ability as the way this motion is written for this bill to come into force. Is that what that means? Thank you.

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

LAW CLERK (Mr. Boyd): Thank you, Madam Chair. In response to the Member's question, if clause (b) and the Civil Marriage Act did not come into force the legislation, Bill 17, would not come into force until the 38th Parliament ended. So to respond specifically to the Member's question, it could be contingent on the length of the current Parliament before the bill would actually come into force.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I believe that the Law Clerk perfectly clarified the questions that essentially as I understand it -- and I would request that the Law Clerk correct me if I'm wrong -- but as I understand it, 11(a) is

basically a delay tactic or, I should say, a delay switch on this legislation. Thank you.

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

LAW CLERK (Mr. Boyd): Yes, just as a point of clarification, the act would come into force on the earlier of the two days and I spoke of the 38th Parliament, it would be the First Session of the 38th Parliament, but it would be the earlier of either of the end of the Parliament or the passing of the Civil Marriage Act.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Boyd. Anything further, Mr. Hawkins?

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess in general I fail to see the need for this, because if this is just a delay and Parliament could change any time now and clause (a) is not linked to anything substantive that I see that would be earth shattering. Maybe for those in the 37th Parliament maybe, but not to me. So as far as linking to the Civil Marriage Act, I'm concerned because I don't think it actually directly links to it. Indirectly I think it is associated and I do think the Members here do have some points that have been validly raised, but I don't think it directly corresponds with it. So I'll be voting against the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I have more Members to speak to this. So let's give them a chance. To the motion. I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thanks, Madam Chair. I will not be supporting this motion either. I can appreciate that sometimes there is a benefit to giving ourselves some room and some time from when a motion or a bill is passed in the Assembly and when it actually takes effect. In fact, I think there are some that have been out there for years that have been passed by this Assembly, but have yet to take force. In this case, I don't really know where the benefit would be for anybody to further delay the coming into force of the provisions of this bill, which, from my understanding, would come into force on assent. Yes, this bill will come into force on assent in our Assembly and I am very much in favour of that. So I will be voting against the motion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: For the record, Madam Chair, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: Thank you. Madam Chair, I can't see why other Members can't support this type of motion that we're putting forward. It doesn't take away from the intent of the bill. If this motion gets passed, I'm sure the bill will get passed and coming into force is on either of these two dates that are there. So no matter what happens, the bill is going to come, but it will be on the later date. This motion, if passed, also gives comfort to Members on this side of the House that haven't had an opportunity to explain to their constituents as to why this bill is being passed. So an explanation can be given to them. By not doing this, Madam Chair, the current bill will come into force as soon as the Commissioner gives it assent. It doesn't give the opportunity to Members on this side of the House to go back to their communities and explain why they didn't vote against this bill. So I think it's fair. In my view, by supporting this motion, by putting this motion forward it will give more comfort to some of us on this side

of the House so that we can have an opportunity to talk to our constituents. On top of that, Madam Chair, maybe the whole issue of the Civil Marriage Act is going to be dealt with before they prorogue the Parliament. So one or the other, no matter what happens, we're just buying a little bit of time and I can't see why the government would go against this type of thing. It's not an urgency and, like I said earlier, I don't understand why this was put as a top priority for government, but, nevertheless, I encourage all the Members to support this motion. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Question is being called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Bill 17 as a whole, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does the committee agree that Bill 17 is ready for third reading, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, Bill 17 is now ready for third reading, as amended. Thank you, Mr. Dent, Mr. Aitken, Ms. Austin and Mr. Boyd.

The next item on our agenda is Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005. Is committee agreed that we will now proceed with the Supplementary Appropriation Act? Mr. Zoe.

MR. ZOE: I move we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Zoe. The motion is in order, it is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion to report progress? All those opposed? The motion is defeated. We will proceed then and ask Minister Floyd Roland if he would please provide his opening comments on Bill 20. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to introduce Bill 21, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005. This bill requests authority for additional appropriations of \$16.813 million for operations and expenditures.

Major items included in this request for operations expenditures are:

1. A total of \$11.1 million for the Department of Health and Social Services, including:
 - \$4 million for the additional costs incurred for the provision of hospital services for NWT residents in hospitals outside of the NWT;
 - \$2 million for the Dogrib Community Services Board's accumulated deficit and increased operating costs;
 - \$1.9 million for additional costs being incurred in supplementary health programs; and,
 - \$1.6 million for increases to compensation resulting from the re-evaluation of nursing and allied health care professional jobs.
2. \$2.2 million for increased costs resulting from the rise in fuel prices in the NWT since 2002.

Subsequent to the supplementary appropriation document being provided to Members, an urgent issue has arose with the Mackenzie Valley winter road maintenance.

At the appropriate time, I will be making a motion to increase the Department of Transportation's supplementary request by \$311,000.

I am prepared to review the details of the supplementary appropriation document.

That concludes my opening remarks. I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): At this time then I'll ask the committee if they would agree to ask the Minister if he would like to bring witnesses into Chamber.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Mr. Roland, would you like to bring witnesses in?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Then I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort Mr. Roland's witnesses to the witness table.

Mr. Roland, for the record could you please introduce your witness?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me tonight is Mr. Lew Voytilla, the secretary to the Financial Management Board.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. If Members could please turn in their binders to Bill 20. I'll ask Members if they have any general comments on Bill 20. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I wanted to make a few general comments on the Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3 that's before us this evening. The first one I would just like to make mention of is the size of it. It's quite sizeable, over \$16 million and I know the government is forced to expend some of this money, but it seems to be a rather large number to be dealing with, extraordinary funding for this. The one thing I really wanted to zero in on is the Dogrib Community Services Board and its operation. The fact that it's been running and operating a deficit for the past five out of seven years and it looks like we're in the process through this supp of bailing them out to the tune of over \$2 million. I know I've read somewhere that they are actually going to go in there and try to do an operational review or try to identify what the problems are or what the situation is there. Obviously, Madam Chair, something is wrong if five out of seven years they have been running up sizeable deficits. Can the Minister tell us what exactly and specifically is the government doing to address the situation out there? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. A review has been done in the area of the Dogrib Health and Community Services Board, and one of the areas that was brought to our attention was that there is a chronic under funding of the board, specifically in the area of ambulance services. That was one of the main areas that this bill goes to address. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. According to the numbers that I have and other Members have, the ambulance services debt would account for \$178,000 out of the \$2 million. I am wondering if the Minister can clarify those numbers for me. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The numbers that we have come up with are the accumulated debt over the years that have accrued and added to that as well as some of the administration, but Minister Miltenberger may have further details that he can provide to Members.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay. I am sorry, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If I could, maybe the Minister of Health and Social Services has those numbers, but I am wondering what the accumulated deficit up to March 31, 2004, in the amount of \$1.289 million; what makes up that number and how do we arrive at that number? If the Minister is saying that most of that is accrued ambulance costs, then can the Minister of Health and Social Services or the Finance Minister break that number down for us? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Again the years that the accumulation started to occur was as far back as 1999. The main area again was around ambulance service provision. For example in 1999-2000 there was an accumulated deficit there of \$510,000; in 2000-01, \$239,000; 2001-02, \$169,000; 2002-03, \$152,000; and 2003-04 another \$11,000, in direct regard to the services provided through ambulance. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If the DCSB has been running up accumulated deficits since 1999, why are we just dealing with that in 2005? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. There has been some discussion back and forth about their deficit situation and the Department of Health and Social Services did have a number of meetings with the Dogrib Community Services Board and, as a result of looking into it in more detail, this is the information that the Department of Health and Social Services has come forward with. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am quite concerned actually about this, in the fact that other boards that are out there that are operating look to this and they can see the fact that they have been running up operating deficits for a number of years and then by the stroke of a pen, through a supp, their entire accumulated deficit is gone. I think it is a pretty scary precedent to set, Madam Chairperson, that we can allow boards to operate, run up deficits and then come through a supp and get over \$2 million to just wipe out the deficit. It doesn't seem

right to me, Madam Chairperson, and I would like to ask the Minister what type of precedent are we setting ourselves up for in dealing with boards that we set up? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is not setting a precedent because the government has, in the past, also provided funding for boards that have been under funded or, in this case, because of ambulance services. But there have been times in the past where the government has put in extra funding once they have worked out the details with the Department of Health and Social Services. There isn't a precedent being set here. In this case it wasn't a matter of poor management, it was a fact that there was under funding for a service that was being provided in this area. The Minister of Health and Social Services may have further details in that area.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The Minister of FMBS, Mr. Roland, is correct that we have provided assistance in the past. We are currently doing work with operational reviews, because there are a number of boards that are struggling with their finances as well. It is not strictly an issue of poor management.

The Dogrib board was created in 1997 and, as already indicated, one of the biggest drivers of their deficit was the fact that there was never any funding for ambulance services. Rae is the only community that doesn't have an airport or have a way to get people to Stanton. They instituted an ambulance service that has, over time, built up a significant deficit. There have been other areas as well, as the Minister of FMBS has indicated, but we are working with other boards. For example, the Fort Smith board has a small deficit that they are working on, the Inuvik has a somewhat larger deficit that they are working on, as does Hay River. There are issues in all those areas that speak to costs that oftentimes the boards don't control. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I guess I will take back what I said about setting precedent, because I guess every time you look around we are having to bail out somebody or other, so this shouldn't really set a precedent then because it's just another bail out, Madam Chairperson.

The other thing I wanted to mention; I am little bit confused about how this is playing out. On one hand you have the Minister of FMB saying that most of the deficit goes back to the fact that they weren't funded for ambulance services. Yet because they have run up deficits in the past five out of seven years, we have gone in and done a review. What is it; if you can blame it on ambulance services and the fact that they are not funded for it, or is it some systemic problems that are in the organization that you have tried to flesh out? I am wondering if Members can actually get a copy of the review that was done of DCSB. Can we get a copy of this review and what it was meant to do? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. As the process would work, when a department comes forward for a supplementary request from FMB, if we feel there is enough information to approve, we would do that; if not, we would send them back or decline and request more information. In this particular case, the Minister did some work within the department and had a review done and the substantiation is what they brought forward. If the Minister is prepared to supply that information, then I guess we can go to Minister Miltenberger for that information.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would be happy to provide Social Programs with the background work that led us to this position.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Who else do I have on my list? The time is up for Mr. Ramsay. General comments. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Looking through the supplementary there are a lot of numbers there for fuel increase in all the departments. I want to ask the Minister, are we to expect this next year? It seems like with these numbers, someone wasn't paying attention to the pricing of fuel in the Territories and it seems like we got caught off guard. Is this going to be the same situation for next year? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With the area of the fuel price increases or the request for supplementary appropriation from a number of the departments is...From within FMB, when departments would come forward and they would request money up front for increasing their budgets based on the possibility of price increases, we would send them back and say come back with actuals, because the price of oil would be fluctuating too much.

This amount goes back to 2002. We feel that with this adjustment, we shouldn't have to come back with another request for this next year. However, if the prices of fuel continue to climb, there could be that necessity to come back for further requests for that. Our policy is that we build the budgets to not adjust them for forced growth until they could have the actual numbers, because of the volatility of the price itself. We feel with the adjustments and with the budget adjustments in the budget we just brought forward, that departments should be able to live within what has been appropriated. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, also in the opening comments, the Minister has indicated, in bold-point form, \$1.6 million for increases to compensation resulting from the re-evaluation of nursing and allied health care professions. Could the Minister further explain the \$1.6 million increase as a result of the re-evaluation of nursing and allied health care professionals? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, the Government of the Northwest Territories went under a major review of the job classifications so a job evaluation process was initiated back in 1998. In March of 2000, a grievance was filed by the UNW on behalf of about 42 nurses that were grieving that their job descriptions did not accurately reflect the duties that they were required to perform. With the work that we had started on that basis, we did a re-evaluation of their jobs and coming forward with the results of that and making the adjustments in the pay scale system, this is the impact of that work. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can the Minister tell me if this situation, this case is closed once and for all or are there other cases that haven't come forward for next year in terms of further increases to compensation regarding evaluation? Is that something we may expect? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The process we are involved in with our human resource system allows for individuals to appeal the classification that they are in and there are a few outstanding yet that may impact us. It is open for members of our workforce to appeal their classification and, depending on the outcome of those appeals, it could have some impact. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It may be hard for the Minister to crystal-ball; however, he does leave some questions for me. He says a few impacts; is it under \$500,000 or is it going to be another \$1 million? I know it is going to be difficult for him to answer but...I'm not too sure if I can get him to commit to a number in terms of the significance of the impacts for next year for this increase in compensation for these nurses. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It would be difficult. There are about 40 positions that are still under review and it all depends on the years of service, if retroactive payments are involved, the classification that they are in, if it is a community nurse, a whole lot of things come into play. It would be pretty hard to crystal-ball the possible outcomes. Some of it might be turned down and need very little adjustment, but what we did when the first grievance was filed by the UNW in January of the last year, we went into a review that resulted in about 472 positions being re-evaluated and almost half of those were assigned higher ratings, which resulted in just about 200 positions with higher ratings and that has had an impact and we have had to bring that forward. Going forward, it would be very difficult to crystal-ball that. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I appreciate the Minister's answers. Does this open us up to any other types of workers in the Northwest Territories, in terms of this type of work that you are doing with the

nurses in terms of compensation or re-evaluation? Are we open up to any other professional jobs, such as teachers or social workers that could also possibly look at a grievance process also? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The process, as it works, allows for all UNW and excluded employees to appeal, so there could be further appeals. Again, the initial job evaluation methodology that was used when the GNWT went to the Hay job evaluation process that we entered into, came up with a rating. Pay was adjusted on that basis and as a result of that there was a grievance filed on behalf of 42 nurses that triggered this going into action and the re-evaluation of the positions. Again, it is open to employees that feel that they are not getting a fair shake, they can grieve it and if successful that will have an impact on us in the future. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. One more question then I will be done with my general comments here. I will make a comment to the \$4 million for additional costs that recur for services at hospitals outside the Northwest Territories. Is this only to one hospital or is this to many hospitals across Canada? This is a huge number to pay for services that possibly could be done in the Northwest Territories.

I might be getting into some areas that maybe we cannot do here in the Territories, but that is a huge increase for costs that we are paying outside the Northwest Territories. Maybe if I can get the Minister to briefly explain to me why \$4 million are being spent for services outside the Territories for our people. Mahsi, Madam Chairperson.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. A large part of this increase is as a result of the increased usage of hospitals outside the Northwest Territories. Almost two-thirds or three-quarters of this, actually, is in the area of increased utilization. Approximately \$2.8 million was just the increased use, add another \$330,000 for the additional rate increase for the services that were charged by the Capital Health Authority, and then claims processed between 2003-04 and 2004-05 is about another \$800,000 or \$860,000. The biggest driver here is the actual increase in use of the hospital facilities outside the Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Ramsay, general comments.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a couple more questions that I would like to ask. The first one relates to some funding for the community of Ndilo, \$29,000 to plan and design a new subdivision. I have been down in Ndilo many times, and I am just wondering where exactly in the community of Ndilo are they planning on putting a subdivision. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has come forward with that. We know that it is for putting a plan together. I am not aware of the

actual detail of where in the community this site is being looked at. Maybe the Minister has that background information. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I could maybe get that response from the Minister of MACA in terms of where exactly in Ndilo the proposed subdivision is. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't have that information on me at this time. I don't know if the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs has that available at this time, but he may have that detail that he can provide to the Member. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Ndilo submitted a request for extraordinary funding for planning and designing a new subdivision. They have a serious issue in the community regarding accessing some funding and also to develop new lots. We don't have exact locations. At least I don't have that information tonight. That is all I have at this point. I could commit to getting further information. At this point, the money is earmarked and identified for planning and design of a new subdivision.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. When I said that I know the Premier is familiar with the community of Ndilo too, I am not familiar where there is an area you could actually put a subdivision because it is the end of Latham Island. I am wondering if the Minister can provide the information on where that new subdivision is going to go in Ndilo, if in fact it is Ndilo. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, I can't tell you exactly where the location of the subdivision is being planned for. This money is for planning and design. My information tells me that it is at the end of the island, and we are applying for extraordinary funding because Ndilo is unable to secure the financial resources through the regular funding process. We are going through this route to do the planning and design and create a new subdivision to open up properties or some lots for what we believe would be able to accommodate their needs for three years.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister of MACA state unequivocally that the subdivision is in fact in Ndilo proper? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. The Minister confirms yes, it is in Ndilo. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank the Minister for that. I wouldn't want to think that it

was somewhere else. The Minister knows where I am thinking of too. I think that is probably about all I had, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. General comments, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I understand there is some extra funding going to the Centre for Northern Families and also the Salvation Army for short-term needs for homeless individuals in the communities. Is that something that we are expecting every year? We certainly need that type of money in our communities. Is this the type of funding that is going to come up every year in the supps? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, as the process would work, the department comes forward with a request for money for either a new program or programs that they didn't have enough funds for, if the usage was too high. In this particular case, we have requested and there is work underway within the department to come up with an approach to deal with this. We are looking at, once this is developed, that it would become part of the business planning process, not being dealt with strictly through a supplementary appropriation process. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Yakeleya. General comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, detail. I will ask Members to please turn to page 5 of Bill 20. Executive operations expenditures, executive offices, special warrants, \$50,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Not previously authorized, \$496,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Total executive offices, special warrants, \$50,000, not previously authorized, \$496,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 6, Executive, Financial Management Board Secretariat, labour relations and compensation services, special warrants, zero, not previously authorized, \$323,000. Total for Financial Management Board Secretariat, not previously authorized, \$323,000. Total department, special warrants, \$50,000, not previously authorized, \$819,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Can I get an explanation from the Minister in terms of this supp here?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the transfer of the pay office from the Stanton Territorial Health Authority took place and moved into the Financial Management Board Secretariat. This is the money that goes along with that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Executive, operations expenditures, total department, special warrants, \$50,000, not previously authorized, \$819,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Finance, operations expenditures, treasury, not previously authorized, \$300,000. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. What does the Minister mean by doubtful accounts for property and fuel tax revenues? What are the doubtful accounts?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, in the area of doubtful accounts, within the Department of Finance, there is a built in reserve for accounts where we send out invoices on an annual basis. Once Municipal and Community Affairs has done their assessments, that comes over to us and we send out invoices on an annual basis around property taxes. As we realize through the year that the account isn't being paid and if it carries over to the next year, then we have to realize that account as unlikely to be paid. So we have to build in a reserve. This is an accounting exercise that we put in place.

The fuel tax revenues work somewhat differently. Fuel taxes are collected on a monthly basis from corporations. In this one particular case, we weren't able to secure payment for those fuel taxes before the company went out of business. We can't carry that on the books as revenue coming in because we doubt, in fact, that we will be able to receive that. That is what we do as well with property taxes. When we feel that we won't be able to collect on those taxes, it wouldn't be appropriate to continue to count them on the revenue side of the chart, so we put them onto the doubtful accounts. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: So, Madam Chair, the doubtful accounts on the property taxes, isn't that worked out with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in terms of some of the taxes or is it solely the responsibility of the GNWT in terms of...Are we telling some of the people in the communities and regions and here in Yellowknife that property taxes can be written off? Don't pay your bill because we could cover it anyway. I don't know what the message is here in terms of doubtful accounts. Just for clarification, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, when we put in an account into the doubtful accounts section, we do not stop from having that on the books and continuing to pursue payment. It is not a forgiveness. It is not a write-off. The debt stays there. We continue to go after it. It continues to accrue interest even. But we can't account for it in the revenue side because, if a company has gone out of business, we know that it probably won't get paid, or if they have gone into receivership or filed with the courts for protection, this is the same as with individuals when people are issued a property tax invoice and they haven't been paying it. We, at some point, have to recognize that it is doubtful that we will receive that. So we have to book it that way. This particular section deals with companies and corporations,

as well as communities in a general taxation area. For example, in Yellowknife, Inuvik and Norman Wells, those are municipal taxation authorities. They have their own avenue of going after the taxes and collecting the taxes and, in fact, going as far as going after the property and selling property if, in fact, they go beyond that.

This is for the general taxation area as well as the corporations and some of the filings that happen outside of the municipal taxation authorities. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. So \$300,000 is the request to restore the cash flow. For the total of this year, what was the total amount of doubtful accounts that was booked? I would just like to get a sense of how much over the forecast we are on this one. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The amount is in the area of \$2 million for doubtful accounts. For this year, it has been about \$500,000, but we have been able to, from within, eat about \$200,000, but feel that we cannot take the rest of this. That is why it has to be booked in. So I believe we are over the \$2 million mark. I think it is just over \$2 million. That isn't just one year; that is for as long as the taxes are in arrears. We do not write off the taxes that are in arrears. They continue to be booked and accumulate interest. So on an annual basis, for example, if we had 100 percent of taxpayers that were invoiced pay their taxes for this year, we would still have to make an account for some increase in that area because of the existing accounts that weren't paid off; they would accrue further interest. We would have to book that as well. The Property Taxation Act is very clear in that area so it continues to accrue interest even though it is put into the doubtful accounts area.

In fact, over the last probably five years, we have had remittance in taxes in the area of 95 percent when you look at it. For example, tax collected as of January 31, 2005, for the existing year taxes that were issued, we have about 91 percent of taxes being collected on the invoices issued. When we look back to the year 2000, the taxes that were issued, we have received about 95 percent of that in payment. For example, if we were at 91 percent for 2004, we continue to go after that source of taxes and people would continue to pay it down, and it would get accounted to the year it was issued. For example, in 2000, there may have been a 90 percent pay rate, but as they paid it down, it goes to that year. For example, in 2000, it has been 95 percent of collection rate. In 2001, it was the same thing, 95 percent. In 2002, same thing. In 2003-04, it has been about just over 91 percent. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. That is great. I have a much better idea of how that system works. To the \$300,000 before us here, I wouldn't expect the Minister to put out any names of individuals or corporations here before the House, but I am wondering whether...I think he mentioned there were potentially some corporate failures involved here. Could we have seen these coming and perhaps predicted that there may have been some default in taxes here? Was the department really caught by surprise by these particular

corporations or have they been on the radar screen? Should we have predicted it? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it would be very difficult for us to try and forecast if a company was struggling and surviving and continuing to make their payments or preparing to shut down and go into receivership. We are more in a reactionary mode when we become aware that a company has filed for protection or have left the North and are no longer doing business. In some cases, for example, in the fuel tax portion, we became aware of it when we did not receive the previous month's remuneration or payment on the fuel taxes and started making some calls. A cheque was then issued for the month after that and then in continuing to try to follow up on the previous month, by the time we got to it, they had shut the doors and we lost a couple more months on the fuel tax side. Again, for example, if a company purchases its bulk fuel from out of the Territories, and they come into the Territories, we still tax that and we go back and try to recover it. Again, on a monthly basis, they would pay us. But if they don't, because they haven't picked it up here, it is a little bit harder and we have to go after them for some money. In this case, we lost approximately three months I believe.

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

MR. VILLENEUVE: Thank you, Madam Chair. He answered my questions already. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. Very good. We are on page 7 of the bill, Finance, operations expenditures, treasury, not previously authorized, \$300,000, total department, \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 8, Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$241,000, total department, \$241,000. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Madam Chair, the Village of Fort Simpson has a number of \$42,000. Can the Minister explain to me in terms of where this \$42,000 is coming from?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, when the Village of Fort Simpson went to renew its water licence, the water board instructed that they buy a back-up generator for that operation. That wasn't accounted for when they had put their plans together. This is a result of having to meet the requirement for the water licence. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Are there any other communities that are going to require this type of back-up generator in terms of when they go for renewing their licence? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not aware of any myself. From this end, this was a one-

time situation. Unless the Minister is aware of what communities are about to run out of their licences and have to go for renewal. Again, some may already have that, so we're not sure of that. Right now, as we've gone forward with this one, this is a one-time situation. As you see it, we'd have to wait and see for every hearing, I guess, as to what may happen. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Surely the Minister could estimate in terms of the type of situation in the village of Fort Simpson to the other communities in the Northwest Territories that may be expiring on their water licence that could possibly be asked to provide some additional equipment to their water treatment plant, I suppose, so we could at least have some type of indication that we could be coming back for more supplementaries. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd have to ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs if he has that detail.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Madam Chair, in response to the Member's question, no, we don't anticipate having any other sewer lagoons requiring back-up power. Most of the sewer lagoons in the NWT, as the Member knows, don't have any power. The Fort Simpson system is a unique system. It's a treatment centre, a treatment process that requires power as part of the new water licence. It required a back-up generator that we hadn't anticipated and they hadn't built into the cost. So we had to go for an extraordinary funding request to accommodate that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I didn't think I was asking questions on the sewer lagoon. That's good to know about this. The other one is about Wrigley in terms of \$165,000 going into that community. Is there something that we also didn't anticipate in terms of these types of dollars for the community of Wrigley? Could I ask the Minister for some clarification on the \$165,000, Madam Chair?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, in the case of Wrigley, the contract that was let for delivery of water services was cancelled and the owner of the business had a unit that was his unit. When the community had to take over that water supply, they did not have a water truck so they had to go and get a water truck. That again was not accounted for in the budget process and was something that wasn't planned as the contract ended earlier than was anticipated. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope we have some short change on this because if we tie that water truck to the community in Wrigley and not let it go anywhere if the contract ever does expire with the community. On the other one is the Enterprise Settlement

Corporation which has \$50,000 on their line item. Can the Minister explain what that \$50,000 is about?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, as this came forward we were informed that through the Enterprise community with the increased traffic load with the heavy trucks they needed to be able to set up a marshalling area for all the equipment. That is something that was not part of their normal plan. So this came forward as a request to cover those costs for that development. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The marshalling area, could you explain that to me because I understand that...Is this some kind of land development or land for Enterprise? Are they seeking land for some development? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is for land development in the area of a staging site for trucks to either switch off their loads or change loads and be able to have their vehicles there away from the centre part of the community. It's broken down. Again, this is to put a plan together for the community and about \$37,000 of that is for a consultant, then \$13,000 to implement the plan. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Madam Chair, this land development staging site, I take it that other groups have been involved. Is Enterprise in the area in terms of going through some land claims settlement in the area that's being developed? That's a lot of area for a staging site. I want to ask that to the Minister. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is a result of the immediate impacts as a result of the development, the increased traffic load that's going through that area. Enterprise is right within a section and a junction of where a lot of trucks would travel and stop off a weigh scale station there. The community is feeling that impact at this point and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has granted their request for their land use plan in the area of their staging area. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Yakeleya, are you finished? You're good? Okay. I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Actually, I'll just wait until we get to page 13. That's where my question is at. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. We were on page 8, Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$241,000, total department, \$241,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 9, Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$81,000, total department, \$81,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 10, Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, program delivery support, not previously authorized, negative \$291,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Health services programs, not previously authorized, \$8.804 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 11, not previously authorized, supplementary health programs, \$1.883 million. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Sorry, Madam Chair. I was following the pages here and didn't quite get the break. I wanted to see if I could inquire into the additional costs for provision of hospital services from Alberta. This would be on page 10, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, thank you. Does the committee agree to let Mr. Braden ask a question from page 10? Nay? Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Braden. Alright, go ahead. At the chair's discretion...

---Interjection

MR. BRADEN: Madam Chair...

MS. LEE: Who's blushing?

MR. BRADEN: Thank you. Yes. Well, let's see if we can...okay. Madam Chair, we spent, according to the supplementary here, about 33 percent more than forecast with the Capital Health Authority of Alberta due to increased utilization and an increase in rates. This is a considerable jump from forecast. The information says that the approved budget was \$12 million, the total projected costs for this year are \$16 million, so we have a shortfall of \$4 million. I'm wondering if the Minister could give a bit of detail on the increased utilization, as well as the jump in rates. Thank you very much.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe I'll have the Minister of Health and Social Services make that response in this area. As I explained earlier, the increased actual usage of what services are provided out of territory and some of those increases in the claims that were processed. For further detail, Mr. Miltenberger can give that detail. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, as the Minister previously indicated, the utilization rates increased to the tune of about \$2.8 million. There's a four percent rate increase of about \$331,000. Then there was some claims processed from 2003-04 for \$865,000. I could share with the Members, if they're interested, the summary of costs by diagnosis, by summary of claims by diagnosis, and by summary of average costs by diagnosis, if that's of interest. I'd also point out that we've also been looking at our costs. Alberta has been looking at our use of their facilities and I've indicated to committee previously that one of the things

we're doing, it's been pointed out to us in our review, that we were shipping people south that could have been serviced in Yellowknife first, at Stanton, to the tune of anywhere between 1,000 and 1,800 bed days. We've taken steps in the last number of months to make sure that we have a referral process that goes through and is coordinated out of Stanton to make sure that we use our northern services first, which we hope and anticipate will reduce some of our southern costs. All these programs are demand driven, so if there's increased usage and there's a requirement to send them south, we do that and then we come back. When we can demonstrate the cost then we come back looking for the extra money. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay, thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the information and, yes, we have had a fairly good exchange about this as committee. From what I picked up on this, the department has recognized and taken action to make better utilization of our own facilities here at Stanton and see if we can do something, and I hope something quite significant, about reducing what the Minister said is potentially as many as 1,800 bed days that we did not need to send to Capital Health but, of course, ended up paying for. The Minister mentioned that this has been in effect for some months now. I'm wondering if Mr. Miltenberger would have some indication for committee if we are indeed making a difference on that. Are we better coordinating among our different health authorities? Are we reducing the cost incurred at Capital Health? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, it's too early for us to determine the success but, yes, the instruction has been issued already. The processes are in place with the authorities in terms of referrals. We have it set up where they work through Stanton. So the medevacs and medical travel are coordinated. We've taken the steps and we're monitoring, of course, the usage and the cost. I'll be able to report to committee, probably in the fall when we come back to start reviewing business plans, where we are and what the numbers are telling us.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister also agreed that we've entered into a new agreement now with the Capital Health Authority at a 4.8 percent rate increase. What kind of term is there on this agreement, Madam Chair?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We've had a contract with Capital Health now for many years. We did a major renewal a couple years ago and there are extension clauses built in, but we've had an arrangement now for many years with Capital Health as our nearest source of that kind of tertiary level service and specialized service. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: So there is no fixed term and renewal contract on this. Is it sort of at pleasure then? How does that work? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Chair, we do have a contract and we do have in there clauses that allow for cost increases for things like the forced growth items that we experience as well. We negotiate a cost and we've changed how we negotiate. I believe it's a five-year term, but I'll have to double-check that. I know it has clauses built in that reflect the increased cost of business. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Further on that page, Madam Chair, were increases for compensation after we re-evaluated nursing and health care profession jobs to the tune of about \$1.6 million. I'm wondering if this process has essentially now been concluded, Mr. Chairman, and are there any other residuals we might anticipate as a result of this re-evaluation. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the process hasn't concluded, so as things continue to move on we'll be able to provide further updates. My information is that this process is still ongoing. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Indeed I think committee is familiar with the process. It's fairly complex and a big piece of work. I guess I'm wondering, should we anticipate further financial consequences or is most of the work remaining of a procedural nature? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there could be further financial implications as we go forward. It again all depends on the final outcomes of the processes in place. So there is that that we could be coming forward for further requests in the future. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Braden. Health services programs, not previously authorized, \$8.804 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 11, supplementary health programs, not previously authorized, \$1.883 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Community health programs, not previously authorized, \$681,000. Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this area and in a couple of other programs in pages yet to come I see a very welcome expenditure here for homelessness and people encountering potentially emergency situations and we are putting assets at the disposal of communities large and small. By my math, there is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$376,000 spread amongst a couple of

different departments. Mr. Chairman, while I see this, as I said, as a very welcome response and recognition to a situation out there on our streets, I'm wondering if this is potentially the beginning of creating another realm in our social programs and safety net agenda, Mr. Chairman. I haven't seen anything framed up quite this way before. Are we expanding or potentially taking on a new prerogative here, a new mandate as regards the response to homelessness? Is there generally a policy basis that supports this? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the government has always had a priority around housing. The specific issue about the homelessness issue is one that we've started to address through this process and maybe we can have the Minister responsible for the homeless, Mr. Miltenberger, give some more detail. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Minister has laid out the basic facts very clearly. I've been tasked, as the lead Minister, to deal with the homelessness issue and I'm also the chair of the social envelope Ministers and we collaboratively got together to look at how we're going to deal with this issue, which is quite complex. Our initial focus was to deal with what they call absolute homelessness for the coming winter, which was those folks who don't have accommodations at all, a warm place to sleep at night. At the same time, the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation is working on the longer-term issue of relative homelessness, those that are inadequately housed or don't have appropriate housing. What we've asked for this winter is the funds to tide us over working with local organizations in Yellowknife and in the communities, recognizing that there's a need to transport people, recognizing that there's a need in the small communities, as well as to increase the capacity of the Salvation Army and the YWCA once again to get us through the winter. We've also got some short-term funding to have some of the actual staff resources to work to pull together the broader plan and the intention would be to have further work with homelessness built into the business planning process of the affected departments, which is Health and Social Services, the Housing Corporation, Education, Culture and Employment, and Municipal and Community Affairs has been at the table, as well.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's what I'm trying to get a handle on. What I'm hearing is through the social programs Minister you've identified a problem and you're taking what appears to be some really proactive action on it. Is this something that through the course of the year you'll be able to come back to, say Social Programs committee, and see where to go on this? I guess, Mr. Chairman, if we've identified a problem and we're starting to address it how are we going to be able to manage it? Or is this just the start of another social dependency that even though we recognized it for as serious a problem as it is, is it going to be something that could potentially get away on us? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, maybe the Minister responsible, Mr. Miltenberger, could give some detail on that.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this is the start of a collaborative effort within government, many departments to coordinate a response because there is overlap and this is a complex issue. If you keep in mind the United Nations definition where they distinguish between absolute homelessness and relative homelessness, absolute homelessness is somewhat more concrete and you can deal with the fact that people have no houses to stay in on a short-term basis. The longer term more difficult issue that has a tremendous connection in a host of areas is the issue of relative homelessness. Inadequate housing in communities ties into the housing strategy where we've already identified 3,000 housing units short and those types of things. So, yes, we intend to come forward with a coordinated plan. We're going to try to make sure we can deal on an ongoing basis with absolute homelessness so that people don't freeze to death in the winters. In the longer term it's going to be to come up with a plan or better coordinate the work, much of which is already underway to deal with the issue of relative homelessness. Struggling with such things as CMHC bowing out of the housing market over the next few years and the Assembly has already instructed the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to come back with a plan. That's going to tie into homelessness as well. So there's a lot of work already underway on this, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Okay. Thank you. That's a very helpful explanation. Just finally on this matter, does the Minister anticipate that the money requested here, will this take us to the end of March, to the end of the fiscal year, or is the potential that we will have to find some more money to finish up this fiscal year?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with this plan that's been put in place we feel that is enough money to carry us through the duration of this first phase. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you, Mr. Roland. Mr. Braden. Thank you. Community health programs, not previously authorized, \$681,000. Ms. Lee.

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have questions about absolute homelessness. Could I ask the Minister if this absolute homelessness covers situations like the ones that Centre for Northern Families are experiencing or situations that the centre has been advocating about, which is that the families on low-cost housing or in public housing could get evicted for whatever reason and then they have debt or outstanding balance or something and then they can't...so they get evicted out of public housing and then they're not funded for any more than \$32 to get into the private market, which effectively makes them completely homeless. Is that the kind of families who could qualify for this kind of program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, once again, for that detail on absolute homelessness to relative homelessness, I go to Mr. Miltenberger, please.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the money that was allocated, some went to fund additional beds at the Centre for Northern Families, as well as the Salvation Army, to get us over the winter months.

The Member raises an interesting conundrum, as it were, or dilemma that we have as a government. As she has indicated, for whatever reasons, families can be without housing because they are in arrears or they have been evicted. Then it has become a homelessness or child welfare issue. So we have some short-term funding to get us over the winter in Yellowknife with northern families in the Salvation Army. The longer-term plan is to sort how we do business as a government, so that we are coordinated as a government in dealing with this complex issue. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: I don't think I got the answer as to whether those kinds of families are able to get some assistance under this program. Maybe I could ask in another way. Under this program, the money you have allocated here, can the families or whoever are absolutely homeless, do they have to go to the Centre for Northern Families or Salvation Army? Is that the only way they can access this help? Under this program, does the government or department or whoever is delivering the program, do they rent private space in private apartments if there is overflow of people who are in need or do we just book so many bed nights at these centres? I just want to know how this actually gets implemented and how the people get served. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, in Yellowknife, extra funding has been provided to fund 20 additional beds, 10 at the Centre for Northern Families and 10 at the Salvation Army. This is for individuals and/or families for the winter months. In addition, through the Housing Corporation, they have worked with the YWCA to provide three additional units at the YWCA to address the needs of homeless individuals and families for what is left of the winter months. That's been in place for the winter. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I don't know if I can ask it in any other way. Is the Minister of Health and Social Services aware, and the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation and the Minister of income support, that there are dozens and dozens of families in Yellowknife who are homeless because they can't get into public housing? They can only get \$32 even if they find other housing. There is no way you can find lodging for that money. The Centre for Northern Families is really for certain women. I don't think you can have kids there. The YWCA has a huge line-up. The Salvation Army is only for

men. Where do families who don't get anywhere go? I guess they have to go to income support. Does this cover those families who are caught in this maze of three or four different programs?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I can tell the Member is this additional funding has been put in. I haven't been made aware if this is deemed insufficient or there is a further crisis that's not going to be able to be handled in the short term. So I can't answer the Member in any greater detail than I have already given her in terms of the current status or the waiting lists. My information is we have moved ahead on this and the money has been put to good use by the community of Yellowknife. It's also been used to a certain extent in other communities that have required it on a case-by-case basis.

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

MS. LEE: The last question, Mr. Chairman, before we leave the Department of Health and Social Services; we are almost close to leaving this session. I know the Minister was waiting to hear from the federal government as to what is happening with the federal money that we want approved. Is there anything this Minister could advise this House?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. That is not part of the bill, but if the Minister would like to respond, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is an e-mail in my in basket upstairs that I haven't had a chance to look at, but apparently we've got the first specific word from the federal government on the portion of money as it applies to waiting times. I just noticed it this morning. It's fairly long and I haven't had a chance to look at it, but that's the one piece so far that they have agreed to. This is on the Canada health transfer side. Thank you.

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

MS. LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps he could tell us more about that tomorrow if there is any news to report.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Thank you. Community health programs, not previously authorized, \$681,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, not previously authorized, \$11.077 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 12, Justice, operations expenditures, services to government, not previously authorized, \$105,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Law enforcement, not previously authorized, \$217,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Community justice and corrections, not previously authorized, \$1.421 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Registries and court services, not previously authorized, \$12,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.755 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 13, NWT Housing Corporation, operations expenditures, NWT Housing Corporation, not previously authorized, \$789,000. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few questions with regard to budgeting for fuel prices. I am a bit concerned about this for a number of reasons. The figure just on increases alone in this supp is \$2.22 million and that's just on increases. If that is just on increases alone, does the Minister of FMB have any idea of what the government spends on an annual basis in terms of fuel? How is this budgeted for in the document that we just approved yesterday? What do they base their assumptions on? Is it the gas prices a year ago? How do they do that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, this result is coming to us because we have, in a number of past years, told departments that they needed to come back with actual costs versus that of doing some forecasting. Budgets are built on an actual price as we prepare the budgets. As an example, the letters go out to departments in June to start preparing their budgets. They would build their information on the available cost of the day and they would also come forward and ask for forced growth and that could include areas such as fuel and electrical costs. They would review those within FMB and FMBS and at times we would tell them, because the volatility of the market was so much, we would rather just deal with it after the fact because of the prices jumping. In this case, we have seen the price of crude oil increase about 31 percent since 2002. That's why we are seeing this come forward in this way. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The sum of \$2.2 million; what period of time does that represent? Does that represent an entire calendar year or a portion of a calendar year? How does that work, Mr. Chairman?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The request for the \$2.2 million is to cover the 2004-05 year. As I stated earlier, when departments came in with the last budget request, we denied forced growth in these areas until we could substantiate if the prices would stay as high as they were going and that's why we see this coming forward. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the Minister know what the GNWT spends on an annual basis in terms of fuel? What do we spend on an annual basis for everything?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have that detail with me at this time. I can try to collect that information and provide it. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: I can wait for that detail. I am trying to understand it from a budgeting perspective on how it all works. Some departments budget it in a different way too. So if in a year you saw a 10 percent decrease, let's pray that it happens, in the price of fuel, how is the government going to show that? Are we going to be expecting departments to give back hundreds of thousands of dollars because you didn't need to spend it on fuel or will you find other places to spend it? That's all I am getting at, Mr. Chairman.

AN HON. MEMBER: Good question.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, as we approve the budgets and the budget lines and the departments request an increase for a specific forced growth issue such as fuel, and if the price, for whatever reason, comes in lower than was anticipated, then there would be a surplus in that budget and it would come back to general revenue. That would be the practice. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think Mr. Ramsay has raised a flag on many of the same concerns or issues that I had with this. I am not going to object to these. This is a consequence of running our government as much as any businessperson or homeowner faces a consequence of keeping the fuel tank topped up.

I guess one area that I might ask about and I hope I am not duplicating something Mr. Ramsay has asked about, but are we trying to contract or buy forward with any of our fuel supplies, for any of our communities or major departments or do we more or less buy the fuel as and when needed at whatever the market rate might be?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we've gone through the Department of Public Works and Services and looked at the area of POL, we would be impacted by the time we went out for resupply to the communities. That is broken down into two areas. One is by ice road and one is by barge system. So at that time, when the contracts are issued, we would have to look at the prices then and make adjustments if we found that the prices had gone up higher than we had anticipated.

For this fiscal year, we feel that we've done pretty good and there shouldn't be much of a change. I believe we have just issued the contract for resupply for winter roads and are waiting to see the final numbers on that. What I am told in the area of POL, that we should be coming out in a pretty good fashion for the ending of the 2004-05 fiscal year. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: That's good news on the small community side where there is a one-shot resupply window.

The larger communities, I would anticipate, overall would account for a much larger chunk and here, Mr. Chairman, I am looking at the needs of our big infrastructures; schools, airports, water treatment facilities and things like that. Here is where again, are we knowing what our annual volumes are fairly accurate? Are we taking advantage of our volume, if you will, and using every possible leverage to buy ahead and get a good price and look things in? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we enter into the area of communities that have a private sector, we do not bulk purchase or purchase futures, is one way of looking at it. It's pay as you go. When you get that monthly bill from the supplier, we would pay the invoices. So in the larger communities, where there is a private sector, it's a pay-as-you-go area. We realize the cost to the government. One of the areas we have had to look at and plan to bring together is a broad energy strategy that will take in the concerns raised around this area when it comes to the supply of power, as well as supply of fuel for our facilities. As we are aware, in all communities, private as well as the communities where the service is by POL, government departments pay full cost. It's not subsidized. So we would pay full cost of the supply of the fuel in that community. It's something we are going to have to begin to deal with as we begin to see the prices of our energy continue to climb. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Chairman, I guess I am surprised, quite surprised, if I hear the Minister right that we make no attempt whatsoever to get the best deal we can from suppliers where there is a competitive private market. Did I hear that right?

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, when we had the Department of Public Works and Services issuing contracts on behalf of all departments within a community, there used to be that opportunity. But as things went to user-pay/user-see, boards would enter into their own contracts. Some boards may enter into contracts to supply fuel, for example, on an annual basis and maybe they will cut a deal, but we are quite fragmented in that area now as we have gone away from the previous contracts that used to be issued and we try to secure the service in bulk. It's something as we go forward we are going to have to wrestle with as a government. Thank you.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't press this any further on this agenda tonight, Mr. Chairman. I have learned something that I certainly intend to carry into committee's business. The GNWT should use every advantage that we can to get good value for the taxpayers' dollar. We have every right to use the competitive marketplace to our advantage and the government, in many ways, is a major supplier and consumer of services. One, for instance, is in the rental

market, Mr. Chairman. I believe the Yellowknife Housing Authority has something like 600 units under lease and yet I wonder to what extent do we use our buying power as a large tenant to get good deals. It's in that context that I fully intend to see what our government could do to really press the case and go out there and get a better deal. I don't have any questions, but I have learned something here tonight. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Braden. NWT Housing Corporation. not previously authorized, \$789,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Total department, not previously authorized, \$789,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, advanced education and careers, not previously authorized \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Education, Culture and Employment. not previously authorized, \$497,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Total department, not previously authorized, \$597,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Page 15, Transportation. operations expenditures, airports, not previously authorized, \$352,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Highways, not previously authorized, \$570,000. There is a motion. Mr. Roland.

Committee Motion 41-15(3) To Add \$311,000 To The Highways Activity In Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005, Carried

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move a motion under Transportation, highways, operation expenditures. I move that \$311,000 be added to the actively "Highways" under the Department of Transportation operations expenditures, not previously authorized, on page 15, for the Mackenzie Valley winter road. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Roland. The motion is just being handed out, Mr. Roland. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just wondering if the Minister could perhaps give us a bit of a better breakdown of what the additional \$311,000 is for. All that it states here is the Mackenzie Valley winter road; it doesn't have any detail of what the expenditure is for.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has come around as a result of extending the highway season for two more weeks, plus the activity on the winter road up the Mackenzie Valley has added a lot of extra maintenance that needs to be done on that area. The increased traffic as well as the extending of the season has caused the department to come in for this request. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is this something that the department would anticipate occurring on an annual basis going forward, or is this just a one time thing? Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is seen as an extension. From time to time there may be requests, but the normal closure is set for March 15th of the year; that is set on an annual basis. At this time the request has been made to extend the season to April 1st. We feel that the cost that would be incurred for that portion of extending the season is in the area of \$142,000 for the additional work that is required because of the increased usage for the development that is happening in that area. When you look at the increased maintenance cycles, the upgrading of the snow fills in some of the areas, when we look at the crossings and grader time in those areas, we are looking at about another \$169,000 for the season. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not debating the expenditure. Given the fact that it is going to extend the highway two more weeks, I think it is probably money well spent. I would just like to see it maybe being more of a permanent fixture and the fact that maybe the Department of Transportation budgets for it and tries to get the road extended until April 1st next year and the years going forward because of all the activity that is happening in the region. That would be my suggestion. Thank you.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an area whether it comes to the ferry service provided at river crossings, as well as winter roads. One of the things that the department is tasked to do is to operate as efficiently as possible. We find that setting the date is one of the better ways of doing that. There is always pressure to extend the season, if, for example, in the fall we have an unusually warm fall, there is a request from the trucking industry to keep those in operation for longer so that they can get the last loads up, as well with the winter road season. If we have a cooler spring as well as increased activity, there is a request to push that. It is something that we will have to play by ear, depending on seasons; and in fact if in this case if we find that there is an unusually warm spring that may impact on how long we can try to keep this open. Thank you.

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

MR. RAMSAY: That is good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Next I have Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to confirm that this request is essentially a response of overwhelming popularity to try and keep the winter road open for as long as we can. In other words, Mr. Chairman, this is not driven by an unusually long spell of bad weather when the road was closed, a lot of overflow

or something that cuts into the already planned item, we are just extending it because people like the road connecting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I stated earlier, there are two factors that add up to the \$311,000. One is the increased usage has caused more work to be done, increased the cycles of maintenance on the road, as well as extending it for the extra two weeks because of the increased activity in the region. So there are the two factors to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Question is being called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you. Highways, not previously authorized, a new total here of \$881,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Ferries, not previously authorized, \$147,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.380 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Page 16, Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, operations expenditures, forest management, not previously authorized, \$35,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Total department, not previously authorized, \$35,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Menicoche): Page 17, Executive, capital investment expenditures, Financial Management Board Secretariat, general accounting, not previously authorized, negative \$135,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total for Financial Management Board Secretariat, not previously authorized, negative \$135,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$135,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 18, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, capital investment expenditures, resource management and economic development, not previously authorized, \$135,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Total department, not previously authorized, \$135,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): We will stand down the clauses and deal first with the schedule on page 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 3, schedule, supplementary amounts appropriated for the 2004-05 fiscal year, part 1, vote 1, operations expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for operations expenditures, \$16.813 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Page 2, vote 2, capital investment expenditures, total supplementary appropriation for capital investment expenditures, total supplementary appropriation, \$16.813 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Mr. Roland.

Committee Motion 42-15(3) To Amend The Schedule To Bill 20 To Increase The Supplementary Appropriation By \$311,000, Carried

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have a motion to move. I move that the schedule to Bill 20 be amended to

(a) increase by \$311,000 the supplementary appropriation amount set out in part 1 item 10, "Transportation", by

(i) striking out "\$1,069,000" and substituting "\$1,380,000" in the column entitled "operations excluding amortization", and

(ii) striking out "\$1,069,000" and substituting "\$1,380,000" in the column entitled "supplementary appropriation by item";

(b) increase by \$311,000 the amount set out in part 1 as the "total supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures", by striking out "\$16,813,000" and substituting "\$17,124,000";

(c) increase by \$311,000 the amount set out at the end of the schedule as the "total supplementary appropriation", by striking out "\$16,813,000" and substituting "\$17,124,000".

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is in order. 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

To the schedule, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Now we will proceed clause by clause. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 4.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 5.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 6.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Clause 7.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): To the preamble.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): To the bill as a whole, as amended.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Does committee agree that Bill 20 is ready for third reading, as amended?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): Bill 20 is now ready for third reading, as amended. At this time I would like to thank Minister Roland and Mr. Voytilla. Thanks a lot. Sergeant-at-Arms.

---Applause

What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chair, I move that we report progress.

AN HON. MEMBER: Hear! Hear!

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Pokiak): The motion is in order. It's not debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

I will now rise to report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please? Mr. Pokiak.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. POKIAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act, and Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005, and would like to report progress with seven motions being adopted, and that Bill 17 and Bill 20 are ready for third reading, as amended. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Do I have a seconder? The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Roland. There is a motion on the floor. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Finance Minister, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 21: THIRD READING OF BILLS

Bill 21: An Act To Amend The Public Service Act

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for

Mackenzie Delta, that Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act, be read for the third time. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 21 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of bills. The honourable Finance Minister, Minister Roland.

Bill 19: Appropriation Act, 2005-2006

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Bill 19, Appropriation Act, 2005-2006, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 19 has had third reading. Item 21, third reading of Bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, March 10th, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
12. Tabling of Documents
13. Notices of Motion
14. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
15. Motions
 - Motion 31, Performance Audit of the Workers' Compensation Board
16. First Reading of Bills
17. Second Reading of Bills
18. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Committee Report 12-15(3), Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures Report on the Review of the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Administration of the 2003 General Election
19. Report of Committee of the Whole
20. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 17, Modernization of Benefits and Obligations Act
- Bill 20, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 3, 2004-2005

21. Prorogation

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 10, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:31 p.m.