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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2001

Members Present

Honourable Roger Allen, Honourable Jim Antoine, Mr. Bell, Mr. Braden, Mr. Delorey, Mr. Dent, Honourable Jane Groenewegen, Honourable Joe Handley, Mr. Krutko, Mr. Lafferty, Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. McLeod, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Nitah, Mr. Roland, Honourable Vince Steen, Honourable Tony Whitford.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

-- Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Tony Whitford): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Please be seated. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 15-14(4): Minister Absent From the House

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jake Ootes will be absent from the House today to attend a meeting with the Honourable Jane Stewart in Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Kakfwi. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister Antoine.

Minister's Statement 16-14(4): Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and Aboriginal Leaders Process

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during our last session, on the occasion of a visit by Dwight Dorey, President of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, I made a statement about this government's work with the national aboriginal organizations.

In that statement I outlined how we have participated with the other territories, the provinces, the federal government and the national aboriginal organizations to establish an ongoing process for regular meetings of Ministers and aboriginal leaders, and to cooperatively undertake practical initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I also committed that I would update the Members of this House and the public after I had met again with my colleagues. It is my pleasure to do so today.

The latest meeting of the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs with the leaders of the five national aboriginal organizations occurred on May 10th and 11th in Winnipeg.

At the meeting, we reviewed and endorsed a report entitled Strengthening Aboriginal Participation in the Economy. The report outlines the barriers and challenges to aboriginal involvement in the economy. It reviews the opportunities for federal, provincial and territorial governments, as well as those for aboriginal communities, institutions and governments; and it focuses on the need for engaging the private sector. The report

speaks to the importance of natural resource development to aboriginal participation in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, later today it will be my pleasure to table this report in the House. The next steps for this report will be the development of a communication plan, as well as an implementation plan to select and act on options we identified for immediate initiatives. For instance, we will now consider presenting the report to other multilateral and multi-sectoral national forums, such as meetings of federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for other portfolios. We will also look at ways to engage the private sector through conferences with business leaders and by examining options for recognizing and celebrating aboriginal entrepreneurial accomplishments.

I am also pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that during our Winnipeg meeting, in addition to dealing with the report, Ministers and leaders committed to a National Aboriginal Youth Conference to be held in Edmonton from October 26th to 28th. The conference represents the priority and importance we as Ministers and leaders wish to put on aboriginal youth issues. The conference is our opportunity to receive direct input from young aboriginal people into our work -- particularly the National Aboriginal Youth Strategy we endorsed in 1999 and upon which I have reported previously to this House.

Mr. Speaker, Government of the Northwest Territories involvement with the other jurisdictions and the aboriginal organizations in this multilateral, collaborative process is an important aspect of playing our role on the national political stage. Primarily, however, it represents our continuing commitment to help others bring national awareness to aboriginal issues. I believe that NWT people have much to offer our brothers and sisters throughout this country, and I look forward to keeping the Members and the public apprised of our activities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Minister Antoine. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Minister's Statement 17-14(4): Canadian Foster Family Symposium – Fostering Our Future

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Towards A Better Tomorrow, we state that in order to support our overall vision, we will make "self-reliant individuals, families and communities working with governments towards improving social well-being" a priority. This means supporting caregivers and focusing on how best to meet the needs of people in our society who need assistance. We are fortunate to have a number of organizations in the NWT working in partnership with us on this.

On that note, I am pleased to advise that the Yellowknife Foster Family Association hosted the Canadian Foster Parents Symposium 'Fostering Our Future' for foster parents and child welfare professionals June 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The symposium allowed delegates from across Canada to share information on best practices in fostering. The NWT had the honour of being the first northern territory to host this conference.

Mr. Speaker, the agenda was filled with learning opportunities. Information on PRIDE (which stands for Parent Resource Information Development and Education Training) was shared at this conference. The 'Looking After Children' accountability tool currently being piloted by three boards in the NWT was also discussed. As well, information on specific conditions such as FAE/FAS, ADD and other therapeutic issues was provided. Workshops on self-care, safeguarding, the need for cultural awareness and input from the client were held. As you can see, there were many learning and sharing opportunities available at this conference.

The Yellowknife Foster Family Association worked hard over the past year to organize this conference, which was attended by over 130 foster parents and professionals from across Canada, including 93 from the NWT. I would like to commend the Yellowknife Foster Family Association for their hard work and dedication to make this conference a reality, and for their 10 years of service and support to foster families in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, community based foster care is the backbone that keeps children and youth safe when their family cannot provide for their needs. In the Northwest Territories, there are foster homes in most communities. Foster parents encounter many challenges, but continue each year to provide support to our children and youth in need.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would once again like to congratulate the Yellowknife Foster Family Association on their ten years of service, and along with all foster families in the NWT, thank them for their labour of love in caring for children.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Minister Steen.

Minister's Statement 18-14(4): Development of New Impaired Driving Initiatives

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Transportation, I wish to inform the Legislative Assembly that the Departments of Transportation and Justice have been working intensively on preparing new, tighter legislation to deal with impaired driving in the Northwest Territories.

New legislation is required to establish an administrative procedure that allows enforcement officers to deal promptly with people who continue to endanger the lives of others by driving motor vehicles while impaired. At the same time, the new legislation must respect the rights of an individual to fair treatment and due process under our system of justice.

Other Canadian jurisdictions have been challenged in their attempts to create an effective environment that penalizes

those drivers who disregard the law and continue to drive while impaired. New legislation for the Northwest Territories must be sound and must achieve the result for which it is intended; making our roads and highways safer for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, I want to confirm with the Assembly my commitment to bringing forward tighter impaired driving legislation for its deliberation. I am equally committed to good legislation that can withstand the scrutiny of the courts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement on Birthday Greetings to Speaker Whitford

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a Member in this House is marking a special day today, a birthday. This special birthday is his 60th, making him an elder, certainly a most respected elder.

Mr. Speaker, this person was born in Fort Smith on June 11, 1941. He was raised in Fort Smith and worked on the tugboats that moved barges in and out of Fort Smith until he was 17. He travelled on one of those tugs to Yellowknife in the late 50s and decided to stay here and enrol in Sir John Franklin High School, becoming a resident of Akaitcho Hall.

After completing high school, he became a mechanic and returned to Fort Smith to work, where he met his future wife, Elaine, who was a social worker in town. I note that his wife is in the gallery with us today, Mr. Speaker. They have been married for over 30 years.

He worked as a member of the town council in Fort Smith, which was his first introduction to politics in the North. After their marriage, he and his wife moved out to Taltson River Dam, where he worked as a diesel mechanic. During this time, they had three sons: Warren, Blair and Ian, all of whom I note are in the gallery today, Mr. Speaker.

In the 1970s, he decided to return to school by attending the University of Calgary and he completed a degree in social work. I must say that his abilities in counselling are often called upon in this House. After completing his degree, he and his family moved to Yellowknife in the late 1970s. For a while, this person worked as the executive assistant to the then-commissioner John Parker.

In 1988, he was first elected to the Legislative Assembly as the Member for Yellowknife South in a by-election. Mr. Speaker, that was a particularly memorable by-election for myself, seeing as I came in a distant second. You might say this Member kicked my...

-- Laughter

He returned to office in 1991 in the 12th Assembly and served as the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Prior to his election as the Member for Kam Lake in 1999, he was the executive assistant to the then-NWT and now Nunavut

Commissioner, Helen Masagak. He was also the Sergeant-at-Arms for the Assembly for two years.

Mr. Speaker, this person has an extensive history of community work, including being a long-term member of the Rotary Club. He is particularly noted for his involvement in preparing the dog track during the days the Rotary Club was looking after the dog derby, and he has continued that work with the new organization.

He is a notary public, a marriage commissioner, and is well known as a volunteer auctioneer and fundraiser. This person is often seen attending the movies with his wife. Now that he qualifies for the seniors' discount, I am sure that we will see him on days of the week other than Tuesday.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Dent, the time for your Member's statement has expired.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank goodness the Speaker cannot say nay to this request, but I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement -- an important statement, I must admit. Are there any nays? There being no nays, Mr. Dent, you may conclude your statement.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this person was elected as Speaker of our 14th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories on January 17, 2000. Mr. Speaker, his wife Elaine's birthday was yesterday, so Happy Birthday to Mrs. Whitford. Family and friends gathered for brunch yesterday to celebrate for both of them.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that there is a rumour that he was anxious, this person, to receive a new vehicle, as his current one is on its last legs. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, he did not receive any new keys yesterday, although I have heard he did receive many great gifts. Mr. Speaker, there will be a celebration at the break this afternoon, but no, Mr. Speaker, there is no point in digging through the cake: there are no keys in this one either.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand here today and, on behalf of all of the Members and staff of the Legislative Assembly, offer you Happy Birthday greetings.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. I do not know where you got all of that information, but it is certainly accurate. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Member's Statement on NWT Literacy Council Story Sack Display and Bishop Sperry's Book Release

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to address the Assembly today on the aspect of storytelling. It is something that we in this Assembly try to do. We spin the odd tall tale, and the odd fantasy sometimes, but there are a couple of events that have recently happened that I would like to draw attention to.

As you entered the Legislative Assembly through the Great Hall, many of us would have seen one very interesting and very

innovative aspect of storytelling, and this relates very much, Mr. Speaker, to our concern and belief in literacy and capacity building in the Northwest Territories.

I speak of a display set up by the Northwest Territories Literacy Council. It is called the Story Sack display. It is a hands-on reading activity that started in Great Britain and has spread around the world. Each story sack is a large cloth bag containing a good children's book, toys, puppets and other child-friendly items that parents can use to make the book come alive.

With this project, Mr. Speaker, the Literacy Council hopes that too often, for parents who have trouble reading and do not often read with their kids, can get one of these story sacks and get right into the enjoyment of discovering and reading books together with their children.

The Literacy Council has established 20 of these projects in Yellowknife and hope to spin this out more into the communities. Two generous businesses, the Yellowknife Book Cellar and Northland Utilities, have helped to make this a success.

While on the subject of storytelling, Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I recognize the 50 years of outstanding service of the Third Annual Bishop of the Arctic, John Sperry, to the people of the Northwest Territories and the Kitikmeot region. John Sperry's book, *Igloo Dwellers Were My Church*, was presented to Yellowknifers this weekend at the Baker's Centre. The book was designed by Outcrop Communications, a northern company, and it chronicles his stories and outstanding photographs of the traditional life of the central Arctic Inuit from the 1950s and 1960s while he served as a missionary.

This is a first-hand perspective of someone intimately involved in the transition of Inuit lifestyles from nomadic to community life. John Sperry became so proficient in the local language that he translated the New Testament, the Book of Common Prayer, and more than 200 hymns into...

MR. SPEAKER: The time for your Member's statement has expired, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, colleagues. Indeed, along with translations of the New Testament, the Book of Common Prayer, and more than 200 hymns into Inuinaktun, this all allowed the Inuit of the area to read and worship in their own language. He was one of the early promoters of literacy and aboriginal languages, and is indeed an excellent example for subsequent literacy projects. I congratulate Bishop Sperry on the publication of his inspiring story of Inuit life through his book, *Igloo Dwellers Were My Church*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Member's Statement on Community Fire Protection Plans

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to talk about the need for this government to develop action fire protection plans for the communities we represent. Fires in the Slave Lake region near Alberta illustrate the need for such a plan. If proper fireguards were in place, loss of property would have been less.

It is simple, Mr. Speaker. Fires do not burn if you remove the source of fuel. I thought the government had learned this lesson after nearly losing the community of Tulita in the 1990s, but that does not appear to be the case.

At the time, Mr. Speaker, the government prioritized some communities and provided funding to build fire breaks and clear brush. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there has been no follow-up since that time. These communities were not a priority and are still waiting on government funding.

I stand to be corrected, Mr. Speaker, but myself and the people I represent are not aware of any programs that would assist a community in developing a fire protection plan. There is no funding available at the community level to implement such a plan. The Government of the Northwest Territories must provide these funds to the communities so they can develop fire protection plans.

Mr. Speaker, there are communities in the forest fire hazard areas with no fireguards or protection plans. This is not acceptable. With all the money that this government spends on developing infrastructure in the communities, would it not make sense, Mr. Speaker, to spend a little bit of money to protect our schools, our recreation facilities in our communities?

We have been lucky so far. Forest fires have threatened communities and people have been evacuated. Other than that, there has been little lost due to forest fires in recent memory. I want this to remain a fact.

Mr. Speaker, I have many questions. Will it take a major catastrophe for this government to act? Will the government spend money now to protect our residents' future? These are the questions I intend to ask the Minister of RWED during question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Member's Statement on Fort Smith Community Events

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak briefly today about three important events that took place over the weekend in Fort Smith. On Friday evening, the Minister of Transportation came to the community to commission the recently renovated airport terminal, which almost looks brand new. It was long overdue and a real benefit for that part of our infrastructure.

Also on the weekend, Mr. Speaker, we had a very important celebrity auction to help assist St. Joseph's Cathedral. Many Members in this House were kind enough to contribute items and artifacts that were auctioned off. I understand it was very successful. In three hours, they apparently raised over \$15,000 to help assist the cathedral.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we had the Third Annual Aurora Open Charitable Golf Tournament, which has a focus of trying to raise money for workplace literacy. Out of that tournament, we were able to donate \$5,000 to the Literacy Council for the promotion of workplace literacy. Mr. Speaker, that event would not have been possible without the kind support of many corporate sponsors, such as Canadian North, Northwestern Airlease, Diavik, NorthwesTel, BHP, NTPC and Kaisers.

Mr. Speaker, it was a resounding success. I hope to see this duplicated and improved upon next year. I would also like to thank my colleagues who came down to support this very worthwhile activity: Minister Allen, my colleagues, Mr. Lafferty and Mr. Nitah. While we were there, the Minister was very busy meeting with sporting groups: the ski club, the biathlon club, kayakers, as well as the golfing folks and their golfing fraternity to look at what is possible in trying to improve those particular resources.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, it was a very positive weekend for Fort Smith. I would like to thank my colleagues and all of the corporations who made this possible, and all of the people who dug into their pockets in Fort Smith to help with the cathedral. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Member's Statement on Poor Condition of Highway No. 2

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue of grave concern to a number of my constituents in Hay River North. Mr. Speaker, the issue I refer to is the state of Highway No. 2 leading into Old Town and the West Channel.

Mr. Speaker, the poor condition of Highway No. 2 affects all Hay River North residents, as this is the route they use to commute to their jobs in the new town and to avail themselves of all the amenities in the new town.

Mr. Speaker, the condition of this highway is deplorable. Over the last year, I have heard this government's desire to invest large amounts of money to construct and/or repair different highways throughout our Territory.

Mr. Speaker, Hay River is home to one of the loveliest NWT campgrounds, which is located in Old Town on the shores of Great Slave Lake. I know I do not have to remind my colleagues how valuable tourism is to the Northwest Territories economy.

Mr. Speaker, tourists who wish to visit our campground have to travel on Highway No. 2 to get to that campground. Mr. Speaker, in 2000, our territorial campground in Hay River was

visited by 2,218 tourists from all across North America and Europe.

Mr. Speaker, NTCL is one of the major employers in Hay River. All NTCL employees are required to use this highway, both in the course of their employment and for their transportation to and from work.

Mr. Speaker, recent statistics of average, annual daily traffic show that Highway No. 2 has the second largest volume of traffic of all NWT highways. In 1999, for example, Highway No. 2, from the West Channel Bridge to West Channel, saw 2,400 vehicles pass over it daily. During peak summer tourist season, from June to August, Highway No. 2 saw 3,000 vehicles pass over it daily. 1999 statistics are the most current data that is available.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out that a large percentage of the heavy trucks that deliver fuel throughout our Territory also have to use this highway to reach the bulk plants to get their loads. Mr. Speaker, this takes a tremendous toll on all the vehicles that travel on this highway that is in disrepair.

Mr. Speaker, I implore this government to take some initiative, recognize that this is a territorial highway, and that the Department of Transportation commit to putting plans in place to undertake the reconstruction of this section of highway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

Member's Statement on Recognition of the Contributions of Jim Martin

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge someone who has made significant academic, social and cultural contributions to the Dogrib region. Mr. Jim Martin first came to the Dogrib region as a teacher in 1981. He was employed at the Mezi Community School in Wha Ti and became the principal of the school two years later. He played an integral part in developing the school and in developing a local reading series. In 1988, he moved to Rae-Edzo as the superintendent of education. At this time, the groundwork for developing the Dogrib Divisional Board of Education began.

This regional board of education was developed of community members and included the words of respected elders Chief Jimmy Bruneau and Elizabeth Mackenzie in its mission statement. Its goal was to develop students who were "strong like two people". It was built on the hope that students develop strengths in their own Dogrib language and culture, as well as developing the knowledge and skills to live in modern society.

As one of the first members of this board, I had the opportunity to work with Jim and other members to promote and support bilingual education and community teacher education programs. Many teachers from the program have moved into vice-principal and principal positions.

Jim served as the director of education for several years. As the board developed, he consolidated board governance and policy.

He promoted school infrastructure and new schools were built in Gameti, Rae and Wekweti. Major renovations also occurred at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School. In 1996, Jim returned to work directly with students and staff at the Chief Jimmy Bruneau Regional High School. As the principal, he dedicated himself to ensuring that the school became a flagship school and a model of bicultural education for the North and for Canada. Local courses were developed to ensure that students would have the opportunities to learn their culture, heritage and language.

In 1998, Jimmy returned to his CEO position with the now fully operational Dogrib Community Services Board. This regional board offers program and service delivery in health, social services and education. With its establishment, specific strategies such as a Regional Addictions Strategy, were developed.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Lafferty, the time for your Member's statement has expired.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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, Mr. Lafferty, you may conclude.

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Jim's dedication to establishing all of the regional board offices under one roof resulted in the recent move of the Dogrib Community Services Board into their new head office in Rae.

Jim Martin will be leaving the North to pursue a new career in Alberta. His 20 years of service in our region has been greatly appreciated. His manner of listening to all people in his quiet manner, providing wisdom and guidance, has not gone unnoticed. He will be greatly missed by the people of the Dogrib region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Member's Statement on Pressures Exerted Upon Front Line Social Service Workers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Happy birthday. Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of challenges in our communities in light of the outlook we have in the oil and gas industry and the diamond industry. The people who face these challenges the most are the front line workers like the nurses, social workers, teachers, police and people dealing with the alcohol and drug effects in our communities.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, more and more pressures are put on these resource people, knowing that along with development also comes additional social pressures. With the lack of human resources in our communities, it is having an affect on our front line workers who are depending more and more on resource people outside of our communities,

In the regional centres and Yellowknife, we have mental health specialists, alcohol and drug specialists, and educational specialists. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the resources in our communities

are inadequate when it comes to meeting the demands of our people, who are now realizing the expectations out there in the oil and gas industry. The opportunities are over the horizon. Yet the ability of the people in our communities and the resource people who will assist these people are very limited.

We talk about programs in our communities to assist people to get into the workforce, to be positive employees in relation to alcohol and drug problems. Students who want to expand and move on to extend their education in the area of adult education programs, and programs to deal with economic opportunities. Despite this, Mr. Speaker, our front line workers are having pressures put on them with limited resources.

Yes, we are having conferences to deal with these problems, but the resources are inadequate. I for one feel that it is critical that this government puts the resources in place to assist the communities and the resource people to do what they can to better the lives of the people we serve. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services questions on this matter. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Member's Statement on Non-Insured Health Benefits Program

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the social envelope of the Northwest Territories is high, as alluded to by my colleague, Mr. Krutko, about the problems facing that particular department. Today, I would like to speak about the Northern Health Benefits Program and how it is supposed to cover benefits and services for First Nations and Inuit people. That includes prescription drugs, dental, medical transportation and other benefits, Mr. Speaker.

The federal government administers this program through Health Canada. All of the First Nations in the south are taking on some responsibilities for it. However, in the Northwest Territories, Health Canada is still doing the paperwork. What upsets me, Mr. Speaker, is that while our people are supposed to have their costs covered, there are problems in many cases.

For example, predetermination has to be done on dental work over a certain cost. That involves a lot of red tape and unnecessary time lags. It also can result in dental work being denied, or only partially paid for. If someone has a tooth missing, they might be told to take a lower-costing service than what they want, even though the more expensive treatment might be to their own health benefit in the long run. To me, this is substandard service, Mr. Speaker.

The Auditor General Report for the Year 2000 on First Nations Health stated that Health Canada delivers health services for more than 600 First Nation communities. The Health Canada branch has just under 1,400 full-time person years. One would think that with all that staff, service would be more expedient. There are seven regional offices across southern Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Why is there not a regional office located in the Northwest Territories, where a great deal of the population is aboriginal? In their report, Health Canada stated it was committed to

continuous improvement in the effectiveness and the efficiency of health programs. Maybe it is time to start looking at areas of improvement for the North, Mr. Speaker, by either devolving the functions to First Nations or by setting up a branch office in the North that people can access.

With that, I will have some questions for the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and happy birthday.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Member's Statement on Regional Reorganization

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the issue of regional reorganization. It is an issue I have brought up numerous times, whether it be in committee or in this forum, to request from this government their plans or what the movement is on regional reorganization.

Mr. Speaker, since we have come into this Assembly, it has been discussed at the level of, we are moving ahead, we have to change the way this map of the Northwest Territories looks because of the self-government processes going on, and how the government programs are delivered through this evolving system.

Mr. Speaker, no plan has been put forward. Nothing has been identified in the sense of timelines as to how different departments will gear up in different areas and which regions today will be impacted by some of the decisions made. Mr. Speaker, I represent a community that is considered a regional centre to a large degree, whether it be by the private sector, for example, like the oil and gas interests today, or in government programs and services in their delivery.

Mr. Speaker, when I worked for the government many years ago as an apprentice mechanic, we used to travel throughout the western Arctic from Deline up to Sachs Harbour, and all of the communities in between. Over the years, that has been cut back to a large degree and communities and other centres have developed, which is an appropriate way to go, Mr. Speaker.

Without a plan, it can be done haphazardly and cost more than is done so today. With the government expenditures as they are, knowing, as some might say, that we are in a surplus situation when you look at the dollars we expend on a yearly basis overall, we are in a rather tight situation.

Mr. Speaker, for my constituents, I am seeking to know if this government has a plan or a map that will spell out what my community will look like after regional reorganization is completed. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Thank you.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Member's Statement on Midwifery Legislation

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to make the case for midwifery legislation in the Northwest Territories. The last research I have seen, Mr. Speaker, showed that we have a much lower number of positions per 100,000 people on average than the rest of Canada. We know we have a high birth rate. We have a situation in the Territories where many mothers are forced to go to regional centres to give birth, often a very routine procedure and something where travel like this is probably unnecessary, Mr. Speaker.

In the Northwest Territories, we have had a long history of midwifery, but for one reason or another, we have gotten away from the practice. I think it was the 1970s that it started to fall out of favour. Given that we are moving to this primary health care model -- as I understand it, this will allow for multi-disciplinary teams working in cooperation with positions -- it seems to make sense to again look at midwifery.

We do not have legislation in place currently, but we do have a policy that defines the conditions and the minimum standards that should be involved with midwifery. I think these were developed in conjunction with the community birthing project in Rankin Inlet that was set up in 1993, Mr. Speaker.

An evaluation report released in 1996 demonstrated that midwives can provide safe, high quality comprehensive and culturally appropriate services within a multi-disciplinary team.

It seems to me that it makes sense for us to look at legislation and move this to the front of the list. I know we have a lot of other priorities, but it seems like it could certainly save us a lot of money. We know we have a hard time attracting doctors and when we are able to attract doctors, a hard time getting them to stay. I know there are insurance issues to be worked out, but I hope the government will take a lead role in pursuing midwifery legislation. I will have questions for the Minister today in question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Member's Statement on Wrigley Students Serving as Legislative Assembly Pages

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to welcome to the Assembly three students from Pehdzeh Ki, or Wrigley, who will serve as pages during this week of the session. Desiree Mose, Jessica and Jennifer Skeard are grade 7 students at the Chief Julian Yendo School in Wrigley. They are achievers who express a strong interest in working for us here as pages in order to better understand how our Legislative Assembly works.

I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that we have a program that allows students from the smaller communities to come to Yellowknife and learn new skills and enjoy some of the activities available here in our capital.

Mr. Speaker, there are many students in our smaller communities who would like this opportunity. However, those who do come here learn and enjoy the experience of working for us here in the Legislative Assembly. I trust they will return to

their community later this week with a better understanding of how our government works.

There are other students here as well. I would like to welcome them to the House. Before I am finished here, Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish you a happy birthday. Mahsi.

-- Applause

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

Member's Statement on Tribute to Inuvik Trapper Ernie Moore

HON. ROGER ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, prior to my Member's statement, I would like to say happy birthday to you as well.

This past winter, a member from my riding deceased. Today, along with my trapping friends in the Mackenzie Delta, I would like to pay tribute. His name was Ernie Moore. Ernie was a personal friend of mine, having known him from our days "from the bush", as he made his living off the land. Ernie was known to many of the west-end community of Inuvik to be a humble man with a simple lifestyle. I often sat with Ernie on our favourite seat on the benches outside the Northern Store, or in front of the Mad Trapper, sharing trapping stories and telling jokes. We shared stories on trapping, hunting and lifestyles outside the normal community life.

Ernie leaves many of his friends still sitting on those benches, telling much of the same stories and jokes. I look forward to joining his friends over the summer to reminisce about the good old times. Ernie is survived by his sisters Lena, Judy, Pauline, Rosalind, and Denise; and brothers Gordon and Billy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Allen. Item 3, Members' statements. I would just like to draw to the attention of the honourable Members of the House that today is also a very special day well for the honourable Member for Nahendeh and his wonderful wife, Celine. Today they are celebrating their 24th wedding anniversary. Congratulations.

-- Applause

The Antoines have three sons. I do not think they are here today, but they have three sons, and your wonderful wife Celine, formerly Celine Buggins.

-- Interjection

One daughter. I am told one daughter. Congratulations.

-- Applause

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: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to recognize people from the NWT Literacy

Council: Donna Mulders, the coordinator of the Story Sack project, along with Catherine Robinson and Lisa Campbell. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to recognize two constituents in the gallery. I would like to recognize Pearl Norwegian, who is my constituency assistant in Fort Simpson.

-- Applause

I would also like to introduce Beatrice Antoine from Fort Simpson, who is the chaperone for the three pages here.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Welcome to the gallery. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I noted that your family was present in the gallery. I would like now to officially recognize them: your wife Elaine, along with your sons, Ian, Blair and Warren, in that order.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. Colleagues, it is an honour to have the family here. They are scattered all over the country now and it is a rare occasion that they are here. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. At this time, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my mother. Sixty years ago at 8:30 this morning I first became acquainted with this wonderful lady.

-- Applause

Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for North Slave, Mr. Lafferty.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 46-14(4): Medical Care for Income Support Clients

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Jane Groenewegen. In February, I shared with Members of this House a very disturbing situation where a constituent received income support and had some money clawed back. Because of the clawback, she was short on funds and unable to access the medical attention she needed. A gap exists for people needing financial support during medical care in regional facilities. I would like to ask the Minister, what has she done in partnership with the income support department to address this oversight? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 46-14(4): Medical Care for Income Support Clients

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that some work has been done to address the issue of unearned income, but that actually falls under the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment's purview, but I can confirm for the Member that work has proceeded on the issue of unearned income and clawbacks from income support clients. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 46-14(4): Medical Care for Income Support Clients

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister when does the department consider an income support client a medical patient? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid I do not understand the question. When do programs of Health and Social Services consider...I am not sure of the question.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Lafferty, would you repeat the question for clarification?

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister, when does Health and Social Services take over financial situations, financial difficulties, for income support clients when they are in the regional centres away from home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 46-14(4): Medical Care for Income Support Clients

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services would become involved with income support clients when they are in need of medical service any time they would be eligible under any of our extended health care benefits. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Lafferty.

Supplementary to Question 46-14(4): Medical Care for Income Support Clients

MR. LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, policies are not made for everyone. There are people out there who do not qualify under income support or under the health for benefits. I would like to ask the Minister if she can commit to working with income support and try to help the people in the short term when they are here for medical reasons. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 46-14(4): Medical Care for Income Support Clients

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are sometimes not policies for every situation which may arise or occur, and what we count on are these being brought to our attention where there may be gaps. When there becomes a significant issue around such gaps, it gives us an opportunity as a department to consider policy that may need revision. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 47-14(4): Public Input on the Cuff Report

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Health and Social Services as well. She updated this House in terms of when the Cuff report would be tabled, indicating it would be tabled on June 25th, which is all well and good, but unfortunately, after the House has risen. The one significant concern I have is that she indicates in her press release that all residents will have the opportunity to respond to the recommendations or provide comments until August 1, 2001, a mere 37 days, Mr. Speaker. This report has been in the works for seven months. It is very problematic for me that it is July when this Assembly itself has said that they want to try to keep the calendar clear for people to have some of the summer to themselves. It is during the assemblies and summer holidays.

My question to the Minister is why are the people of the Northwest Territories being allowed only such a miniscule amount of time to look at what should be a very important report?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 47-14(4): Public Input on the Cuff Report

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. The report has been under construction. It has been under review for some time. Over 350 interviews have been conducted, which is a very extensive consultative process. We do not anticipate repeating the consultative process. What we do anticipate is that during the time between the time the report is released on June 25th and August 1st, we will receive any additional comments on the recommendations. It is not our intention to duplicate the consultation that has already gone into the report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 47-14(4): Public Input on the Cuff Report

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated they had consulted and talked to 350

people. There are 40,000 or more people who live in the Northwest Territories. I am asking about the chance of looking at this report during a time when most people will not even be in the communities or in the North. They have 37 days, Mr. Speaker. It is not fair and it is not adequate. Surely the Minister will consider, hopefully, that she will give enough time for the people of the Northwest Territories to look at this. My question to the Minister is will she in fact extend this deadline and make it reasonable? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 47-14(4): Public Input on the Cuff Report

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the Member does not feel that 37 days is reasonable, but certainly we want to get underway with developing an action plan in response to the recommendations contained in the report. We would like to start that work as soon as possible because we do feel there is some urgency to addressing some of the issues that the Cuff review is considering. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 47-14(4): Public Input on the Cuff Report

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is going to be yet another black mark against the Cuff Report before it even sees the light of day. The committees are not even going to be looking at this. The MLAs probably will not even have a chance to look at this, and the Minister wants to jam through some plan before she has even received any feedback. It is beyond belief that the Minister would do that. Let me ask the Minister again, surely to goodness having waited this long, we should be given enough chance to look at this -- the Members of this Legislative Assembly, the people of the Northwest Territories, the very many NGOs and groups that have waited to see what is going to come out of this. I would ask the Minister again: will she be reasonable and give the people of the Northwest Territories enough time to look at this? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 47-14(4): Public Input on the Cuff Report

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the report will come for everyone on June 25th. As I said, we will receive responses and input into the recommendations that will be in the report. We would like to be able to table a response to the report during the fall session. The Member is suggesting that we should move this work back and delay this. What we could do is consider the volume of responses that we get after the report is tabled and hear from people who feel they may want to make a response but have not had time. Right now, our plan and our time line is try to have a response developed in preparation for the fall session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 47-14(4): Public Input on the Cuff Report

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the majority of the people are not going to be aware of this or even around to reply for wide feedback, it is clear that there is going to be a low volume. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that it seems to be that the department has its own agenda. They already know what they want to do with this report. They are ignoring the public feedback and feedback from this legislature. It is so unfortunate and unacceptable that I do not really have a question. I just want to put that issue on record.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Miltenberger, it is your final supplementary and you should ask a question. There is no question there. Madam Minister.

Further Return to Question 47-14(4): Public Input on the Cuff Report

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have already indicated, there have been 350 individuals interviewed in preparation for this report. Also, we have asked the consultants who are working on the Cuff review to consider the other significant consultation that took place with the public such, as the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services and other previous reports that were done. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. I should just remind Members that questions should be to the point, particularly the supplementary ones, and I am sure the answers as well could be to the point by the honourable Minister asked. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

Question 48-14(4): Community Fire Protection Plans

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I raised the issue of community fire protection plans in the North. I would like to ask a question of the Minister of RWED. I would like to ask what his department is doing to develop community fire protection plans and protect the communities from forest fires.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Return to Question 48-14(4): Community Fire Protection Plans

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a regular basis, RWED does assessments of sites and structures and so on around all of the communities. They are doing that again this year, updating information. That should be completed by the end of the summer. We have also set aside a \$300,000 budget to implement community forest fire protection and hazard abatement plans, so that funding is there. To date, no communities have formally asked for assistance. Our department is also available to help communities if they ask for assistance. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 48-14(4): Community Fire Protection Plans

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has indicated that no communities have asked for assistance. This program that is in place to develop a community fire protection plan, how many communities have accessed funding through this program to develop proper fire protection and fire guards? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 48-14(4): Community Fire Protection Plans

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, no communities have put in an application for fire protection plans this year. I am not sure how many have done it in the past years, but there are some that are ongoing that were in last year and continue on. For this year, we have not received any new applications yet. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Supplementary, Mr. McLeod.

Supplementary to Question 48-14(4): Community Fire Protection Plans

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister, how long will it be before we see proper fire protection plans for all of the communities in the North? What is the time frame he is looking at? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 48-14(4): Community Fire Protection Plans

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, the question is one that we would have to ask each community. It is up to each community as to whether or not they want to have a fire protection plan in place for their community, whether there will be a fire guard around their community or some other arrangement they may wish to make.

I would hope that we move quickly to protect all of our communities in the forested areas. As I say, our department is there. We are ready to cooperate and hopefully work with communities that are asking for plans to be developed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 48-14(4): Community Fire Protection Plans

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the development of these fire protection plans, I would like to ask if the Minister,

when he said the department is there to develop and assist in all areas, does his department also provide the funding to develop the terms of reference?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Mr. Handley.

Further Return to Question 48-14(4): Community Fire Protection Plans

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think within reason, our department would make money available, but if the communities are going to get into a long consultation process, then there may be limits on what we would be prepared to do. Some of it does rest as a community responsibility. I would like to say that we want to cooperate. It is in our interest to have the fire protection plans in place. I think we are there to help put the plan together. We would probably assist to some degree with consultation, but it would depend on how extensive it is. It would have to be negotiated in each case. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Question 49-14(4): Highway No. 2 Maintenance

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, about a year ago, I raised concerns in this House about Highway No. 2 that goes through old town in Hay River. I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that at that time, the department was quick to respond to some repairs in a couple of locations. I would like to commend the Minister for that.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if he would agree that this was a band-aid approach to Highway No. 2 and that section of highway is indeed in need of some major work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 49-14(4): Highway No. 2 Maintenance

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for the question. Mr. Speaker, Highway No. 2 that the Member is referring to has been under some consideration by the department already on an ongoing basis. For the Member's information, at the present time, we are planning some engineering assessments, which will be done this summer.

We already have some estimates as to what it would cost to upgrade this highway because of the poor base it is sitting on. We are estimating it is anywhere between \$2.5 million to \$3 million to improve the base so we can have a better long-term surface. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary to Question 49-14(4): Highway No. 2 Maintenance

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the past, I have heard in this House the Minister justify expenditures on highways by the amount of traffic that is on the highway system. The statistics I had were available from 1999. Would the Minister have any more recent figures on the amount of traffic on that stretch of highway from what I had available in 1999? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 49-14(4): Highway No. 2 Maintenance

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department, as well as using traffic volume figures for deciding on operations and maintenance for these highways and capital investments, we also take into consideration the existing problems with the highway, regardless of the traffic volume.

In this particular case, this highway has been causing the department some problems for a number of years, simply because of the type of terrain it is built on. We have to take into consideration that we may have to make expenditures on this particular stretch of highway, regardless of whether the traffic volume contributes towards that decision.

In other words, to keep it safe, we would have to make expenditures. This is what the department is doing. We are doing engineering assessments on the highway as to what would be needed just to bring it up to safe standards. That is not to say that it is not in safe standards at the present time, but we do not want it to deteriorate any further than it is. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary to Question 49-14(4): Highway No. 2 Maintenance

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the safety issue, there may be some questions raised there. As recently as Saturday, there was an accident on that highway with a car rolling over. I could not say for sure, Mr. Speaker, whether there were any serious injuries from that, but from a safety point of view, that could be an issue right now. Would the Minister commit to having the department put some plans in place for some expenditures on that stretch of road?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 49-14(4): Highway No. 2 Maintenance

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is necessary for me to commit anything here. I already told the Member the department is already doing engineering assessments on it. In other words, we are looking

at what is going to be necessary to bring this highway up to standards. We are going to be doing the work, yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Final supplementary, Mr. Delorey.

Supplementary to Question 49-14(4): Highway No. 2 Maintenance

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister just finished saying that piece of highway has been a problem to the department for many years now. Is he telling me that just now, they are going to start putting some plans in place to look at? When can we expect some action on that piece of highway, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 49-14(4): Highway No. 2 Maintenance

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I expect the results of the engineering assessment will be reflected in next year's business plans. There will be some discussion within the department as to what expenditures will be necessary. In other words, do we just do a temporary fix or do we do a total expenditure, which we estimate at \$2.5 million to \$3 million? It all would depend on what access we have to capital expenditures. It will be reflected in next year's plan. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 50-14(4): Operational Change at Stanton Hospital

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, I have heard that at least one of my constituents has received notice of impending layoff from Stanton Hospital. She was told that this was because of plans to privatize the laundry. Can the Minister tell the House about this change in the operation at Stanton?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 50-14(4): Operational Change at Stanton Hospital

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have heard of board deliberations around the issue of privatization of various aspects of activity within the hospital. I am not sure of the timelines or what the status of any decisions around that are at this point in time.

I have offered a briefing to Members on the issue of the surgical ward for later this week, and certainly the issue of any privatization initiatives could be added to the agenda for that briefing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Dent.

Supplementary to Question 50-14(4): Operational Change at Stanton Hospital

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had also heard rumblings that this was one area where privatization was being considered as part of the deficit recovery plan. Is the Minister saying then that this has not been approved as part of the deficit recovery plan?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 50-14(4): Operational Change at Stanton Hospital

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will take that question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The question has been taken as notice. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Nitah.

Question 51-14(4): Non-Insured Health Benefits Update

MR. NITAH: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has nearly an \$800 million budget. Twenty-five percent of that budget is spent on health. Treaty Indians and Inuit, people of the Northwest Territories, through their treaties, have a special right in relationship with the federal government where they have a fiduciary responsibility to pay for some of their health benefits through the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program.

Towards the end of last session, Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of talk about the non-insured health benefits. Can the Minister give this House an update on the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen. A short update.

Return to Question 51-14(4): Non-Insured Health Benefits Update

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, an agreement-in-principle has been reached to enhance administrative resources and renew the agreement for a one-year period. It has also committed both parties to conduct a joint review of the issues and options for addressing them. This work is expected to be completed by the end of June. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 51-14(4): Non-Insured Health Benefits Update

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I mentioned the fact that in southern Canada, there are federal government regional offices to administer the non-insured health benefits on behalf of First Nations. Some First Nations in the south have taken on the responsibility. Can the Minister commit to this House that she will look at encouraging

the federal government to open a northern office that can be accessible to the people of the Northwest Territories, or work with First Nations that are ready and willing to take on the responsibility of delivering non-insured health benefits to the people they represent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 51-14(4): Non-Insured Health Benefits Update

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so far we have not had any indication from any aboriginal governments that they are interested in taking on the administration of the non-insured health benefits. However, as I stated in the last session, the GNWT is absolutely committed to consulting with all stakeholders before any decisions are made with respect to these non-insured health benefits. That certainly does include representatives of aboriginal people. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Nitah.

Supplementary to Question 51-14(4): Non-Insured Health Benefits Update

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this consultation process, we were made aware that the agreement might be signed between the federal government and the GNWT to deliver non-insured health benefits in the Northwest Territories by the end of this month. Has there been any consultation prior to the finalization of that agreement with First Nations governments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 51-14(4): Non-Insured Health Benefits Update

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have agreed to continue to administer this program for a one-year period. The renewal date for a contribution agreement would be March 31, 2002. Certainly our consultation with stakeholders, including aboriginal organizations, would take place prior to that renewal. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 51-14(4): Non-Insured Health Benefits Update

MR. NITAH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my earlier question, 25 percent of the total GNWT budget goes to health issues. Can the Minister tell the House what percentage of that 25 percent of the \$800 million that is spent on health in the Northwest Territories comes from the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nitah. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 51-14(4): Non-Insured Health Benefits Update

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The contribution from the federal government through Health Canada to the territorial government to administer on their behalf is around \$5.5 million per year, I believe. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 52-14(4): Adequate Resources for Front-Line Workers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. It is in regard to my Member's statement. We are seeing a major increase in the demands that are now on our front-line workers in our communities, with the increased developments that are taking place in the Mackenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea area.

Mr. Speaker, something has to be done to ensure that our front-line workers have the resources to deal with this increased workload that they have because of the developments that are taking place. I think as a government, we do have an obligation to ensure the health and well-being of the people in our communities is the utmost thing this government is responsible for.

I would like to ask the Minister: what are you doing to ensure that the front-line workers in the communities are receiving the resources to deal with this unforeseen impact that we have at the present time?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 52-14(4): Adequate Resources for Front-Line Workers

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we rely on the health boards, the regional community health boards, as a vehicle by which we deliver most of the money that is in our budget for programs and services. As the Member states, if there are increased demands in certain areas because of increased economic activity, we would expect to hear about that from the health and social services boards and would respond accordingly to those increased demands. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 52-14(4): Adequate Resources for Front-Line Workers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we cannot be caught acting after the fact. We have to be proactive when these developments take place. We do have to have the resources, the people in our communities and the resource centres so we can deal with these problems.

What are you doing to deal with the front-line workers in the communities and not the regional centres? I am talking about

front-line workers. What are you doing to address their problems?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 52-14(4): Adequate Resources for Front-Line Workers

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree that we need to be proactive. I think this government has been very proactive in terms of the attention paid to the development of a Social Agenda Framework and the uniqueness of the Social Agenda Conference, which is coming up. This is the first time that I am aware of that front-line workers from the communities will have the opportunity to meet with and speak with leaders of this government, community governments and aboriginal governments on some of the pressures and the challenges that they are feeling in doing their jobs.

I agree with the Member that we need to ensure that front-line workers are feeling supported in the very important work that they do, and that they are adequately resourced to do their jobs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 52-14(4): Adequate Resources for Front-Line Workers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I for one feel that we do have to improve on the infrastructure that we have in our communities in dealing with the programs and services that we are delivering. The demand is increasing. We are seeing more social effects on the community as a whole, from the elders to the youth and to the families. I think we have to have a plan and the resources to do it. When will the Minister be coming back to the House demanding more resources and improving the programs and services that we have in our communities?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 52-14(4): Adequate Resources for Front-Line Workers

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as part of our budgeting process and our business plan process, each year, various departments identify areas of need for critical investment. As this process proceeds, we will have the opportunity to share and talk about that kind of information with standing committees and with Members of this Legislature. That is an opportunity for input into priority areas for Members. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 52-14(4): Adequate Resources for Front-Line Workers

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an urgent matter. This government has to move on it. The development is going to be increasing two-fold from what it was last year. From the results we have seen from the activities that took place last year to what it is going to be next year, I believe we have a lot of catching up to do. I feel this government has to put a priority on this and it has to identify resources to deal with these. How soon can the Minister have something back to the House so that we as a committee and as Members of this House have a chance to look at the options we may have as a legislature?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 52-14(4): Adequate Resources for Front Line Workers

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, probably one of the earliest responses we are going to have that we will be able to share with the Member is the outcome of the Social Agenda Conference when we meet with front-line workers and leaders to talk about the challenges. We are very intent on making sure that our economic agenda is balanced with our social agenda, and that we are proactive and stay ahead of the demands and the needs that will be forthcoming as a result of the increased economic activity. I would say that would probably be one of the earliest indicators that we will have of where we may require additional resources. We had a fiscal update from the Finance Minister. We can see that there are some additional resources that we may be able to access to address the social needs. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

Question 53-14(4): Regional Reorganization Initiative

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Premier of the Northwest Territories regarding my Member's statement on regional reorganization. Mr. Speaker, it has been an issue since the 14th Assembly has come into being. It has been an on-again/off-again process. My concern, Mr. Speaker, is that without a plan in place, we are looking at making some changes. I would like to know from the Premier what has gone on since this has last been discussed? It has been brought up in committee, as well as by myself here in this forum. I would like to know what is going on with regional reorganization. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Return to Question 53-14(4): Regional Reorganization Initiative

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the issue of regional reorganization, we have asked the Intergovernmental Forum Secretariat to conduct a review and to come forward with a report. That will be given to us as a Cabinet, which will then be forwarded to the Standing

Committee on Accountability and Oversight so they can be apprised of the situation as we see it internally within government, and proceed with a common base for addressing the issue of regional reorganization. That will be done in the course of this summer. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 53-14(4): Regional Reorganization Initiative

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is it correct that this then is considered a governance issue? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 53-14(4): Regional Reorganization Initiative

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on reviewing the current structure of administrative regions, we have identified this as one of our priorities. A lead responsibility will be going to the Honourable Joe Handley, but at this time, we have asked the Intergovernmental Forum Secretariat to develop a discussion paper to guide future discussions on regional reorganization. The paper will include a review of existing structures, proposed principles, goals and options for changes. The discussion paper, once it is developed, will be forwarded to the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight for their input over the course of the summer. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 53-14(4): Regional Reorganization Initiative

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Accountability and Oversight Committee as a whole will be able to review what comes out of this work that is being done? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 53-14(4): Regional Reorganization Initiative

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Yes, Mr. Speaker, as I have said, we have asked for a discussion paper to be developed by the Intergovernmental Forum Secretariat. The discussion paper will look at the administrative regions as they are now and develop outlines on some of the elements that should be considered when we start to discuss this issue. The discussion paper will serve as a basis for us to consult with Members and the Accountability and Oversight Committee, so we can then begin developing a common base on which to make decisions and proceed. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 53-14(4): Regional Reorganization Initiative

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier inform me if there has been any work that has been ongoing in changing the way government programs are delivered within the regions of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. The honourable Premier, Mr. Kakfwi.

Further Return to Question 53-14(4): Regional Reorganization Initiative

HON. STEPHEN KAKFWI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not certain exactly what that question is, but there are changes that have happened as a result of division. We have changes that are ongoing as a result of, for instance, the Beaufort Delta self-government discussions. The intention is, for instance, at some point in the future, the Sahtu will no longer be part of the Inuvik region. This has been ongoing for some time. Recently, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has started to move to setting up a more autonomous, administrative region for the Sahtu by setting up a superintendent capacity in Norman Wells to serve the Sahtu. The Housing Corporation has followed that. Some years ago, Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development also set up an autonomous, administrative Sahtu region separate from the Inuvik region. Previous to that was the Sahtu Divisional Board, which I think was set up in 1988. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

Question 54-14(4): Midwifery Legislation

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question, as I indicated earlier, will be for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. It is about midwifery legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand the primary health care model, it is a team approach to front line service provision. It allows for nurses and other professionals to be the first point of contact. For instance, if I have a cold, Mr. Speaker, I am not initially going to see a doctor if I may not need to. If it gets to that, I can be referred later.

It seems to me that this would be a good fit for midwifery. I am wondering what the department thinks of that. Could the Minister indicate whether or not she feels the primary health care model is indeed a good fit for midwifery? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 54-14(4): Midwifery Legislation

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, where an initiative comes forward from a community where they have people who are capable of providing midwifery services, and where the community desires those services, the Department of Health does support a team approach that could include a primary health care model, including midwives in that model. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 54-14(4): Midwifery Legislation

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that communities can come forward and apply to the department. We do have a policy in place that provides a framework, but we do not have any legislation. I think legislation is one of the key pieces that would allow us to have insurance and other things come more easily. Would it not make sense if we have the policy, we have the framework, Mr. Speaker, why no legislation? Can the Minister indicate why we do not have legislation yet? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 54-14(4): Midwifery Legislation

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are planning on working towards introducing midwifery legislation. We will work closely with midwives in developing such legislation. We will also rely on prototypes of legislation, which may be available to other jurisdictions. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 54-14(4): Midwifery Legislation

MR. BELL: I guess the question that follows from that, Mr. Speaker, is how long will it take to develop the legislation. It seems to me that we could, as the Minister has indicated, essentially boilerplate the legislation from other Canadian jurisdictions, so how long, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen,.

Further Return to Question 54-14(4): Midwifery Legislation

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do have a very busy legislative agenda for the Department of Health and Social Services, and even if we could, as the Member refers to it, "boilerplate the legislation", it still requires a fair amount of human resources and financial resources in the drafting and preparation of any legislation.

Certainly in the meantime, the GNWT Certified Midwife Policy provides an adequate framework within which boards could offer birthing services using midwives. If there is an interest in the communities or in the regions for this, we would encourage them to proceed under the policy and we will commit to the legislation as soon as possible. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Bell.

Supplementary to Question 54-14(4): Midwifery Legislation

MR. BELL: Thank you. The policy is there, Mr. Speaker, but as I understand it, without legislation insurance, providers will not provide insurance in the Northwest Territories. That is my

understanding of the issue. Obviously it is a problem and certainly you are not going to have a situation where you have midwives practicing if they cannot get insurance. I am wondering if the Minister will commit to having this legislation come before this House in the next year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 54-14(4): Midwifery Legislation

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will certainly take note of the support that has been shown by Members for this legislation, and I will have to inquire of the department as to whether or not it will be feasible to commit to the legislation within a year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

Question 55-14(4): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat. Can Minister Handley advise this House if the government still maintains a no layoff policy?

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

Return to Question 55-14(4): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a staff retention policy, which achieves many of the objectives of the old no layoff policy. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 55-14(4): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, would the staff retention policy apply to employees of wholly funded agencies like hospital boards?

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

Further Return to Question 55-14(4): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As long as they are civil servants, then it would apply to them. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 55-14(4): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So to the Minister's best understanding, an employee of the Stanton Hospital in the laundry, who has been a member of the civil service for, say 28

years and seven months short of a full pension on retirement, would have access to the staff retention policy?

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

Further Return to Question 55-14(4): GNWT Staff Retention Policy

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is correct. The administration at the hospital would have to go through the same steps in the staff retention policy as we would for any government employee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 56-14(4): Cuff Report on Health and Social Services

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health and Social Services, and it is once again with regard to the Cuff Report and the unseemingly haste with which the government seems intent on jamming this particular report through. Within that scant 37 days that are open for feedback, would the Minister commit, if a community or a health board asks for the department to come in and speak to the recommendations or help to clarify or explain them, would they at least have that luxury? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 56-14(4): Cuff Report on Health and Social Services

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in laying out the time frame for responding to the Cuff report, we have certainly taken into consideration the comments of Members who say that the time for consultation is past. There have been many reviews and many questions asked, and that they would like us now to take action. Action will tentatively revolve around the recommendations contained in the report.

Mr. Speaker, there is no intent on the part of the department to preclude anyone or cut anyone off from making comments on the recommendations as they will appear. I think anyone who considers the recommendations to be a priority will have time in the month following the release of the report to respond. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 56-14(4): Cuff Report on Health and Social Services

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me ask the Minister, if the community of Fort Smith, for example, were to write to the Minister within the next day, or if I as an MLA were to write to the Minister and say once this report is tabled and released, I would like your officials to come

to the community to meet with the people to go over it, the same as was done by Mr. Robertson with his study on power and hydro. Would the Minister commit to that? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 56-14(4): Cuff Report on Health and Social Services

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we as a department work very closely with the regional community health boards, and certainly any time there is a request for communications, dialogue or support in any manner, we do consider those requests. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 56-14(4): Cuff Report on Health and Social Services

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister clarify? She said 'consider'. She did not say yes. She did not say no. She said they would consider. Consider is a word that can cover a multitude of sins, as we well know. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 56-14(4): Cuff Report on Health and Social Services

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member posed a hypothetical question. He is saying if the Fort Smith health and social services board were to request, would I ensure that someone could come and report or speak with the community. That is a hypothetical question and I said yes, we would. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister, that is your answer. Final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger, a short supplementary.

Supplementary to Question 56-14(4): Cuff Report on Health and Social Services

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate how she intends, given this tight time frame, to tie in the outcome of the social agenda conference, the regional reorganization of government work that is being done, the issue of community service boards that has been raised in this House by myself and my colleague, Mr. Nitah, given once again the haste and tight timeframes? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 56-14(4): Cuff Report on Health and Social Services

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot prejudge what the discussion may be at the Social Agenda Conference. However, I would like to point out

that the Cuff Review does deal with some fairly specific areas of the health and social services system. It talks in the terms of reference about issues of governance, accountability, reporting mechanisms of the boards. It has a lot to do with the structure of the system. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 57-14(4): Deferral of Mackenzie Delta Projects

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation and it is with regard to the line of questioning I had last week concerning the two projects that were deferred from my riding, where the monies were put into the riding of the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake with regard to the Campbell Creek Bridge. I would like to ask the Minister exactly how soon will the money be reinstated into two projects that were deferred in my riding?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 57-14(4): Deferral of Mackenzie Delta Projects

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department's plan is should there be money available from other capital projects that we could redirect back to the two projects this year, we will do it this year. If not, the plan is for next year. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 57-14(4): Deferral of Mackenzie Delta Projects

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the question is kind of iffy, if there is money left in the department. I would like to ask the Minister when he can assure my constituents that these two projects will be available to them? As you know, the construction season in the North is only three or four months long. To put these culverts in and to widen, these things take place during the summer months. Can the Minister give me a general idea of how soon I can get a response back to tell my constituents that this work will be on or will be off? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Return to Question 57-14(4): Deferral of Mackenzie Delta Projects

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I can give the Member what he requests here, a more specific time. I am aware of timelines involved with the capital project on the Dempster.

I would just like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the bridge project was given priority over the other two projects because there were some environmental issues involved in regard to changing this project from a culvert project, which is what it was

in the past, into a full-scale bridge. We are doing this because of the concerns expressed by federal fisheries and other people.

The bridge project has received the priority of the projects on the Dempster. That is why the bridge project is going ahead. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 57-14(4): Deferral of Mackenzie Delta Projects

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe the big problem that we have here is the lack of communication between the Department of Transportation and Members of this House, especially when projects are being moved from one riding to another.

I fully support the bridge project on Campbell Creek. The point I am trying to make is the Minister did not keep me in the loop when he made that decision. Can the Minister keep me informed on all aspects in relation to this issue, so that I can know exactly what resources are going to be made available and how soon this project can take place?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. There were a couple of questions there. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 57-14(4): Deferral of Mackenzie Delta Projects

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe I already committed on Friday to supply the Member with the information as to the plans of the department for those specific projects on the Dempster. We will supply the Member with that information. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 57-14(4): Deferral of Mackenzie Delta Projects

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, under the Financial Administration Act, has the Minister notified the Department of Finance of this movement of money from one project to another?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Steen.

Further Return to Question 57-14(4): Deferral of Mackenzie Delta Projects

HON. VINCE STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no we did not because it is not a requirement. It is a different section that the Member is referring to, I believe.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Steen. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Question 58-14(4): Health and Social Services System Review

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are addressed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, and once again they are in relation to the upcoming Cuff Report. The Minister's press release would give rise to the question, at this point, has she in fact seen the draft recommendations or the final recommendations of the report? She talks about their specific nature and what they relate to. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Return to Question 58-14(4): Health and Social Services System Review

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, I have not seen a draft report or any recommendations. I was referring to what we anticipate to be contained, in a general sense, as the areas which are outlined in the terms of reference for the report. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 58-14(4): Health and Social Services System Review

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has basically pushed aside my previous question on how they are going to tie in things like the request for community services boards, the outcome from the Social Agenda Conference, and the outcome and findings of whatever comes out of the governance work that is being done by the government. Can the Minister indicate whether that will be included before the department comes forward with their formal response? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 58-14(4): Health and Social Services System Review

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, work that had already been done under various initiatives prior to the Cuff Review starting, Mr. Cuff and his associates were instructed to take into account such things as work that was ongoing with self-government which may impact governance and board structure issues.

Certainly anything that happens following the release of the Cuff Report prior to the implementation of the action plan that will be tabled in the fall session, if there is relevant information that comes to light, it could very well be included in the action plan, as responses to the report may also be. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 58-14(4): Health and Social Services System Review

MR. MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, one piece of work I neglected to mention as well, which is also gathering dust in the Health and Social Services archives, is the work done by the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services. Will those recommendations and suggestions be incorporated into the response being brought forward by the Minister? Will it once again just be focused on what Mr. Cuff has to say? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 58-14(4): Health and Social Services System Review

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cuff and his associates were directed to the previous recent work that has been done on health and social services system issues. They were asked to take these reports into consideration in the work that they were doing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Final supplementary, Mr. Miltenberger.

Supplementary to Question 58-14(4): Health and Social Services System Review

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned as well about the lack of opportunities for MLAs and the Social Program Committee to have any meaningful say before this August 1 deadline, given the fact that July is on our calendars covered with nothing but nice bright, smiling suns. Many of us have made alternate plans. Can the Minister indicate if she intends to give the committees and MLAs adequate chance to have input before August 1st? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister responsible for the Department of Health and Social Services, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Further Return to Question 58-14(4): Health and Social Services System Review

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, after the publicizing of the Cuff Report on June 25th, we will certainly be welcoming any comments, input and responses that may be forthcoming from the Social Programs Committee, from the public, from Health Boards, from anyone who has an interest and will take the time to read the recommendations in the report and respond to us. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 6, oral questions. The honourable Member for the Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

Question 59-14(4): Notification of Project Deferral

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for FMBS. Under the Financial Administration Act, it states that your department has to be informed if there are any changes to any capital projects. Can the Minister tell me: have you received any notification of these changes? Thank you.

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

Return to Question 59-14(4): Notification of Project Deferral

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, if there was notification, it would have gone over to FMBS. To my knowledge, there has not been any notification received. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 59-14(4): Notification of Project Deferral

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister check to see if that has been dealt with? Can he also check with the Financial Administration Act to ensure that all departments are following the act?

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

Further Return to Question 59-14(4): Notification of Project Deferral

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, yes, I can check to see. We will also send a reminder out to all departments that under that section, they do have to make the reports the Member refers to. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Handley. Supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

Supplementary to Question 59-14(4): Notification of Project Deferral

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know it is short notice, but can the Minister try to get something back to the House on any projects that have been moved in this capital year before the adjournment of this House?

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

Further Return to Question 59-14(4): Notification of Project Deferral

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am assuming the Member is referring to the current capital year, the 2001-2002 year. Yes, I will endeavor to get information on what transfers might have taken place. Thank you.

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

Supplementary to Question 59-14(4): Notification of Project Deferral

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister also give us a briefing in regard to any responses he has seen back in ensuring that the departments are living up to the Financial

Administration Act, so we are kept in tune on which ones are breaching the act and which ones are not?

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

Further Return to Question 59-14(4): Notification of Project Deferral

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, certainly I hope that none of them are breaching the act, but if there are any, then I certainly will share the information with the Members. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. The time for question period for today has ended. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 3-14(4): Fuel Rebate Program

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Honourable Roger Allen, the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. It is in regard to the Fuel Subsidy Rebate. Two questions:

1. Did the department advertise the extension of the original program past March 31st, 2001 and if so, where?
2. Due to the low uptake, only 78.5 percent of the money was spent. Have we analyzed the program to determine why so many residents were excluded? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. Item 7, written questions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

Written Question 4-14(4): Funding for Non-Government Organizations

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance and it concerns funding for non-government organizations. In this year of the volunteer, this Assembly has supported the work of volunteer organizations. We have also expressed concern for the stability and funding that this government provides.

I have five questions that I would like the Minister to respond to in this regard:

1. Which non-government organizations does the government assist with core funding or in kind support?
2. Which non-government organizations receive specific project funding?
3. Which non-government organizations have multi-year agreements for core funding?
4. What criteria does the Government of the Northwest Territories use to assess performance and value for money spent?

5. Is there an annual review of performance and results?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 7, written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 8: RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Return to Written Question 1-14(4): Fuel Rebate Program

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, Return to Written Question 1-14(4), asked by Ms. Lee and responded to by the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation on the Fuel Rebate Program.

1. The duration of the initiative was approximately seven weeks from the day it was announced on March 8, 2001, to April 30, 2001.
2. The initiative did go past the original ending date of March 31, 2001, to April 30, 2001, as approved by the Financial Management Board.
3. Reasons for the extension include the number of incomplete applications received at March 31, 2001, and demand from the public that not enough time was given for all eligible people to complete and submit applications.
4. The total amount given to residents of the NWT under this initiative was \$916,045.
5. The \$916,045 represents 70.5 percent of the \$1.3 million original budgeted amount.
6. A total of 3,320 individuals benefited from this initiative. Thirty-nine received the \$75 amount, 544 received the \$150 amount, 277 received the \$160 amount, and finally 2,460 individuals received the \$320 amount.
7. The community breakdown by numbers of recipients is as follows: Aklavik 30, Colville Lake 2, Deline 33, Dettah 5, Enterprise 14, Fort Good Hope 63, Fort Liard 26, Fort McPherson 59, Fort Providence 72, Fort Resolution 81, Fort Simpson 127, Fort Smith 292, Hay River 566, Hay River Reserve 29, Holman 20, Inuvik 176, Jean Marie River 4, Kakisa 3, Lutsel'k'e 18, N'dilo 13, Nahanni Butte 6, Norman Wells 58, Paulatuk 1, Rae Lakes 50, Rae-Edzo 105, Sachs Harbour 7, Snare Lake 23, Trout Lake 13, Tsiigehtchic 15, Tuktoyaktuk 30, Tulita 29, Wha Ti 52, Wrigley 10 and Yellowknife 1,288.

Mr. Speaker, these numbers, as well as some other statistics, are now available on the Housing Corporation's website.
8. The total number of applications received was 3,671.

9. Of the total received, 351 were rejected for not conforming to the guidelines. Rejecting occurred in almost all communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform all Members that these are preliminary numbers only, as we are still trying to contact some people to verify that in fact they do qualify, otherwise overall, there will not be any significant changes to these numbers.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to the opening address. Item 10, petitions. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

Petition 2-14(4): Amendment to the Northwest Territories Liquor Act and Regulations

MR. BRADEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of an amendment to the Northwest Territories Liquor Act and Regulations.

Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 265 signatures of Yellowknife residents. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that the Government of the Northwest Territories make proper changes to the Northwest Territories Liquor Act and Regulations to allow for a commercial U-Brew facility in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

ITEM 12: REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS

Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Credit Corporation Act

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development has reviewed Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Northwest Territories Business Credit Corporation Act, and wishes to report that Bill 1 is now ready for further consideration in committee of the whole. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 11-14(4): Strengthening Aboriginal Participation in the Economy (Antoine)

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled Strengthening Aboriginal Participation in the Economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 13, tabling of documents.

Tabled Document 12-14(4): Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner, Fiscal Year 1999-2000

In accordance with Section 23 of the Official Languages Act, I wish to table the annual report of the Languages Commissioner for the fiscal year 1999 and 2000.

Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 6: National Aboriginal Day Act

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 13th, 2001, I will move that Bill 6, National Aboriginal Day Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Antoine.

Bill 7: Powers of Attorney Act

HON. JIM ANTOINE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 13th, 2001, I will move that Bill 7, Powers of Attorney Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Antoine. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 8: An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 13th, 2001, I will move that Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 9: Commercial Vehicle Trip Permit Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 13th, 2001, I will move that Bill 9, Commercial Vehicle Trip Permit Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 10: Public Highway Improvement Fund Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 13th, 2001, I will move that Bill 10, Public Highway Improvement Fund Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. Item 15, notices of motion for the first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen.

Bill 11: Architect's Act

HON. VINCE STEEN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 13th, 2001, I will move that Bill 11, Architect's Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Steen. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. There are no further motions. At this time, I think the House will be taking a break.

Just before the honourable Members take their break, it would be remiss of me if I did not make mention of this being a very special day for a lot of people. I want to draw attention to the fact that today is an anniversary for our distinguished Clerk, Mr. Hamilton.

Some 21 years ago, Mr. Hamilton began his career as an assistant clerk at Baker Lake on June 11th. It was 21 years ago that he began his career as assistant clerk and then moved all the way up to here. It is a very special day and congratulations go to Mr. Hamilton.

-- Applause

As well, today is the birthday of our law clerk, Ms. Katherine Peterson. I guess that is all of the special announcements I have to make. The House will take a break until the call of the Chair.

-- Break

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now come back to order. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

Motion 1-14(4): Appointment of Sole Adjudicators (Carried)

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Section 103 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act permits the appointment of sole adjudicators by the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS sole adjudicators appointed by the Legislative Assembly may be required to hold an inquiry for one as directed by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that the Legislative Assembly make such appointments;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that in accordance with Section 103 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the Legislative Assembly approves the following for appointment as Sole Adjudicators:

- Claude Bisson -- Jurisconsult of the National Assembly, Quebec
- Robert C. Clark -- Ethics Commissioner, Alberta
- Honourable Gregory Evans, Q.C. -- Integrity Commissioner, Ontario

- Gerald L. Gerrand, Q.C. -- Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Saskatchewan
- Wayne Green -- Commissioner of Members' Interests, Newfoundland and Labrador
- Honourable Ted Hughes -- Commissioner of Conflict of Interest, Yukon
- Honourable H.A.D. Oliver, Q.C. -- Commissioner of Conflict of Interest, British Columbia
- Honourable Robert Stanbury, Q.C. -- Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Nunavut

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

Motion 2-14(4): Affordable Access to Energy (Carried)

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS it is incumbent on the Government of the Northwest Territories to ensure that residents have access to an affordable energy to heat and light their homes;

AND WHEREAS access to energy is considered a basic necessity in the North;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories residents must use some form of oil, gas, propane or electricity to heat and light their homes;

AND WHEREAS Northwest Territories residents have some of the highest energy bills in Canada because of longer, colder winters and fewer daylight hours;

AND WHEREAS Northwest Territories residents lack access to alternative, less costly energy sources;

AND WHEREAS residents of the Northwest Territories are reliant on automotive fuels for travel and transport of goods;

AND WHEREAS the cost of heating oil has increased by 30 percent, propane by 96 percent, gasoline by 25 percent in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS increases in the cost of electricity follows fossil fuel cost increases;

AND WHEREAS the increases in energy costs have caused hardship to many individuals who are not eligible for existing subsidies, including elders and senior citizens and middle income families;

AND WHEREAS these increases in energy costs have also had an adverse impact on many businesses, particularly those who must use some form of energy to produce their product;

AND WHEREAS this government has committed to a long-term strategy to examine alternative energy sources to reduce reliance on fossil fuels;

AND WHEREAS residents of the Northwest Territories need immediate relief from the high energy cost that they will experience this winter;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the Premier and Cabinet bring forward a comprehensive energy assistance program that will serve to offset the high cost of energy to all northern residents regardless of income.

AND FURTHER, that the benefits from this program be received by Northerners by October 31, 2001.

AND FURTHERMORE, that the Premier and Cabinet bring forward a comprehensive energy strategy for the Northwest Territories that includes the development of alternative energy initiatives such as residual heat recovery programs, and encourages and promotes energy conservation.

AND FURTHERMORE, that the energy strategy include a stabilization fund to benefit northern residents and businesses.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to speak against the motion at all, because I certainly support the intention and...

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, Mr. Handley. I failed to recognize the mover of the motion, Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak in favour of this motion. We have heard from all the Members within this room that they recognize that the cost of living in the Territories continues to increase, and not only from Ordinary Members. I know Ministers are very busy and do not get back to their constituencies as often as we do, but I am sure they are in touch with their constituents enough to hear that there is a major concern for the cost of living up here.

I recognize the fact that the government is taking some initiative to put a long-term energy strategy in place. I agree that is very important. That may look after the long-term needs of the residents of the Northwest Territories, but in the short-term, we need something to help offset the high cost of living to our residents.

We have heard the Minister state a number of times that we are monitoring the cost of this and the cost of that. At the last minute, maybe we react, like we did with the Fuel Subsidy Program, but not enough time to review how effective it is going to be and who it is going to benefit. In that way, Mr. Speaker, we miss out on addressing the needs of all our residents.

I have heard the Minister say the price of oil and gas is coming down. That creates some concern for me, Mr. Speaker, because we are gearing our whole energy strategy towards a window where the prices are up, and that encourages the oil and gas development sector.

I for one do not think the prices are going to come down that far, not near to where they were before they started going up in the last year or so. I think we have to think short-term. We have to put some benefits in place that will help our residents come over the short-term.

I know people want to see development in the North. They want to see development in the hydro area and in oil and gas. I do not believe, Mr. Speaker, that the revenues that are going to be coming from any of these developments are going to be coming to our residents anytime soon, not in the next few years anyway.

I think it is incumbent upon us to get some relief packages in place that will benefit our residents. I encourage this House and the Minister to look at putting this subsidy in place to help our residents in the short term. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. McLeod.

MR. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the seconder of the motion, I would like to make my comments in favour of this motion. As we are all aware, the cost of energy is becoming increasingly high in the North, the highest in Canada, I hear. There are very few alternatives for energy in the North. It is causing hardship to many of the residents in the Deh Cho, especially to the elders and the people who were on fixed income. Last week, I made my Member's statement on the situation with the elders and the threshold that is set at \$31,000, which is no longer adequate.

I have been approached by many of the seniors who want to resort back to wood. However, that is not a solution to the problem. Many of them are not mobile enough to go out and cut firewood anymore. They still do not have the dollars to buy the firewood, as it has become quite costly. The Minister has indicated that there is no threshold review in sight.

It has also become a very big problem in the smaller communities on the businesses, not so much the ones who are established, but the ones who are young, who are trying to set up. It has become a very big hurdle. Since we have such small populations, it is increasingly difficult to set up a new company. The businesses that require the use of a lot of energy are also facing great difficulties.

This government has committed to an energy strategy, I understand to reduce the dependence on fuels. I think there is a very aggressive campaign for hydro. However, we need something new. We need something now. We need something to offset the high costs. We cannot wait. We need to get this government to act now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. To the motion. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker, I want to support the intention of this motion. I do not think the intention is anything we want to argue with, or does anything but complement the efforts that we have been making as a government on this one.

I do want to point out several things, though. Last year, we had tremendous price increases and we did implement, along with

the federal government, the one-time fuel rebate that was put in place. I want to emphasize "one-time".

At the direction of this House, we are undertaking a number of initiatives that the House has asked us to do. I am just a little concerned that we may be beginning to trip over ourselves here by having one set of directions, and before we get through with those ones, having another set of recommendations following up right behind it.

Last spring, we were asked to monitor the price of fuel and report back. We have been doing that. We were asked to come up with a program to look at ways we could help businesses, and we have been doing that. There are a number of initiatives that are ongoing right now through Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development to determine to what extent we need new programs and what those new programs would look like.

We are already doing some things that are not 100 percent consistent with what is being asked in this motion, but I think are aiming in the same direction. That includes some of the major initiatives in terms of assisting Inuvik with the gas pipeline, the work we are doing on the Hydro Strategy, on the new Environmental Technology Program we have initiated this year. There are a number of things that are ongoing.

I think we have to be careful we do not get so many directions and recommendations out there that we get confused about which way we are going before we put together the basis of the strategy.

One piece of the motion that caused me a bit of concern is the statement that the benefits of the program be received by Northerners by October 31, 2001. That is a pretty quick turnaround, to have programs all in place, a strategy in place, a program in place, and the cheques going out to people by the end of October. Realistically, can we be expected to achieve that kind of deadline? I doubt that we can have a whole energy strategy put together and benefits paid out to everyone in any orderly fashion by the end of October. I hope there is some flexibility on that one.

As well, I think any kind of energy subsidy has to be looked at as something that is responsive to the price of fuel. It cannot be just an ongoing subsidy that is paid out regardless of what happens to prices. As a government, we need to have that flexibility to be able to adjust any sort of subsidy program according to prices.

I am optimistic that the price of fuel is going to continue to go down. Some may not share my optimism. It is going to be hard to tell who is going to be right in the end. I doubt prices will go as low as they have been in the past, but I expect that they will be lower in the short term, at least in the next few years, than what we have experienced last year.

We do not want to get into a situation where we are getting into permanent subsidies because permanent subsidies do not work. I have seen various kinds of those over the years and they lose their meaning after a while.

Mr. Speaker, while I support the intention of the motion, there are some things in it that I believe are overlapping with the direction, the recommendations and the advice that has been provided by the House already. We want to be careful that we do not trip over some initiatives before they even get

completed. Second, it is just a heads-up that I really do not believe that we will be able to deliver the benefits of this energy strategy, energy program as early as next October. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting this motion. I think it is a good motion. I specifically wanted to speak to the suggestion that we need another fuel subsidy.

I did a statement last week about fuel subsidies, and suggested that the next time we do one, we have to get it right. We have to make sure the thing meets the objectives that we set out for it. I think the last fuel subsidy that we did, although it was well intentioned, I tend to think that we may have rushed it through and not taken the time to flush out the details that were necessary.

I think this is evidenced by the uptake in the last program of 70 percent of the original budget was spent, Mr. Speaker. I think that is why I asked the written question today about this 70 percent uptake, and why we excluded so many residents and did not allow everyone to have some relief.

I think the next time we do this, we have to look at it for small businesses as well as individuals. There is a perception that small business can simply pass on the added costs into the price of their goods, and residents, at the end of the chain, will end up paying these costs. It is not always the case, Mr. Speaker. I think oftentimes, small business in small markets are not pricing their goods based on the cost of goods, but often on what the market will bear. In smaller communities, this is more likely the case in many instances.

I think we have to look at something that provides relief to small business, and I do not think that this has to be contrary to other initiatives that the government has going on at the same time. I think we could sit here forever waiting for relief if we waited for all of this government's strategies to come to bear, Mr. Speaker. I think we have to move more quickly than that.

I also believe that the next time we get into a subsidy situation, we should not exclude people on the basis of income. We saw situations where there were people making well below the threshold who, for one reason or another, were getting a slight line on their cheque that suggested part of their wage was a fuel subsidy, they were automatically excluded.

There were other people making a few dollars over the cutoff, yet they were running a larger home because they may have had lots of children, big families, one income in the family, they still did not qualify, Mr. Speaker. I think that is a shame. I think these things have to be based on expenditure. If people are paying for fuel, they should be getting relief. I think that should be the only criteria, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I think this is a good motion. I was disappointed that the government did not support this the other day. I am glad to hear Mr. Handley state that he agrees in principle. I believe the time is now for action on the part of this government to provide relief to all of our residents. I hope the government will take this motion and our recommendations seriously. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bell. To the motion. The honourable member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I as well would like to speak in support of this motion. I see the main thrust is a short-term remedy to get ready for this coming heating season, which is not that far off. The longer, more strategic plan would come later, as the Premier has indicated. He is starting an Energy Secretariat that is going to report to him. It is going to have the mandate to come up with this broad energy strategy, as well his Hydro Secretariat, that is going to have a related function.

Very clearly, Mr. Speaker, the price of fuel, while Minister Handley may think is going to go down, the reality is that it has come up very, very high. It is not going to go down to the same levels. I just saw a survey done by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business which indicated that is the number one concern among small businesses in the Northwest Territories, the high cost of energy, heating and fuel.

I think that sentiment would be shared by every private individual as well. I think this just provides reinforcement and support to the government to move ahead with this kind of very important program. Let us do it now, and not be like the grasshopper and fiddle away until September or October. Let us be like the ant and get ready for the winter we know is coming.

I would strongly encourage the government to take this motion in the spirit it is intended, to support the initiatives and efforts of the government to deal with this very complicated issue. However, we have to be ready for the winter. Now is the time to start planning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak in favour of this motion as well. I think that we really need to develop a plan that will help all.

As we have heard, the rebate plan that was developed last year did not really help as many people as we thought and were told it would. In fact, I have constituents who did not qualify, even though their total amount of compensation was \$30,000 less than what the cap was on the program. They could not qualify for the rebate program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame!

MR. DENT: Why? Because they had a line on their cheque that said fuel rebate. Mr. Speaker, these were single moms who could not qualify, even though they should have within the salary guidelines that were set for the program.

We need to be prepared with a program that is better thought out for next winter, and that takes some time.

The Minister has said that he does not think that it could be ready for the fall. The program we had this past winter was announced, then developed and then paid out in a matter of weeks. That, Mr. Speaker, was part of the reason for the problem. It was developed too quickly and we missed some of the people that should have qualified for it.

We need to take from now until October to make sure we develop a program that gets to as many people as possible. I think that it is also time, as other Members have said, to bring in a program that will consider small business.

If we are not careful, high energy costs could eliminate many jobs in a lot of our smaller communities. I hope the Minister is right, that the cost of energy is going to go down in the next few months, but I do not think that it will. I think that we have to be prepared for that.

In the short-term, we need to have a program that is ready for us to talk about in the fall, one that will eliminate the flaws that we had in the last program.

The second part of this motion deals with the long-term energy strategy that, Mr. Speaker, the government has already committed to and is moving forward on. I think that what we are trying to do here is encourage the government to take a two-pronged approach.

One, move forward on a comprehensive energy strategy, which should include a rate stabilization fund to benefit Northerners in the long-term. However, in the meantime, and in the short-term, we need to have an energy rebate program for this coming winter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dent. To the motion. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues have covered a number of good points. I was pleased to hear that the Minister has not dismissed the idea of an energy subsidy.

There may be issues to do with timing, but I would certainly hope that the government will pick up the challenge of addressing more comprehensive energy rebate programs for the cost of Northerners in that time.

I would like to make a point that, Mr. Speaker, in a number of programs, this government is already engaged in energy subsidies that are valued in the millions, and perhaps even in the tens of millions, of dollars a year. Reflect on the Power Support Program, on the Seniors Fuel Subsidy, on Income Support clients who, through Housing Assistance, receive an indirect subsidy for their energy costs. A number of communities are benefiting through the Petroleum Products division, also indirectly from the provision of government supported infrastructure for their fuel systems.

Our point here, Mr. Speaker, is that a belief that if we took these individual pockets where this government is already engaged in energy related support, we would already have a very substantive core fund that could be used on a more universal basis, as my colleague Mr. Dent said, to provide an even greater assistance and incentive for businesses to set up.

Those are the kinds of things that would be very progressive and it would go into a long-term program to not only assist with the high cost of energy, but stabilize over the long-term this essential part of our life up here in the North.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Braden. To the motion. Question has been called. Before that, the mover has the last word. Mr. Delorey.

MR. DELOREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few words on the Minister's comments. I am glad to see that he is in support of the intention of this motion.

As far as a one-time fuel rebate that he mentioned, this is not permitting the government to any yearly subsidy or program. I think that this is kind of a one-time thing to address our residents' needs in the coming winter.

Energy, heating our homes and lighting our homes is not an option in the Territories. It is something that has to be done. We know that is going to be expensive next winter. We would like to see something come into place.

As far as timelines are concerned, as was mentioned by my colleague, Mr. Dent, the last fuel subsidy rebate that was put in place was a very short time frame. It was something like three weeks. So we thought we were being very generous when we said by October, 2001. We think that is a good time to give it some thought and make sure that it is done right, and that it benefits as many of our residents as possible.

We know there are a number of initiatives in place within the government to deal with energy, and I encourage that. I hope that those initiatives continue, but I think we have to do something in the short-term. We have to do it quickly. By October, I think we have time to look at it and have the government do it right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

-- Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Is the House ready for the question? Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

-- Applause

Item 16, motions. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motion 3-14(4): Amendments to the Rules of the Legislative Assembly to Facilitate Referral of Statutory Reports (Carried)

WHEREAS, certain annual reports and the reports of statutory officers presented to this Legislative Assembly require review and consideration by the House; and

WHEREAS, these reports require referral by the House to a committee of the Legislative Assembly for review; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to establish a referral process in the Rules of the Legislative Assembly to facilitate reviews by committees;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Weledeh, that Rule 85(2)(d) of the Rules of the Legislative Assembly be amended by adding after Auditor General, "In the event that the Assembly is not in session, the Speaker may provide the Auditor General's Report and the Minister of Finance may provide the public accounts to the committee for review, which may include public hearings in advance of tabling";

AND FURTHER, that new rule 85(2)(f) be added as follows: "Review, as necessary and appropriate, the annual and other reports of statutory officers of the Legislative Assembly, including the Commissioner of Official Languages, Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the Information and Privacy Commissioner";

AND FURTHERMORE, Rule 85(2)(f) be renumbered as 85(2)(g) and Rule 85(2)(g) be renumbered as 85(2)(h);

FURTHERMORE, that 85-4 be rescinded and the following be adopted. "The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures shall:

- a) review the reports of the Chief Electoral Officer on the conduct of elections, plebiscites or votes conducted in the Northwest Territories, in accordance with statute; and
- b) inquire into such matters as may be referred to it by the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker or the Board of Management.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Item 16, motions. Any further motions? Item 17, first reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 4: Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1, 2001-2002

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1, 2001-2002, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Handley. We have a motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The Chair recognizes that the motion is carried. Bill 4 has had first reading. Item 17, first reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

Bill 4: Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1, 2001-2002

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1, 2001-2002, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some reservations in regard to the size of this supplementary that is presently in front of us. We just passed the Main Estimates a couple of months ago, yet the size of this supplementary is pretty large, knowing that we are not out of the woods yet with respect to the deficit situation that we just got out of. If we have a bad fire season over the summer, I believe we may be back in those trees. I think that we as a government have to realize that we are spending the main portion of the whole supplementary appropriation reserve that is supposed to be there for the whole year through this one supplementary.

I think we have to be cautious when it comes to expenditures knowing that we have a process in place where we as a government and we as Members have a say in regard to how the expenditures are going to be done through the business planning process that we all go through, and that the departments should plan ahead for these expenditures. Yet, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of expenditures in there which were not even part of the main estimates or planning process that we were looking at just a couple of months ago.

I realize there are some important issues out there, but we have to also realize that we are not better off than we were a number of years ago. If Members can remember from the 13th Assembly, we had a major deficit situation where we had to cut over \$100 million. That was a lot of pain for everybody in the North. I feel that we as a government and as Members of the opposite side of the House have to realize that the supplementary appropriations should be used only in cases of emergency. We should not be using dollars because we want to establish a new program where we missed the timing of the capital planning process. I do not think it is fair to our communities.

The communities I represent, in the case of Aklavik, they have an alcohol and drug centre which they cannot use because it was condemned by the Department of Health and Social Services because the sewer system froze up and they cannot even have gatherings or meetings with clients. These situations are happening in our communities where those projects are not part of this year, but yet we have allocated a lot of dollars to different groups.

I think we have to realize that it should only be used on an emergency basis and only when it is absolutely needed, and we have to use supplementary appropriations for the whole year and we cannot use the large portion of it just a couple of months after we passed the main estimates in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I will be having more questions on this matter when we go forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. To the principle of the bill. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too share some of the same concerns my colleague from Mackenzie Delta stated. We are early in our fiscal year and we are already, according to the numbers that are being presented, over expending our supplementary reserves. That is a concern to me. Since becoming a Member of the 14th Assembly, I have made my concern about our fiscal position as the Government of the Northwest Territories known.

Mr. Speaker, within two months of the budget being passed, the fact that we are already expending the supplementary

reserves gives me concern. We have ten more months to go, with the more expensive season yet to come, the winter season, for extra costs as a government.

I know Members have been calling for more expenditures in areas, but I think we really need to look at what we are doing and how far we are willing to go. I understand that some of these figures in the supplementary appropriation are for carryovers and for capital projects, and those are understandable. Sometimes projects do not get completed on time so the money is carried over, but there are areas where there is concern, Mr. Speaker, when we are so new into the fiscal year that we are already having to deal with forced growth. That, Mr. Speaker, gives me serious concern.

We are just beginning the year and the time of the year when things would be considered to be less expensive. For example, Mr. Speaker, we all know that the energy costs are lower during the summer and prices, as we heard Mr. Handley state, of oil and gas have been dropping. We know that they start dropping in May because the demand, for example, for home heating oil goes down. They again start going up in October, as is the cycle for many years. We will be paying more then. Departments will have to pay more. If we are already dipping into forced growth areas that were unaccounted for, that gives me serious concern as to what is going to happen in the near future when things start getting colder and darker once again.

There are some important initiatives in here, and as Members, we will need to look at that. I myself intend to question some of the requests for funding.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the area of special warrants is one of the highest areas that is being called for. That basically tells me as a Member that it has already been expended. The money has been spent and we are just going through a process now. It draws serious concern in that area, Mr. Speaker.

With that, as we are going through it, I will be questioning the Ministers on their requests for more funding. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. To the principle of the bill. Is the House ready for the question?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 4 has had second reading. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to committee of the whole. Item 18, second reading of bills. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Handley.

Bill 5: An Act to Amend the Education Act

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Speaker,

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Education Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will allow the Minister to allocate to an education body the power to dispose of personal property held by the education body and, subject to the approval of the Minister, the power to dispose of real property held by the education body. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Minister. We have a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour, please signify. Thank you. All those opposed? Thank you. The motion is carried. Bill 5 has had second reading. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to a committee. Item 18, second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Ministers' statements 1, 3 and 4; Bills 3 and 4, with Mr. Krutko in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): I would like to call committee of the whole to order. We have Minister's Statement 1-14(4), Minister's Statement 3-14(4), Minister's Statement 4-14(4), Bill 3 and Bill 4. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I would like to recommend the committee consider Bill 3 first, followed by Bill 4.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We will proceed to Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, colleagues, as Government House Leader and member of the Board of Management of this Assembly, I am pleased to present Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

By practice, amendments of this nature have been introduced by the government after they have been developed by the Board of Management. The bill before you today, Mr. Chairman, will clarify that only one Minister serves as a member of the Board of Management, and provides for the appointment of alternate members to the Board of Management. In providing for alternate members, the amendment makes provision in the act for the appointment by the Legislative Assembly of one alternate Cabinet representative and two alternate Regular Members on the Board of Management. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Minister Handley. This bill was referred directly to committee of the whole. It was not reviewed by the committee. At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to bring in witnesses.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that the Minister can bring in witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses in please? Mr. Minister, please introduce your witness for the record.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me is Mr. Mark Aitken, the director of the legislation division at the Department of Justice.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome to the House. General comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): This is in tab 3 of your grey binders. Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Clause 1.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 2.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Clause 3.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill as a whole?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, is ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Bill 3 is now ready for third reading. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you to your witness. As we agreed, we will move on to Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1, 2001-2002. I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the bill if he has any comments. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1 requests authority for operations expenditure appropriations of \$25,107,974 and capital investment appropriations of \$31,871,000.

The request for operations expenditure funding exceeds the supplementary reserve in the 2001-2002 Main Estimates by \$2 million.

Major items included in the operations expenditure request are as follows:

1. \$6.6 million for programs associated with the Maximizing Northern Employment initiatives. A special warrant was approved for \$4 million of this funding to ensure programs were in place for students and new graduates whose schooling ended in April.
2. \$6.8 million for the Department of Health and Social Services to address forced growth in the health boards, standardized physician contracts, and operating costs of the Yellowknife medical clinics. The 2001-2002 supplementary reserve had included \$6 million for forced growth by the department.
3. \$1.8 million for startup and operating costs associated with the implementation of the Highway Investment Strategy.
4. \$2 million for required investments related to Mackenzie Valley development projects.

5. \$1.8 million for the Departments of Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment for the initiatives outlined in the Early Childhood Development Action Plan. A separate supplementary reserve of \$2 million was established for these initiatives in the 2001-2002 Main Estimates.

The request for additional investment exceeds the budgeted reserve by \$23 million. However, the net impact on the Government's accumulated cash position is only \$5 million. This is due to:

1. Advancing \$10.7 million of the cash flow for the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Centre, which was accelerated due to the successful negotiations for the design and construction of the facility; and
2. 2000-2001 capital appropriation lapses, which were \$7 million higher than estimated.

The additional capital investment includes \$17 million in capital carryovers from the 2000-2001 fiscal year. The funding was approved and lapsed in 2000-2001.

Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to review the details of the supplementary appropriation requests. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Thank you, Mr. Minister. There is no committee report. Are there any general comments on the Minister's opening statement? At this time, I would like to ask the Minister if he will be bringing in witnesses.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, I would.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Sergeant-at-Arms, can you escort the witnesses in please? Mr. Minister, can you introduce your witness for the record?

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, with me is Lew Voytilla, secretary to the Financial Management Board. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Welcome. General Comments to Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act. Detail? Can I have you move to, in regard to Supplementary Appropriation, under the Executive, operation expenditures, Cabinet Secretariat. There is no numbering on these pages, but that is where we will start from. Has everybody found it? Executive operation expenditures, Cabinet Secretariat, special warrants, \$3,456,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am just wondering, under the \$3,456,000 that we see for Maximizing Northern Employment initiatives here, can the Minister tell us what is the total amount proposed in this fiscal year for Maximizing Northern Employment?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, up to today, the total amount is about \$8 million. We anticipate that it could be as much as \$3 million more.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know when we first heard about the initiative, we were told that the reserve for it would be about \$5 million. We are talking now about more than double that, if I hear the Minister right, going up to \$11 million. I believe, in this supp alone, there is about \$6.4 million. So what is leading to the move from a program that was announced at about \$5 million to more than doubling the program, in such a short period of time?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of Finance, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the \$5 million we had initially estimated is a holding figure that we had at the time, but what we have found is that there are tremendous opportunities out there. There are also a lot of candidates for training and employment programs and, as initiatives come forward, they are considered.

I think this is a good initiative in getting our people employed and on the job as our economy speeds up. We are responding to the initiatives as they are coming forward.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not think that anybody in this House would disagree with the Minister's characterization that this is a very important program and that we want to see it maximized.

My interest and concern comes from...is this a bottomless pit? Do we have unlimited funds that we can put into this? I think I heard earlier today, the Minister talk about us having more expenditures in terms of cash than we have revenues this year. He just told us that we can expect to see a further \$3 million in supplementaries, if I heard him correctly, on this initiative alone.

My question is: is there a limit that the Minister has in mind for this program for this year or is it one that is open-ended, depending on the initiatives that come forward?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister responsible for the Financial Management Board, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I expect that the \$8 million, plus an estimated \$3 million more, is the limit that we would want to place on this.

Having said that, I have to say this is a good investment. I think it is worth putting money into our people. If and when we do reach the \$11 million, we have to look very hard at whether or not that is where we are going to cap the program or whether there still are initiatives out there that are worth putting money in.

I do not see it as a bottomless pit. I see it as an investment. I think it can be a good investment if we do it right. I am optimistic, given the initiatives underway, that this is going to give us returns in the end. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, I cannot disagree with the Minister at all. I do agree that these are important initiatives and I think that they are investments in our future.

However, I guess if we do not have an endless supply of money, we do have to make choices. I would say that we should carefully examine whether or not the further investment in money comes in adult training programs or increasing the funding at the early childhood level or in primary or secondary education. The first twelve years of formal education and before.

We know how much of a payback we can get from an investment in early childhood development. We know that we get savings for government, about seven dollars for every one dollar that is invested in early childhood development.

I am not sure that we get the same level of return from this type of investment. So unless we can afford to do both, I think we have to look at where the balance is. That was the point of my question. I think we may be jumping on this bandwagon with a lot of enthusiasm. I think that is good, but I think we need to examine our priorities.

I think we would be better served by moving some of that \$11 million into the early childhood programs, or into schools programs and taking a look at whether or not, for instance, the pupil-teacher ratio; should it be an average? Or should it be considered, as what we set right now, as an upper limit? Move our targets to bring the pupil-teacher ratio down and put more money into classroom support so that kids have a better chance of success.

That is the purpose for my question. It is not to say that these are not good initiatives. I think they are, but if we can afford to go for \$5 million to \$8 million to \$11 million in this one program, I think that we have to say, at the same time saying, we have no more money for early childhood development or for schools. I think we have to examine our priorities and say maybe there is a saw-off here that we have to make.

That is really what I am hoping we can take a look at, rather than just continuing to look at these initiatives as they come forward.

I do not have a question on that. That is a comment. I am hoping the government will move to reexamine its focus on this and perhaps take a look at increasing the funding in the early childhood or the schools area.

One question I do have, or further question I have on this page, Mr. Chairman. The \$225,000 for the Social Agenda Conference; is this the entire cost that we are expecting to see for this conference? If not, could the Minister advise us what the expectation is that the total cost for that conference will be?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, just to comment on the setting of priorities. Let me just clarify that while we are spending up to \$11 million on Maximizing Northern Employment, we have not forgotten early childhood and in-school programs.

In fact, in this same supplementary appropriation, there is a request for \$2 million for early childhood that we have included in here. We also have legislation in place requiring us to act on lowering the pupil-teacher ratio at the school level.

However, the reality is that we have jobs out there today, and this winter and next year and so on, that we have to prepare

people for. I appreciate the Member's comments. We will keep in mind the need to balance out our spending and get returns. We also want to put an emphasis on investments that we will be able to measure and know whether or not they will be giving us early returns. If they are not, then we will cease those ones.

In terms of the costs for the Social Agenda Conference, the \$225,000 is not the full cost. The full cost is estimated at \$325,000. The additional costs were funded from within the existing appropriations of the Department of the Executive and from the social envelope departments. Our estimate right now is \$327,000 for the full cost of the conference. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of supplementary identified under here as special warrants at \$3,456,000 as approved on April 5, 2001. My question is why would this be a few days after the Main Estimates were approved? Can the Minister inform us as to why this required a special warrant and was not planned for during the process? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): The Minister of the Financial Management Board, Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this amount was \$310,000 for northern student employment programs and \$3,146,000 for northern graduate employment programs. While we announced the initiative in the budget, we did not have the details worked about how this programs were going to be structured, but it was necessary to have early approval of these in order to not create delays in hiring graduates and in providing student summer employment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My recollection is that these programs were announced early in the winter. I believe in January some announcement was given as to these programs were being looked into and planning to take down and get involved with. At that time, why were some figures, even holding figures, not placed in the budget to establish them? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we did have a \$5 million holding figure for Maximizing Northern Employment in the budget. We did not have the detail of each of these programs. That was worked out later but too late to include in the budget. There was a \$5 million holding figure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under special warrants, where would you get the initial revenue for it for those expenditures?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure if I understand the question, but the funding for this would come out of general revenue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A little more specific in my question, under special warrants. According to the Financial Administration Act, special warrants can be expended and approved, and dollars can be taken out of certain areas, whether it is other projects or other identified dollars. Then, when approval is granted, I guess you can put the money back. Do I have the correct understanding of this process? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Financial Administration Act does provide an option for the consideration by the Financial Management Board, and that option is to take the money to finance the special warrant from some other location. In this case, the Financial Management Board chose not to do that, and instead chose to fund it from general revenues.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Mr. Chairman, may I seek some clarification. I thought we were already in detail. I did have page 8 of this bill. Is that not the case?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): We are under executive operations expenditures, cabinet secretariat, special warrant, \$3,456,000, not previously authorized, \$225,000. Cabinet secretariat, special warrant, \$3,456,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Not previously authorized, \$225,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Executive, operations expenditures, directorate, special warrant, not previously authorized, \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Not previously authorized, \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Excuse me, could I have some cooperation here? We are going through the budget. Not previously authorized, \$25,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the directorate of FMB, healthy workplace program, June 1, 2001, can we get some information as to what this healthy workplace program is meant to do?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This modest amount is just an initial step towards improving the workplace in the GNWT. We do think that the people who are in the best position to tell us what we need to do to make the workplace a better environment are our employees. This initial money is to set up a series of focus groups and sessions with employees throughout the Territories, and with their union representatives, to work through what changes should be made to the workplace and what priority should be assigned to those changes. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): General comments. Directorate, not previously authorized, \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Labour relation compensation services, special warrants, \$186,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Not previously authorized, \$111,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Total department, special warrants, \$3,642,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Agreed. Not previously authorized, \$361,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, regional operations, special warrants, \$580,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for clarification on this issue. This is a matter that was raised during the winter session as the budget was going through. Members had identified and heard the concerns of municipalities in the area of insurance. It is good to see that we are reacting to ensure that the communities are not negatively impacted by a decision made that impacts Canada overall. My question is, is this a continuing process? Will this be identified in the main estimates as forced growth? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Minister.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is forced growth. We did not have the detail we needed in order to put it into the mains. I would hope that in future years, it can be included in our mains.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Regional operations, special warrants, \$580,000. Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Community financial services, special warrants, \$250,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is this \$150,000 that we see here for the evaluation of community water infrastructure systems, is it related to the \$530,000? Is this attempting to ensure that our water systems in the North are in fact safe and that we can therefore demonstrate that safety to an insurance company, and perhaps bring down the premiums for municipalities in the future? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. That is the intent, as Mr. Dent has outlined. We will do an assessment to look at our legislation and use that information to be able to keep our premiums at a minimum.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to hear that. Does the Minister believe that we are perhaps headed towards territorial water standards? In other words, are we considering the enactment of legislation that would make sure that all municipalities met certain minimum standards, because that would obviously be one way to assure an insurance company that our communities do in fact have safe drinking water?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, that could very well be where we are heading.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Community financial services, special warrant, \$250,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total department, special warrants, \$830,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of special warrants, approved on May 22nd, 2001: "To provide funding for supply of gravel materials. Due to bad weather conditions, scheduled gravel hauls could not be completed during the 2000-2001 fiscal year", an offset amount of \$100,000. We are expecting this work to begin when?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is a capital carryover. The work was not done last year, but was carried over this year. As far as we know, it has already been done.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Total department, special warrants, \$830,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Health and Social Services, operation expenditures, directorate and corporate services, not previously authorized, \$1,200,000. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the description we have in our supplementary, it looks like we have a large portion of this money for training programs and development of the programs.

What I am trying to get here is a sense of what the breakdown is for workers. We know from the Child Welfare League Report that we have a considerable problem with the numbers of workers in some regions in the Northwest Territories. I would like to know how much of this money is going to go into increasing the numbers of workers in the field? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, we already introduced 10 new positions into the system in our mains. So this amount of money is being used in order to make our social system work effectively. It goes into a number of areas, in both program development and also in social work, or child protection, training development and delivery.

However, none of it is for additional, new, social work or positions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Krutko): Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I am disappointed to hear that. I think that it is essential that we have good training programs and obviously, we need to make sure the system works well.

The ten new social workers the Minister talks about could have easily gone to one community and not dealt with all the problems laid out by the Child Welfare League.

So we are a long ways behind the curb when it comes to having an adequate number of workers. The workload is a real problem. I would have to again ask, where is the priority of the government if we are not putting the money into front line workers and making sure that we have an adequate number of workers to deal with the problems they are facing in the field right now?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, having workers is certainly one part of the problem, and a big piece of it, but having effective programs for those social workers to work with is also a challenge. We would not want to put social workers in there without the programs. So the areas we are intending on investing money in the supplementary request is in support of those child workers. It is part of the recommendations of the Child Welfare League. It goes into areas such as the child protection programs, adoption programs, foster family, family violence, search and reunion training, child abuse protocol training and looking after children training, foster family training, computer-based training and a whole host of areas that we need in order to make the social workers effective in their positions.

So just putting in more and more workers without the support programs I think would result in an ineffective system and very frustrated workers.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not arguing against the need for those programs, Mr. Chairman. However, what I am concerned about is the fact that we have social workers now who do not have time because they are so far behind the 8-ball when it comes to trying to deal with the situations. I believe we have children at risk in the Northwest Territories.

Having all the programs in place does not do you any good if the workers themselves do not have time to deal with the families in crisis, if they do not have time to deal with the kids who are in trouble.

That is the situation I think we are in right now and I think the Child Welfare League Report confirmed that. It did say that there was a crisis when it came to dealing with the number of workers, specifically in Yellowknife and in the Deh Cho region.

Mr. Chairman, again, we talked earlier about having to set priorities if dollars are limited. I would have to question whether or not this is the right split, or whether or not some of these monies should not be split off from program development into

making sure that we could increase the numbers of workers quickly.

I just recently got a letter from the Minister of Health and Social Services telling me they could not find the funding to continue providing Yellowknife Health and Social Services with the money they had had last year for three temporary positions.

So we are in a situation where I am scared that kids are going to be put at risk because we are not finding enough workers to deal with their immediate needs. I think that we need to reexamine where our priorities are here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am sure the department shares those same concerns. The need to have a balance between the number of social workers and the programs that they have to deliver to make them effective social workers.

Mr. Chairman, maybe I will ask if the Minister of Health wants to comment on this, since it is getting into the programs that are delivered through that department.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you. Mrs. Groenewegen, would you like to respond?

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have a lot to add to what Mr. Handley has already said. The response to the Child Welfare League Report was identified as a three-year implementation plan. Year one of the plan did call for ten social workers, and a significant investment in training program development. The need for the training and development does go hand-in-hand with the employment of workers in this field. We feel it is an important component as well. I do not have a lot to what Mr. Handley has already said. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly hope that we do not hear about a child that has had to undergo a crisis because we could not get a worker to deal with the family. I really think this is something that we need to take a look at. I think that Minister Handley has talked about the need for us to invest, for instance, in training and jobs, and how important that is given what is happening in our economy. I have no doubt that the Minister has also heard about the developing social problems in those communities that are impacted by an increasing number of jobs, particularly in the resource sector.

I think that if nothing else, if we cannot use this money to get more social workers, then I hope we are going to hear that some of that \$3 million he was talking about still to come for Maximizing Northern Employment is going to be used to make sure that we get more social workers in the field, because we really need to see that happening and we cannot wait. Three years is too long to respond to the recommendations of the Child Welfare League report.

Mr. Chairman, I think I have said my piece on that. I have one question now that I would like some detail on. In the explanation for this \$1.2 million, we see that one of the reasons for the expenditure is for child advocacy. Are we moving

towards instituting a child's advocate in the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are, and that is part of this funding allocation, to do the research and development of a proposal for a child advocate, so yes we are.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very happy to hear that. By the way, I am surprised. Being a member of the Standing Committee on Social Programs, I would have expected that committee would have been informed that we were moving that way. Can the Minister give us some details about the plans to move towards having a children's advocate in the Northwest Territories? For instance, what is the timetable? Is it seen as a full-time position? Where will the position be housed? Will it operate at arms length from government? Could the Minister give us some understanding of just how it is that we are headed towards this program but we are hearing about it the first time now?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Madam Minister.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department has begun the preliminary work necessary to determine the viability of creating such a position and determining how the advocate would function most effectively. Information is being gathered on various mandates and roles of advocates, potential options and costs. A variety of potential options has been developed. However, all potential options require legislative authority, and once the initial research has been completed and a proposed approach developed, input from MLAs and other key stakeholders will be sought.

Mr. Chairman, this work that is being done on a child advocate has been laid out as part of the implementation goals from the Child Welfare League report. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. The Chair recognizes Mr. Braden.

MR. BRADEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like my colleague, Mr. Dent, I am concerned that the resources, especially the human resources, that we are to make available just are really not meeting the needs. It was indeed frustrating and heartbreaking to listen to people already on the front line in child care talking about situations they recognized which were spiraling out of control in problem homes, knowing that because they did not have the wherewithal to assist and intervene at an early stage, there were disasters and crises in the making. The need to be able to stream more people into that is right at our doorstep.

The question I would like to ask in relation to that, the budget amount that is being requested here is in the description of training and program development. I certainly cannot argue with that at all. What I would like to find out a bit more about though -- perhaps it is under program development -- is prevention and measures that we can take to do more of that

proactive upfront work to help people, to help families, to help systems recognize early on the actions that can be taken that will make a difference before we have to get into the stage of active intervention and crisis management. What kind of resources or funds are within this budget allocation that could be said to be working for prevention? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, in the area of child protection training, development and delivery, there is about \$490,000 out of this that goes into that. Most of that money is essentially training money. While some of the money that is included in program development, the \$710,000 in child protection, adoption, foster family, family violence, children's mental health and so on, is also in the category of prevention. A good piece of it here is meant to begin working on prevention, but also to enable our social workers to be effective so that they have the tools and the training to be effective social workers.

Mr. Chairman, I think a lot of the discussion we are getting into here today is the kind of discussion that I expect will be happening next week when we get into the Social Agenda Conference, and we have everyone from front line workers to officials within departments and with boards who are discussing these same issues we are talking about here as they go through the various reports that have been made available. I think we are going to have a lot of good discussion next week and, probably at the end of the week, be able to put a much finer focus on this as a result of the conference outcomes. Thank you.

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

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too have some real concerns with regard to the whole area of child protection and child advocacy. I think it is important that we do ensure that the people we have in those areas have the training and have the abilities and resources to try to keep families together, rather than pulling them apart and start institutionalizing our children. We have seen what has happened in the last 30 or 50 years with regard to residential schools. We have seen what has happened with regard to the young offenders programs we have out there. I think the number of children we already have in care, we have already budgeted or allocated some \$9 million to that alone. I think just by using those numbers, that shows us the amount of resources we are spending dealing with the whole area of children who are presently in care, and the problems we see in our communities, especially where alcohol and drugs play a big role.

I would like to ask the Minister, is there a possibility that we can get a breakdown of that \$1,200,000, as to exactly how it is going to be allocated?

You mentioned different areas; child protection, adoption, family violence, foster care, children's mental health and child advocacy. Do you have a breakdown of exactly where those dollars are going to go in those different areas?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, if you like, I can just read through it and tell you what the breakdown is on each of the areas.

On social worker child protection training development and delivery, there is statutory training, child protection, \$17,200. Adoption training, \$25,000. Then we have what we refer to as competency based training for our workers. For supervisors, \$40,000 and workers \$231,815.

Foster family training, \$49,625. Looking after children training, \$40,535. Child abuse protocol training, \$12,075. Search and reunion training, \$33,750. Family violence training, \$40,000.

Under the area of program development, child protection, \$70,000. Adoption, \$15,000. Foster family, \$150,000. Family violence, \$10,000. Children's mental health, \$240,000. Child advocate, \$225,000.

That totals up to social worker child protection training development and delivery, \$490,000 and program development, \$710,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to the \$225,000 for the child advocacy, how soon do you see that being established and implemented and enacted?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a good question. I do not know how soon we would plan to have the child advocate position in place, but I have outlined the work that is being done at this point in time in a response to a previous question. However, I do not know the exact date of when a position like that would be staffed and operational.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In most jurisdictions in Canada, under the child advocacy, there is legislation that gives them their powers and what not to deal with that. I would like to ask a question on that basis. How soon do we see legislation being brought forth to establish this organization, in regard to child advocacy and having the legislation to back that position or person, so they can carry out their responsibility as a child advocate, similar to other jurisdictions in Canada?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: As I said before, there is legislative authority required to develop this position. The research on what happens in other jurisdictions is underway now.

I believe Mr. Krutko had an opportunity to attend a meeting recently that discussed the issue of child advocacy in various regions. I believe that some of the representatives that were at that meeting may also be coming here to the North. We plan to take every opportunity to avail ourselves of precedents and work that has already been done in this area, in order to ensure

that we get the best and most current legislation in place. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: One last question. I would like to ask how do we see our front line workers in our communities dealing with this? Lately, most of the calls I have received were in this area, in which I was asked to intervene where a child was taken away from a parent because of alcohol-related problems, in which they were drinking at home.

It seems like it is always alcohol-related, but yet we do not have a mechanism to help people deal with the alcohol problems in the home. Our solution seems to be we will take the kid away from the home, but do not deal with the problems in the community and in the home.

So I would like to ask the Minister, exactly how much training do people in the communities have in this area? What are you doing to deal with the main source of the problem, which is probably 80 or 90 percent alcohol-related?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, part of this money that is being requested is to ensure that there are standardized levels of competency amongst child protection workers who do work with children and families that are stressful and high risk situations.

Certainly there are a number of contributing factors to families who find themselves in situations. The Member is correct that quite often, alcohol does play a role.

One of the other items that will be coming up under the early childhood development initiative, talks about parenting and family support. I just want to restate that when child protection workers work with families, removal of children from the family is always viewed as a last resort. We have a statutory obligation to protect children at risk. Every effort should be made to keep the family together and to support the individuals as a family unit.

We feel that with the additional training and support that will be offered to the front line workers that, with the additional positions that have been added, the ten new social workers, there is going to be more time available to work with families in dealing with some of their issues. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Directorate, corporate services, not previously authorized, \$1,200,000. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a little further in this area. Some of the detail that was provided earlier to a Member in the area of fostering and foster care training and programs, I believe there is \$12,750 identified in training for foster families, and then \$150,000 identified in programs. How much training do we expect to get for \$12,750? How many families do we expect to be able to provide training to?

Then, under programming of \$150,000, what will that be used for? Is that to provide more funding for foster care families, or is

it programming that would be used in the department? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the amount for foster family training was \$49,625. That is more than the \$12,750. Exactly how that is going to be used, how many families that trains and exactly what the \$150,000 is for, I will have to turn to Mrs. Groenewegen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have that level of detail with me today. However, I could certainly provide a breakdown even further, as to the exact activities that would take place under the \$150,000 that the Member refers to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Roland.

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I ask the questions and would like to see that detail is I share some of the concerns raised by other Members. In fact, we are dealing with some numbers here, and some of the numbers quoted are not very large figures. A concern is we are identifying dollars and training programs, things that will be used in headquarters, or training of senior staff, in those areas.

I am not sure, until I see further detail, is it going to front line workers, or is it going to, in this case, foster care, right to families so they can use it for food or clothing? What area is that in the area of foster care? Is it to try to get more foster care parents, who is going to be eligible for the money? That kind of detail would be nice to know, because right now, those figures are not very high. Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, the money is identified as social worker/child protection training and delivery. Clearly, the \$49,625 is for training social workers, not people in headquarters.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you. Does this training initiative also cover the travel involved with getting social workers either to regional centres or to the capital? Thank you.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure. It does not break it down that way. I am assuming it would include the cost of bringing people to centres if that is necessary, or having someone go out to them.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Directorate, corporate services, not previously authorized, \$1,200,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Agreed. Primary and acute care programs, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I see that \$420,974 of this \$7 million is to provide funding for a third internal medicine specialist and associated support staff at Stanton Regional Hospital. I would like some clarification. Would an internal medicine specialist not require the support of a surgical unit at some point in order to work?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would expect that the medical internist would not require a full-time surgical unit. The internal medicine deals with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, liver, kidney diseases, cancer and so on. I expect that while a surgical unit complements it nicely, I do not think one is 100 percent dependant on the other. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question was not whether it needed to be there 100 percent of the time, but I guess I am really trying to find out, since we do not know yet when or if the surgical ward is going to open, is this position not a position that would have need of a surgical ward in order to fully perform the function of their job?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Handley.

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not think that not having a surgical ward would mean we should not have an internal medicine specialist. While a surgical ward would be useful, it is not absolutely essential. I notice that part of the ongoing annual operating costs includes travel to other centres, for example, Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik as well. We do not have surgical wards in all of those. I think while a surgical ward and internal medical specialists complement each other very well, one is not a requirement for the other. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Handley. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are there surgical wards in operation at other places like Inuvik?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mrs. Groenewegen.

HON. JANE GROENEWEGEN: I know that there is not in Hay River, not in Fort Smith, and whether they perform surgery in Inuvik, I do not know.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just trying to find out whether or not there was any tie at all to the surgical ward. I know we are hoping to find out in the near future whether or not the surgical ward will be reopening, and I wanted to know whether or not this position was somewhat tied to it. I guess we will have to accept the Minister's statement that in fact it is not.

One other issue I would like to question while I still have the floor is that I notice we have some forced growth funding here for the boards. Specifically, there is \$915,000 for the Stanton

Regional Health Board. My question is, since we are providing this extra funding, does this deal with the deficit or shortfall that Stanton had in the past, or is this to deal with this year's shortfall? What specifically does this \$915,000 address?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. \$915,000 is for this fiscal year, so it is to provide additional funding to Stanton for 2001-2002. It should, in the view of the department, allow Stanton to be able to get their operations back on keel. In other words, they should not have a significant deficit this year. This will not address the accumulated deficit for the last two years. That is still something that the boards and the department have to work out a strategy for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I notice that in the description above, it says that these funds for the other boards relate to base funding shortfalls from 1997-1998 to 2001-2002. From what Mr. Voytilla has said, did I hear him incorrectly that none of this \$915,000 applies back to 1997-1998, 1998-1999 or 1999-2000? That all of this \$915,000 is for this current fiscal year for Stanton? Can I just get some clarification on that, please?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, to clarify, this is for this year. Stanton had an operating surplus in 1997-1998 of \$338,000. They had an operating surplus in 1998-1999 of \$107,000, so they had an accumulated surplus of almost \$300,000 at the end of March 31, 1999. Then they went into deficit in the following year to the tune of \$1.3 million, and they have a projected deficit for last year, that is just a projected deficit, of about \$1.2 million.

They have an accumulated deficit forecast, not actual, of about \$2.5 million, which represents about five percent of their annual budgetary expenditure. In 2000-2001, their total revenue was close to \$48 million. So standing at five percent, it is a significant accumulated deficit to have, but not one that should be out of the realm of manageability.

With this additional ongoing funding, it will prevent them from getting into any greater financial difficulty and give them the opportunity to address the accumulated deficit in a managed way.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Voytilla's characterization of \$2.5 million as a small percentage is small comfort to those who may be faced with reduced hours in the emergency ward, for instance, or whatever else it may take for Stanton to deal with that. I think there is going to be some concern about how that \$2.5 million is dealt with.

However, I noticed that for the last two years, the deficit has been \$1.2 or \$1.3 million. Is this \$915,000 then sufficient to address what would otherwise be their deficit for this year? Or is this in fact a short fall again, so they will still have a deficit over and above this \$915,000?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our understanding is that this \$915,000 represents the amount of their operational requirement for this year that pertains to forced growth and that the department is continuing work with the boards, including Stanton, on further assessing their operational requests and needs. They will be reporting back to the Financial Management Board later in the year as a result of those discussions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Voytilla. Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I guess the bottom line is that we could be seeing supplementary appropriation coming through for the board because, unless they found some way to eliminate an awful large expenditure, it looks like we are talking \$200,000 to \$300,000 based on the last couple of years, at least. It must be cut out or else they are going to go further in debt. They could be facing some problems.

Is it a similar situation for the other boards? When I look at this \$3.9 million, are we in some cases going to be talking about situations there where perhaps the boards are not getting enough to meet the needs for this year, unless they have an approved deficit recovery plan? If so, when can we expect to hear about those deficit recovery plans and the impacts they will have on service levels across the Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Dent. Mr. Voytilla.

MR. VOYTILLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps my way of answering this question at this point in time, I would simply go through the accumulative surpluses and deficits, as they stood March 31st, 2000, and then update that for the projected surplus deficit for last year.

The Deh Cho Board had an accumulative surplus at March 31st, 2000, of \$755,000; the Deninu, \$46,000 surplus; the Dogrib, \$170,000 surplus; Fort Smith had a deficit of \$390,000; Hay River, a surplus of \$678,000; Inuvik, a deficit of \$409,000; Lutselk'e, a deficit of \$24,000; Stanton, a deficit of \$1,300,000; and the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board had a \$648,000 surplus.

They are projecting the deficit for the year, last year...actually, Deh Cho is expecting a surplus; Deninu is \$35,000 deficit; the Dogrib are expecting a \$574,000 deficit; Fort Smith, \$534,000 deficit; Hay River, \$1,000,000 deficit; Inuvik, a \$756,000 deficit; Lutselk'e, an \$18,000 deficit; Stanton, a \$1,200,000 deficit; and the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board, a surplus of \$178,000.

In this supplementary, there is \$3.9 million worth of forced growth funding being provided to the boards to help them deal with their financial requirements for this year. In the case of the work the department is doing, they have been working very extensively with the boards to assess their financial situations, assess why their expenditures are what they are, and work out what part of their deficit has been legitimate forced growth versus what part might have been discretionary spending that the board had control of and made the decision to spend on and working through all of that, working out a deficit recovery plan with each of the boards. That additional work is still ongoing.

This is the initial assessment of the legitimate forced growth that the boards require. That is why it is coming forward in this form at this time. As you can tell from the figures I read out,

there is still some work to do with boards in assessing their expenditures and assessing the way that is best for each board to deal with the funding situation it is in.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the area of primary and acute care programs, expanding a little further on what Mr. Dent has been discussing in the area of forced growth, I look at some numbers here and, maybe it is just how I interpret it or my math compared to Mr. Voytilla's math or the Department of Health and Social Services. For example, to provide funding for a third internal medicine specialist for associated support staff at Stanton Regional Hospital, \$420,000. Then when you look at it again, the Stanton Regional Health Board, when you look at just forced growth funding of \$915,000, when you look at standardized physician contracts in the Northwest Territories of \$1.4 million, not all of that would be accounted for Stanton. I agree. However, a large portion would be because of the amount of doctors here.

When you look at the \$1,413,000 below that, again to deal with the clinics purchased here for the primary health care services delivery model in Yellowknife, one can argue that is a separate area, but, in fact, that has an impact on how things are carried out, how those physicians work for other residents in the Territories. It is hard to separate.

However, when you add those up, for example, just trying to isolate the one for Stanton, my numbers are over \$1 million and whatever portion is out of the \$1,460,000 that would go towards Stanton.

If, for example, you did not address the \$420,000 for an internal medicine specialist, we would see a larger deficit, is the way I would see it. So are we, in fact, by this supplementary appropriation, dealing more with some of the ongoing problems that we have heard about in the past number of months, rather than dealing with new initiatives. Is that a correct interpretation on my part? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, first of all, let me just say that none of the \$1,460,000 goes to Stanton. It is all for the other hospitals.

Are we dealing with an ongoing problem, as compared to new initiatives? I suppose you could say that we are because this same problem has been going on for a long time.

That \$1,460,000 goes, roughly, \$379,702 to Fort Smith; \$755,594 to Hay River; and \$499,419 to Inuvik. The Yellowknife Board actually loses \$574,290.

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

MR. ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a breakdown of the \$1,460,000. When I look at, again, the numbers; \$420,000, the \$915,00 that has been identified as a historical base funding shortfall, 1997 to 1998 and 2001 to 2002, is over \$1 million. Is that correct? In fact, are we expending more on an ongoing basis? If we did not address this funding at this

point, we would in fact be looking at an additional \$1.3 million, let us say, of deficit.

Just another one, Mr. Chairman, the simple fact that as we look at it, the Minister stated this has a long history, but according to what Mr. Voytilla stated to Mr. Dent, in 1997-1998, 1998-1999 years, the budget had an accumulated surplus of some \$300,000. This shortfall we are talking about is in fact in the last year, pretty well, year and a half, maybe two years. In 1999-2000, there must be some identifiable situation that has come around to suddenly increase this and turn things around totally. If we can get some information on that. How will we address that so that next year, or in three months time when we come back for the fall, for example, addressing another supplementary appropriation to deal with these shortfalls?

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

HON. JOE HANDLEY: Mr. Chairman, there has been a turnaround in the last few years. As Mr. Voytilla pointed out, some of these boards were in a surplus position until last year or the year before that. How are we ensuring that we do not continue to see this happening? That is what the Department of Health and Social Services is working on with the boards to ensure that we do not have a trend going on here that continues to demand more and more money.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Delorey): Thank you, Mr. Minister. The Chair will recognize the clock at 6:00 p.m. and will rise to report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. Item 20, report of committee of the whole. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Delorey.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. DELOREY: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, and Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act No. 1, 2001-2002 and would like to report that Bill 3 is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Delorey. Do we have a seconder for the motion? The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Steen. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? Thank you. All those opposed? The motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the honourable Member for Frame Lake, Mr. Dent.

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to Item 13, tabling of documents.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. The honourable Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to item 13, tabling of documents. Are there any nays? There being no nays, Mr. Dent.

REVERT TO ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 13-14(4): Page C-13 of news/north, Monday, June 11, 2001

MR. DENT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to table page C-13 from today's news/north, Monday June 11th edition.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 13, tabling of documents. Item 21, third reading of bills. Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Hamilton): Mr. Speaker, meeting of the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development at adjournment tonight. Meetings for tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. of the Cabinet House Strategy, 9:00 a.m. of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight; a full Caucus at 10:00 a.m.; of the Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages at 11:00 15 and of the Standing Committee on Social Programs at 12:00 p.m.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, June 12, 2001:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills

18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 1-14(4), Sessional Statement
 - Minister's Statement 3-14(4), Fiscal and Economic Update
 - Minister's Statement 4-14(4), Update on the Social Agenda
 - Bill 4, Supplementary Appropriation Act, No. 1, 2001-2002
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Again, congratulations on your 21 years of clerkship. I understand from certain information that you may almost be the longest serving clerk in Canada. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, June 12, 2001, at 1:30 p.m.

-- ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

